

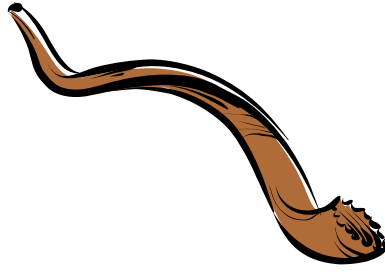


Thy Kingdom Come

***The Revelation of Jesus Christ
(A Commentary on Revelation)***

By

Elder Charles Taylor



A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Revelation

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Date of John's Writing Revelation (54A.D. - 68A.D.)

It is generally held that Peter and Paul were martyred during the reign of Nero, who is called the Anti-Christ. Since Paul mentions the anti-Christ as already being among them, this points to the period of Nero's reign (54A.D. - 68A.D). It is commonly believed that John was banished to the Isle of Patmos during Nero's reign. While there, Jesus instructed John to write these things "which must shortly come to pass." It was mandatory that the writing be done immediately. We let the Scriptures speak to this issue. Revelation 1:9-11 says, "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." The warning to these churches would not have served its purpose if received after the tribulation period, which was coming upon them. This warning from Patmos of things which shortly must come to pass was a valid call to repentance lest they be found wanting.

Some of the Church fathers tell us that John was at Ephesus in the year 95 A.D. This would have been during the reign of Domitian. Some hold to this for being the period when John wrote of the events showed to him on Patmos. Since Jerusalem was destroyed by Rome in 70 A.D., much of the book would have already been fulfilled had the writing taken place in 95 A.D. The preponderance of evidence shows that the Revelation account was written during John's incarceration on Patmos, or shortly afterwards. While holding great respect for the thinking of others, the most tenable time of the writing would have been prior to 70 A.D. This brings into retrospect the events that fit the figurative descriptive language with which the book is written.

Foreword

Why yet another commentary on the book of Revelation, one may ask? Have there not been volumes written that fully explain all the apocalyptic implications of the prophecies of this last book of God's word? Has every avenue not been explored in seeking the true meaning of the figurative language the Holy Spirit inspired through John? This book answers the question, Why another?

In response to a congregational desire to study the book of Revelation during a weekly Bible Study, Elder Charles Taylor began an intensive self-study of the book. He taught it verse-by-verse to the congregation of Grace Primitive Baptist Church in Loudon, Tennessee, over a period of approximately fourteen months. He prayerfully researched and meditated upon every verse, allowing the Bible to be the primary interpreter of itself. The result was what you will find in this book. God richly blessed the church during this time, and many misconceptions about the figurative language used in Revelation were cleared up.

A warning is issued to all who may be looking for yet another futuristic, mystical attempt to fit John's Revelation into every centuries past, or near-future, historical or political event. The approach used herein is to allow the Bible to act as its own primary interpreter. Then the commentary is built upon the foundation of that interpretation without moving off into the mystical, unsupportable sphere of futuristic, prophetic meaning.

The author moves forward from the foundational position that John was inspired to write the Revelation prior to the destruction of Jerusalem by Roman legions in 70 A.D. This is an equally tenable position as that held by most people who place John's writing after 90 A.D. In fact, in many aspects it is a more tenable position. (Refer to the article, "*Date of John's writing Revelation*," page viii.) Based upon that interpretive foundation, the mystery of the figurative language opens up like a flower after a refreshing spring rain.

As you move through the twelve major sections of the book, continue to build on this foundation in your own understanding and you will be blessed beyond measure. As you read [Section 1, Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega](#), see the One who deserved and demanded the preeminence in His kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In [Section 2, The Letter Corpus](#), apply the instruction to the seven churches to your own past and present spiritual condition. Go up with John in [Section 3, Introductory Visions](#), and see God's dealings with His elect people over the all-encompassing four periods of time on the earth.

[Section 4, The Seven Seal Visions](#), reveals how God preserved a remnant of those who followed the Lamb of God to establish His New Testament Church. Discover in [Section 5, Woes of the Seven Trumpets](#), the gathering of the destructive forces God would use to remove Jerusalem and the Temple, the figures of the now-defunct Jewish religion. Proceed to [Section 6, The Dragon's Kingdom and the Church Triumphant](#), to observe the means Satan used to attempt to defeat Christ's kingdom. Then rejoice as you see the triumph of the Church of Jesus Christ in the face of such strong persecution.

The power of Almighty God in preserving and establishing His Church, and in punishing and disestablishing the wicked, can be clearly seen in [Section 7, Those Who Worship the Lamb and Those Who Worship the Beast](#). [Section 8, Vials with the Seven Last Plagues](#), then reveals the awfulness of God's wrath on those who worship the Beast, and illustrates the impending destruction of Jerusalem. This leads you into [Section 9, Visions of the Fall of Babylon](#). A vivid picture of Jerusalem in her putrid, completely apostate condition is presented here, along with the rejoicing of heaven's hosts over her impending and final destruction. No more will Jerusalem be the figure for the "top of the mountains" of God's people. No more will she represent spiritual Zion, the mountain of God's holiness!

Rejoice in [The End of Satan's Evil Age and the Beginning of God's Righteous Age](#), in [Section 10](#). Christ the victorious conqueror is clearly shown to have won the battle of Armageddon at Calvary, binding Satan in the bottomless pit. Then [Section 11, Kingdom Changed from Sacrificial Offerings to Grace](#), shows the final end

of this means of temporary, figurative propitiation. No longer will there be an earthly system of figurative offerings to appease the wrath of God, because the only true offering that could ever accomplish this has been sacrificed. Jesus Christ died for the sins of His people, and was raised triumphantly for their justification. Never again will God accept an animal sacrifice. He took away the Temple to add the final emphasis to His ending the defunct system that was still being emptily maintained by the Jews in Jerusalem.

The wonder of God's ways can be seen in His showing John the true, spiritual Jerusalem and the true, spiritual Temple, where there is no need for the sun or the moon, or for any earthly trappings. God will sustain His Church in the earth until He says, "it is enough!" Then Christ will come to deliver up the kingdom at the end. "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Corinthians 15:24).

If you've prayerfully read and studied this commentary all the way through, you will be overjoyed to come to [Section 12, Epilogue](#). The fear will be removed as you finally read the sweet testimony of His eminent return, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen." (Revelation 22:20-21).

I thank God for the study that produced this commentary, and I pray that God's people will rejoice in its truths for many years to come.

Elder Bill Taylor, Pastor
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Section 1 - Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega

“As you read *Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega*, see the One who deserved and demanded the preeminence in His kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

The Preface (1:1-3)

Revelation 1:1. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

There are three important foundations for proper interpretation of the revelation of Jesus Christ:

First, this is revealed from God to Jesus Christ, and is to be given to the Churches. “For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel” (John 5:20). John was that servant who would pen these things down for the churches.

Second, it is a revelation of things “which must shortly come to pass.” The Greek word for *shortly* is *en*; a primary preposition denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state), to give oneself wholly to; to do quickly, shortly, speedily. When we examine the text, we are told that these things will be carried out in the very near future *quickly (speedily)* by one who is *mighty* and will give Himself wholly to this work.

Third, Jesus Christ signified it by His angel unto His servant John. This messenger was faithful in delivering the messages that were important to the people in that day. We are given the written word that contains those messages. Let us be careful not to add or take away from these things. May we prayerfully and carefully seek guidance from God in our interpretation.

Revelation 1:2. Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

According to Parson's Thesaurus, Record¹ means a register, a catalog, a daybook, a ledger, or lot. This shows that these events were already put in a register. If so, God will not change it because He is omniscient, or all knowledgeable of past, present, and future.

Revelation 1:3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

The blessedness of those who read and keep those things that are written in this prophecy is manifest in their obedience. Please read the instruction given in Mark 13:14, and Luke 21:20, 21 concerning fleeing out of Jerusalem to the mountains. Much had been given in prophecy concerning this great catastrophe that would come upon the inhabitants Jerusalem as a result of their sinful and disobedient condition. The Jews possessed these prophecies and could read them. Nevertheless, the reading of God's word is not the end that God intended for His people. Their temporal salvation lies in how they hear and obey the given instruction. “All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge” (Proverbs 8:8, 9)

¹The Greek word *martureo*, *mar-too-reh'-o*; from *martus*; to be a witness, give [evidence], bear record, have (obtain of) good (honest) report, be well reported of, testify, give obtain) witness.

Section 2 - The Letter Corpus (1:4 - 3:22)

“... Apply the instruction to the seven churches to your own past and present spiritual condition.”

Covering letter (1:4-20)

Revelation 1:4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

The seven churches that are in Asia are specifically mentioned as the Churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. A popular theory says these represent the so-called “ages” of the Churches; however, I believe that the conditions of these churches are to be patterns for all churches that serve Jesus Christ in sincerity, throughout all ages.

The attributes of *Grace* are *graciousness in manner or act, especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life*. This is found most often in the benedictions given by Paul in his epistles to the churches. This should be the spiritual desire for all who are sincere in their worship and service to God. Our manner of conduct should be adorned with grace.

The attributes of *Peace* are *accord, armistice, harmony, reconciliation, and truce*. Paul wrote, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). If there is to be peace, there must first be a spirit of accord among God's people. If there are differences there should be an armistice, in which there is a *cease-fire*. Harmony can only come about through reconciliation with one another and most of all, with God. There comes a time when God's people must declare and observe a truce while we take a good look at our lives and service to God.

This peace must come, “from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.” The course of our lives will be changed through obedience. The seven Spirits (notice the capitalization) are in perfect accord with God. Matthew Henry takes this to mean the “Holy Spirit, which is called the *seven Spirits*, the infinite Spirit of God, in whom there is a diversity of gifts and operations.” I can see the meaning to have something to do with the number (seven) of churches mentioned. These seven Spirits are in complete harmony with the will of God and are ready to faithfully carry out the messages to the churches.

Revelation 1:5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

No one is more faithful than Jesus Christ. If there is a witness who is more worthy of sending this message to His Church, let that one now be named. “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house” (Hebrews 3:1-3). His faithfulness is shown in the promise of the *resurrection*, in which He was shown to be the first begotten from the dead! Being Prince of the kings of the earth, He is King of kings. He *loved us* even while we were dead in trespasses and sins (See Ephesians 2:1). He washed us by His blood and cleansed us from all iniquity. Surely we must say that one who loved us so much and gave Himself for us is a faithful witness in things concerning our warfare while here in the earth.

Revelation 1:6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

What a wonderful existence we have in His inheritance! We are kings and priests unto God! What does this statement mean? If we are made *kings*, then we have a kingdom. “And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:29, 30). The writer of Hebrews states it this way, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28, 29). If we are made *priests*, we have a priesthood. No, we are not *High Priests*. This is the office of Christ Jesus; however, we do have a priesthood that was prefigured in the Levitical priesthood. They participated in the worship service of the earthly temple; so do we have a place in the Spiritual temple. The Levitical priests trimmed the lamps; so should we keep our lights trimmed and burning. They burned incense; so should we let our prayers ascend to God for a sweet smelling savor. They were teachers; so should we apply ourselves in teaching others by our lives.

Revelation 1:7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

In the midst of the warnings that are given there is a sound of triumph in the words. There also seems to be a warning for His elect not to follow those who are walking in error. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:24-27). Even in the early days of the Church there were many who claimed to be the Christ. By His own words, they need not run to and fro following every religious sect. When He came to destroy Jerusalem, it was with great distinction and utter destruction. This could not be ignored!

The point of reference about which Jesus is speaking moves back to the destruction of Jerusalem: “For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Matthew 24:28). The word carcase [*ptoma*, from the alternative of *pipto*; a ruin, i.e. (specifically) lifeless body (corpse, carrion)--dead body, carcase, corpse] describes the condition of those Jews who were apostate in their worship and teaching. They were in a dead condition. The body was lifeless. The Roman army was swift in moving to take vast territories. This may be the meaning of the above verse. When the body of Judaism became lifeless, the eagles (Roman armies) moved to destroy the lifeless body. The body of Christ without the Spirit is dead. God has no use for a lifeless corpse. Jerusalem, refusing to be ruled by God, was dead. These were days of great tribulation for those who were gathered in Jerusalem. They were shut in for three and one-half years. Josephus writes in his history, War of the Jews, the famine was so rampant throughout the city, that mothers killed and ate their young.

Jesus said, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29, 30). The great satellite of Judaism [the moon] gave no light because of their sins. The sun was darkened because of the great smoke that arose from their burning. The stars [men of great stature] fell from heavenly places. The powers of these great people [Jews] were shaken and they lost their position in high places.

Revelation 1:8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Here we find Jesus identified as the One who has no beginning and no ending. The metaphor of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet is used here. David could say in Psalm 90:2, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art

God.” The wise man Solomon, being inspired by God, could say in Proverbs 8:23, “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” The One who commands and it is done was in the beginning with God. He was the most indispensable part in the plan of our salvation. He is our Redeemer and guide. When the earth shall be folded, as a garment that is no longer needed, He will still be there. He is eternal, the sovereign God of the universe. With all the great number, we can also say Amen.

He returned with great power to take vengeance on the evil of the people whom He had chosen above all the peoples of the earth. He returns often when men least expect it. He will also return at the proper time to call His elect from the earth to meet Him in the clouds of glory. There shall we ever be with the Lord.

Christ in the Midst of the Candlesticks (1:9 - 1:20)

Christ could be called the Critic of Churches. This is true in the sense that Christ is speaking to the pastors (angels) of the churches of things that are not as they should be. Two things show the mark of a true Critic: (1) The ability to recognize the problem(s); and, (2) The ability to see a solution to the problem(s). In this portion of the book we will find Jesus faithfully sending the messages that are relevant to the needs of the churches. As we proceed through this section many things will enlighten us, leaving no doubt as to their needs and the solution to their needs.

Biblical scholars recognize the speaker as being the Apostle John, the brother of James. Both were the sons of Zebedee, the fisherman. Herod Agrippa I put James to death about A.D. 44, (Acts 12:1. 2). It is not clear exactly when John was banished to Patmos. It is thought to be shortly after the death of Peter and Paul (Hassell's Church History, pp. 215, 242.). This was during the reign of Nero (Ancient & Medieval History by Magoffin and Duncalf, page 350.), who reigned as emperor in Rome, 54-68 A.D. (Nero succeeded Claudius Caesar). The period during the reign of Nero was one of the most terrible times of Christian persecution recorded in history. John is said to have died about 98 A.D., and was buried² at Ephesus during the reign of Trajan, who was emperor of Rome from 98-117 A.D.

Revelation 1:9. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John identifies himself as a brother, and companion in tribulation. The Apostle Paul uses the same vernacular in his letter to the Romans concerning their suffering for the cause of Christ, “. . . if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:17). It was during this great persecution of Christians by Nero, emperor of Rome, that both Paul and John were writing. It is said that Paul was put to death during this mad man's reign, and John was banished to the Isle of Patmos. In Verse 9, John states that the reason for his being on the isle called Patmos is “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” It is my understanding that he is referring to the reason for his banishment, which was because of his holding faithfully to the things of Christ in the face of this great persecution.

Revelation 1:10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

It seems to be significant here that the time element is mentioned. It was on the Lord's Day! The time set aside by the early Church as a day of worship and rest following the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is called The Lord's day. This was observed on the first day of the week. Even here on this desolate island, and having no one with whom to converse, John still observed the Lord's Day. Also John states, “I was in the Spirit.” As John was in this position of worship, being in the Spirit of God, he states, “I heard behind me a great

² Hassell's Church History, page 225.

voice, as of a trumpet.” God makes Himself known in no uncertain terms. In this case it was with the voice (sound) of a great trumpet, loud and clear! The importance of the message required attention.

Revelation 1:11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

He identified Himself as Alpha [the first letter in the Greek alphabet - - meaning first; protos, pro'-tos; foremost (in time, place, order or importance) -- before, beginning, first (of all), former] and Omega [the last letter of the Greek alphabet, i.e., (figuratively) the finality]. He is identified this way four times in this book: Revelation 1:8, 1:11. 21:6, and 22:13. “What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia.” The importance of this message was directed to the particular churches mentioned. Yet, it is just as important to each body of believers today. It has not lost its great value. The purpose of this important message was to cause the churches to repent and turn from the error that was among them.

Revelation 1:12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks

In the book of Exodus we find a command of God that a *menorah*, a chandelier or candlestick having seven branches, be made. This *candlestick* was to be made according to the pattern shown to Moses on the mount (Exodus 25:40). This *menorah*'s seven branches typified the seven golden candlesticks in Revelation 1:12. We know that the number *seven* is a representation of perfection. So in this respect, it seems that the seven churches of Asia were a representation of the whole body of Christ, which is the Church. In this we have a pattern of conduct for every individual congregation of believers in all ages. The Greek word for *candlestick* is *luchnia*, lookh-nee'-ah; a lamp-stand (literally or figuratively): --candlestick. It is my understanding that this candlestick was the place where the light was placed. Our Lord explains this in Matthew chapter five as the body where our lights (membership; affiliation) should be placed: “Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.”

Revelation 1:13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

A parallel scripture is found in Daniel 7:13; “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.” The description Daniel gives is identical to John's description. We find another description given in Daniel 10:5; “Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: . . .” There seems to be no doubt that this is Jesus Christ who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Revelation 1:14. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

Revelation 1:15. and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

When we compare the figure John saw with that which Daniel saw, we see the same Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. He is mighty in power and His strength and dominion have not diminished in the least. There is a reason for the similarity in the comparison. The times prophesied by Daniel were fulfilled in the Kingdom of God through the early Church. These times are not reserved for the “millennium” or some future age. Let us study God's Word diligently, so as not to be deceived by false teaching.

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

The descriptive language remains the same throughout Scripture. “And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory” (Ezekiel 43:2). In Ephesians 6:17, Paul calls the word of God the sword of the Spirit. In Hebrews 4:12 he speaks about the effectiveness of the word of God; “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” With similar language, Paul describes his experience as he was on his way to persecute the saints, “At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me” (Acts 26:13).

Revelation 1:17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.

Ezekiel 1:28 describes the appearance of Jesus as having such a great effect that Ezekiel fell as one dead. When Saul (Paul) saw this light that did outshine the noonday sun, he and all his companions fell to the ground. He could not look upon Jesus in His glorified state.

Revelation 1:18. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Herein the resurrected Christ is revealed to the Apostle John. He is not dead as some suppose, He is alive! Furthermore, Paul writes of how we benefit from this in Romans 6:9, 10, “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”

He has the keys of hell and of death. David could say, “He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belongs the issues from death” (Psalm 68:20). Hell and death have no more dominion over Him. Neither do hell and death have dominion over those for whom Christ died. Revelation, chapter nine refers to one called the fifth angel. To him were given the keys to the bottomless pit. The power over hell is in the hand of our Saviour who died for our sins, and arose for our justification. It is a wonderful assurance to the believer that hell cannot receive those for whom the Lord died.

Revelation 1:19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter

The vision being shown to John is to be written in a book. The things “which are” evidently exist at the time of the vision. The things “which shall be hereafter” are those things which shall shortly come to pass. This serves as a warning to God's people to repent, for, “Behold, I come quickly.”

Revelation 1:20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

John's eyes (and ours) are now opened to the mystery of the seven stars. The seven stars are the angels (overseers, pastors) of the seven churches. “For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 2:7). The seven candlesticks are the seven churches, representative of the complete body of Christ in all ages.

As we progress through the letters contained in chapter two of the book of Revelation, we will find things in each letter that we can apply to our present condition. Let us study these intelligently, and with wisdom. Unless we can find this also directed toward our condition as a church approved by God, we will not have bettered

ourselves by this study. The book of Revelation is not given simply to serve as a conversational piece! Israel of old had not considered their condition in the light of God's word. They received a just recompense of reward because of their ignorance. Their beloved city and temple were destroyed. They no longer have a place where they can come as they did in days of old. Many former places of worship no longer exist because God's people did not hallow them.

Letters to the Seven Churches (2:1-3:22)**Letter to the Church at Ephesus: (2:1-7)**

INTRODUCTION: (Information for this introduction gathered from King James Version of The Bible, Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, Atlas of the Bible by Reader's Digest, The Ancient World by Curtis, and Atlas of Bible Lands by C.S. Hammond and Company.) Ephesus was situated on the west coast of Asia Minor. It was the Capitol of the Roman province of Asia Minor. The famous temple of Artemis, located at Ephesus, was one of the wonders of the ancient world. Paul stayed here for two years (Acts 19:10). Paul was persecuted at Ephesus by the silversmith because of his stand against the goddess Diana. Ephesus was also one of the chief ports that served a vast network of trade routes. Also, please note that the Isle of Patmos to which John was exiled was only between 25 - 50 miles from Ephesus. The physical connection of the Aegean Sea with the Mediterranean Sea indicates many different beliefs that plagued the early church at Ephesus. Certain Jews followed Paul to Ephesus teaching the doctrine of works mixed with grace. Circumcision was one of their chief arguments.

Acts chapter nineteen readily points to a condition that had pervaded the church at Ephesus. By John's time, Ephesus was a dying city. In A.D. 65 an attempt was made to clear the silt and deepen her harbor. Ephesus' decline was a mortal sickness; her lamp stand (candle) had gone from its place. As we study this letter to the angel of the church at Ephesus, it is easy to find the pattern for moral decline and removal of the candlestick from churches.

Revelation 2:1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks

This is serving notice to the church at Ephesus, and the pastors especially, that the Sovereign God who is over all things is scrutinizing the actions and beliefs that are driving the lamp stand (candle) from their midst. The Bride of Christ is the "Apple of His Eye," and He will not allow degrading sins to continue among His people without bringing judgment upon their heads. He holds the stars (angels, messengers, preachers) in His right hand. He walks among the candlesticks (churches). Now He is speaking with authority to the church at Ephesus.

Revelation 2:2. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Our Lord remembers the works, labor, and patience of those who contend for the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord and Redeemer. He is aware of those who toil in great pain to keep the paths of the righteous. He is aware of their patience (constant endurance) and their continuance in those things upon which they were founded. Our Lord is aware of how His people grievously hate the evil that drives their lives to the brink of despair. He is aware of the searching of doctrines by those who hate evil, and how they use the "Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," (Hebrews 4:12), and the only Rod of judgment.

Revelation 2:3. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

These brethren at Ephesus were not subdued without a long struggle. The power of Jesus, when properly understood, will keep us in the time of trouble. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). The knowledge of this refuge and strength is the salvation of God's people in all ages. There is no fainting when we know we are in His everlasting arms.

Revelation 2:4. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

DEFINITION: The first love [agape, ag-ah'-pay; from G25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence; spec. (plur.) a love-feast:--(feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love] of the Church is that which is “foremost in time, place, order or importance.” It is the beginning of her affection. The word that sets this love apart from any other is specified in the Greek language as *agape*. We find this love couched in the letter from Paul to the Ephesian brethren, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4). This love (agape) expresses the deepest kind of love. It was the chief concern of God in electing His children in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Through this deep love He drew us to Himself while we were afar off. He placed a new heart within us and gave us the capability of loving Him above all else. This was the first love of the Church at Ephesus.

Peter wrote of a secondary love and the result of that love; “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:8, 9). This expression of love (philadelphos) is fraternal in nature. It is not of the same depth as *agape* that is expressed as being astonished, awestruck, dumbfounded, overwhelmed, gaping. A fraternal (brotherly) love gives us affection, devotion, friendship, kindness toward our brothers and sisters; but it can never cause us to be awestruck, dumbfounded, overwhelmed, as does the love of God toward Himself and His Son Jesus Christ.

There is another kind of love that in the Greek is termed *eros* and relates to things referred to as *erotic*; some similar words are *amorous*, *passionate*, *sexual*, *carnal*, or *concupiscent*. Again, this meaning of love can never be used in connection with the church that God has purchased by His own blood. This kind of love (*eros*) always demands and never gives.

The expression “thou hast left thy first love” relates to coldness that creeps into the lives of those composing the church and robs them of the joy of that first relationship which they enjoyed with God and with Christ. They still declare their hatred for all evil, and still judge all who “say they are apostles and are not.” They cannot see their own condition of a fallen state. A friendly love for the brethren (philadelphos) may still exist. Yet that overwhelming love (agape) for God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Church has escaped them. The reason for this is that worldly love (*eros*) has invaded their lives and taken them captive.

Revelation 2:5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

The Prophet Jeremiah gave instruction to Israel of old concerning this condition. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16). He that walks among the candlesticks sees the condition of the Ephesian church and counsels them to remember - just as God instructed Israel - to “stand still, see, ask, and walk in the good way.” Israel said, “We will not walk therein” and was taken into captivity until they remembered. This same Sovereign Power was dealing with the church in John’s time. Repentance is given to the church for our forgiveness and growth. There is a very great mandate here: “I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” We may be aware of places of worship that have been misused by people who have left their first love and God has removed their candlestick. May God help us to use the grace of repentance when we find ourselves in a cold condition due to having left our first love.

Revelation 2:6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

This sect of people is spoken of in Revelation 2:15, “So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.” We will give more attention to this verse later. Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary explains it thus: “A group of persons in the church at Ephesus held the same doctrine (Nicolaitan) as the Pergamene church” (Revelation 2:15). Nothing else is known about them with any assurance, but some

have guessed that they were the followers of Nicolas of Antioch, one of the first deacons (Acts 6:5). However, there is no Biblical evidence for this assumption. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes was similar to that of Balaam through whose influence the Israelites ate things sacrificed to idols and committed fornication (Revelation 2:14, 15). A sect of Nicolaitanes existed among the Gnostics in the third century, as is known from church fathers of the time (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian). It probably had its origin in the group condemned in Revelation.

The church at Ephesus retained enough godliness to reject this group of people who evidently taught others in the practice of the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. We can see a parallel in things practiced in groups of God's people today who declare that fornication, sodomy, homosexuality, are simply a way of life which the church must condone. God hates this sin! The church of Jesus Christ ought also to hate this same lifestyle. It is the deepest kind of falling from our first love.

Revelation 2:7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Without an ear there is no organ with which to hear the words. God's people have been endowed with ears to hear spiritual things. May God help us to use these ears! Let us not stop them, as did Israel of old. Let us not choose to walk in our own lust of the flesh to the dishonor of God. The message being given is to the churches. We cannot explain it away by saying with some; "It is because of the sinning world." This is simply not so! God is interested in the welfare of His people – those for whom Christ paid the extreme penalty of death on the cross. The unregenerate will never heed these words simply because they have no organs for hearing.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life" Who is it that overcometh? "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4, 5). Scripture depicts Jesus as being the Tree of Life. None has a desire to partake of the *Tree of Life* without believing that He is, and is a rewarder of all that believe.

Letter to the Church at Smyrna (2:8-11)

Smyrna was located on the west coast of Asia Minor just north of Ephesus, facing on the Aegean Sea. The harbor of Smyrna was well protected, being a natural terminal of a great inland trade route up the Hermus valley. The Lydians destroyed it in 627 B.C., and for three centuries it was little more than a village. It was revived again in the middle of the fourth century before Christ, after Alexander's capture of Sardis. It quickly became the chief city of Asia. Smyrna was shrewd enough to mark the rising star of Rome. Roman historian, Tacitus, 55 AD- 117 A.D., informs us that in A.D. 26 Smyrna petitioned Tiberius to allow the community to build a temple to his deity. The petition was granted, and Smyrna built the second Asian temple to the Emperor. Smyrna was famous for science, medicine, and the majesty of its buildings. Apolonius of Tyana refers to her "crown of porticoes," a circle of beautiful public buildings which ringed the summit of Mount Pagos like a diadem, hence John's reference (Revelation 2:10).

Revelation 2:8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Revelation 2:9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Again (Verse 8) we find the same identification given to the Revelator, Jesus Christ. There can be no mistake about the condition of the saints of God in Smyrna. In the midst of all the riches of those who are worshiping the Emperor of Rome, there is poverty and tribulation in the church. Their works are manifest by the very fact they are being persecuted. This is always the case with the church in the world. Satan goes about

seeking whom he may devour. History records that persecutors of Christians martyred Polycarp, a faithful bishop [preacher] of Smyrna, in AD 155. Because of their faithfulness, the message states, “but thou art rich.” What a wonderful testimony for a church which is set in the midst of a prosperous city, for the most part, cares nothing for the Creator of all their wealth.

The persecution comes from “them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” We find this same language used in Revelation 3:9, “I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” Paul refers to this in the Roman letter: “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:29). Again we find the result of influence that comes from wanting to be pleasing to the world. Christian spirituality is apt to leave with the winds of worldly prosperity. The Psalmist states: “They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah” (Psalm 62:4). Our Lord tells us to “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15). As always, Satan uses the religious elements, which are false worshipers to persecute the saints of God who are striving for the right way. The Lord calls them blasphemers, who are the synagogue of Satan.

Revelation 2:10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

They can take courage because of the help from the Lord. He is a very present help in time of trouble. The work of Satan can gain no ground because the Lord is our help. They can take courage because Jesus tells us “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19). As we read throughout the book of Acts, we find this persecution taking place in the lives of Stephen, Peter, Paul, and numerous other named men. John is on the isle of Patmos because of persecution, “that ye may be true.”

“And ye shall have tribulation ten days.” This seems to be figurative, although the term is used throughout Scripture as time periods in the events of God’s people. The number “ten” is used many, many times, and is a biblical number. As we observe its usage in the passage under consideration, it seems to come as an encouragement to God’s people. There is a limit set by God as to the length of persecution before He intervenes for them in a positive way. Paul encourages the church through his own persecutions and suffering: “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed” (II Corinthians 4:8, 9). God has been specific in many things recorded in Scripture concerning the persecution of His people. Israel would be in captivity four hundred years. At the end of that time He would bring them out with a strong arm. They would be in Babylonish captivity for seventy years. Following that, Jerusalem and the temple would be rebuilt. God was faithful to honor his word and these things came to pass as it was spoken. Daniel spoke about the coming of the Messiah, “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Daniel 2:44). Paul verifies this in the Galatian letter, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5). God’s time schedule concerning His dealings with His people is always precise.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Though some of them would not survive this tribulation and persecution, there was a great consolation given them: “a crown of life” awaited them. They believed God, “and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). Hear the words of James, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12). There seems to be no rebuke to this church. We find mentioned at the ending of the Philadelphia letter; “hold that fast which thou hast, that no man

take thy crown.” This “crown of life” indicates that God does recognize and reward His people here in this life for faithfulness and patience.

Revelation 2:11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

We are reminded that there must be a spiritual hearing of the things of God. In order to overcome, there must be knowledge of what the Spirit is saying. It is needful to know the source of our overcoming. John gives this solution, “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5). Paul discusses the question concerning believing, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe [to entrust one’s spiritual well-being to Christ] in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (Romans 10:14-18). The relationship here hinges on two propositions: believing and gospel preaching. The proposition is “to him that heareth what the Spirit sayeth.” Some take the stand that this passage pertains to obtaining eternal life (being saved). The word used for believed is *pisteuo*, and refers to that one who has already put his or her trust in Christ. This perfectly fits that one to whom Christ is speaking: “to him that heareth what the Spirit sayeth.”

“He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” We died in Adam (first death); we are made alive in Christ Jesus (first resurrection). “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power” (Revelation 20:6). He now leaves the resurrection and proceeds to what is termed the second death. What is this second death? “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Revelation 20:14). “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

There are some who deny the teaching of Hell as punishment in the “hereafter.” However, to believe in everlasting joy is to become reconciled to the teaching of Christ concerning everlasting punishment. “... for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). Some might argue this as meaning “works” which would be punished in this life. However, the nature of the unregenerate man is to do evil. “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear” (Psalm 58:3, 4). The unregenerate know nothing but to follow nature. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after” (1 Timothy 5:24). The sins of God’s redeemed have gone before to judgment. They were nailed to His Cross. The unregenerate is not so.

Letter to the Church at Pergamos (2:12 - 17)

Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary says of Pergamum, Pergamos, a city of Mysia was located in the Caicus valley, 15 miles inland. Pergamos was royally situated in a commanding position. Pergamum was the capital until the last of the Pergmenian kings bequeathed his realm to Rome in 133 B.C. Pergamum became the chief town of the new province of Asia, and the site of the first temple of the Caesar-cult, erected to Rome and Augustus in 29 B.C. A second shrine was later dedicated to Trajan. The multiplication of such honor marks the prestige of Pergamum in pagan Asia. The worship of Askelepios and Zeus were also prevalent in the locality of Asia Minor. The symbol of the former was a serpent, and Pausanias describes his cult image with a staff in one hand and the other on the head of a serpent.

Pergamenian coins illustrate the importance that the community attached to this cult. Caracalla is shown on one coin, saluting a serpent twined around a bending sapling. On the crag above Pergamum was a throne-

like altar to Zeus now in the Berlin Museum. It commemorated a defeat of a Gallic inroad, and was decorated with a representation of the conflict of the gods and the giants, the latter shown as monsters with snakelike tails. Zeus, to deepen Christian horror was called in this connection, “Zeus the Saviour.” It is natural that “Nicolaitanism” should flourish in a place where politics and paganism were so closely allied, and where pressure on Christians to compromise must have been heavy. Pergamum was an ancient seat of culture and possessed a library which rivaled Alexandria’s. Parchment (charta Pergamena) was invented at Pergamum to free the library from Egypt’s jealous ban on the export of papyrus.”

“Zeus was the chief of the Olympian gods, corresponding to the Roman Jupiter (see Acts 14:12, 13; 19:35). His ancestry was as follows: Chaos, a heterogeneous mass containing all the seeds of nature produced Gaea (Earth) who in turn produced Uranus (Heaven) and married him. Among their numerous progeny were Cronos (Saturn) who married his sister Rhea and they became “Father and mother of the gods.” Chief of their children was Zeus, head of the Olympian gods and by various marriages and illicit unions the father of most of the greater gods of the Greek pantheon. One of the crowning insults which Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria 176-164 B.C., offered to the Jews was his dedication of the temple at Jerusalem to Zeus (II Macc. 6).

The above may not be relevant to the lesson. However, I think it is instructive for us to get a view of how the geographical and historical settings of these churches could have been a great influence on their deteriorating condition. Those who worshiped the Greek gods were in contrast to the Church of Jesus Christ that was planted in this place. So, there was persecution against those who walked after this man called Christ. The sect called “Nicolaitans” was active during this time of events. This culture was a breeding ground for all that would be a thorn in the flesh of the churches.

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

The message is directed to the “angel of the church in Pergamos.” Judgment can be inferred by the fact that the one who is speaking has the sharp sword with two edges. This corresponds to Hebrews 4:12; “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” He who walks among the candlesticks is aware of the condition of this church at Pergamos just as He is aware of the condition of His people in all ages.

Revelation 2:13. I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Again we are reminded that works are a necessary part of the life of the church and her members. “And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us” (Deuteronomy 6:25). The passage not only says to observe, but also to do all these commandments. We may speak of faith, but faith without works is dead (James 2:20). If you read the verses following verse 20 in the second chapter of his epistle, you will find that James speaks of Justification by Works. Abraham was not only justified by works when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar, but faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” (James 2:23). Here we find the passage in Deut. 6:25 verified by the New Testament: “And it shall be our righteousness . . .” So Christ observed that the works of these saints at Pergamos were accounted as a seal of their faith.

The passage, “I know where Satan's seat is . . .” does not refer to these whom He commends for their good works. I wonder how many of God's little children often dwell at Satan's seat. As we examine ourselves in the light of this watchfulness of Jesus Christ our Lord, it may be that we will find ourselves in the shade of Satan's dwelling place. In the face of many persecutions the One who walks among the Candlesticks could

say, “Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.” Their good works had not diminished in the face of death. The faithful martyr, Antipas, lost his life in holding fast to the things of Christ. Satan dwelt in the worship of all the false gods that were worshiped here in Pergamos.

Revelation 2:14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

It is important that we again turn our attention to the way we are told of our sins, which are ever among us. First: these people were told of all that was imputed to them because of their faithfulness in works. They were assured this was marked on the side of their righteousness. Then after this loving consolation reminding them of their relationship to their Father, we find the words, “But I have a few things against thee . . .” The charge was: causing others to stumble because of the actions of brothers and sisters who walked not uprightly. Jude has something to say about this very thing which leads some of the saints astray: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not” (Jude 1:3-5).

Balak, king of Moab, called Balaam to prophesy against the children of Israel. Balaam wanted to go, but each time consulted the Lord and was forbidden. However, he desired the great things that Balak promised him. First, there were many rich gifts, or rewards of divination, in Balak’s hand. This was enticing to Balaam, but he consulted God and was forbidden to go with these men and curse Israel. Next, there was a promise saying, “I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.” Again Balaam consulted God (Numbers 22:20) who admonished him to do whatsoever “I will tell you.” Against all these commands of God, Balaam arose the next morning and saddled his ass and started to go with the men. “And God’s anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him” (Numbers 22:22). The doctrine of Balaam was this: he followed his own desires against all that God had set in his way. This continued until God said, “It is enough.” There seemed to be some in the church at Pergamos who followed the same way of Balaam for profit and caused others to fail because of their actions. This is what is meant by “eating things sacrificed to idols and committing fornication.” The fleshly lusting of children of God is the same as the sin of Balaam, who was finally killed by the children of Israel. He received a just recompense of reward for his deeds.

Revelation 2:15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

The Nicolaitans were that portion of the Gnostics who mixed Christianity with Gnosticism. This is called false Gnosticism, or false knowledge. Hassell’s Church History, Page 365, (quoting from the Third period of Apostolic age - John the Apostle and Prophet) gives some insight into the term Nicolaitanes. “It is thought that Simon Magus, the Nicolaitans, Cerinthus, the Ophites, Sethites and Cainites, in the first century, were precursors of the Gnostics, whose system became fully developed in the second century. The three chief centers of Gnosticism were Alexandria, in Egypt, Antioch, in Syria, and Pontus, in Asia Minor. The most famous Gnostic was the Alexandrian Jew, Valentinus. His system was the most complete and consistent, and effected a fusion between nominal Christianity and the Platonic philosophy, leaving out the humbling ideas of sin, repentance and atonement, and weaving in the proud ideas of Buddhistic pantheism, man being set forth as the most perfect realization of the Divine.” With one of the famous centers of Gnosticism being located in Asia Minor, it is easy to see how that what is called the Nicolaitans (a mixture of Gnosticism and Christianity) could creep into the churches which were located there. At Ephesus the Apostle John was in the center of Paul’s mission-field in Asia Minor, and not far from Greece. Christianity had achieved splendid conquests in the flourishing cities of that country; but it had also encountered dangerous enemies. It was there that false

Gnosticism first showed itself, and perpetually sought out new adherents. The Apostle Paul had spoken before his death of its rapid progress (I Timothy 6:20, 21). This was an aggregation of corruptions from all the countries where Christianity was disseminated - a combination of Platonic philosophy, Alexandrian Judaism, dualistic Parsism, pantheistic Buddhism, and phantasmal Christianity (a figment of the mind, a deceptive likeness of something). When searching out this mixture, it can be found that this type of so-called Christianity is hated by this one who walks among the candlesticks. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is by no means dead today. It is very much alive in the lives of people who find so many ways to serve the flesh, yet believe this is acceptable to God.

Revelation 2:16. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Our Lord calls for repentance from this vile doctrine that destroys the very fiber and being of His people. There is one alternative: there will be quick retribution against this false doctrine. He will fight against them with the sword of His mouth (Hebrews 4:12). This great and mighty sword, when wielded by God, tears out the worst kind of heresy. This is the only thing that will cause God's people to fall down and call out on Him who will keep His Church pure. If those who are guilty do not repent and turn, the Candlestick will be removed.

Revelation 2:17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

To that one who overcomes (believes that Jesus is the Christ) will be granted to sit at the table and eat of the hidden manna (spiritual things hidden from the eyes of the unregenerate). Oh, how it behooves us to listen to what the "Spirit saith unto the churches." To him that overcometh will be given a white stone, and in the stone a new name written. We are told that those tried in a Roman court of law and found "not guilty" were given a white stone as a mark of their innocence. If they were found guilty, they were given a black stone and sent to serve their sentence. I believe we can see this analogy set forth here. Jesus Christ our Saviour died to set us free from sin and its consequences. A new name is written in that stone that no man can read save him to whom it is given. "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name" (Isaiah 62:2). "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:12). This new name, which signifies that we belong to Him who gave Himself for our ransom, is a wonderful consolation. Because He overcame death, hell, and the grave, we also can overcome through Him in whom we have believed.

Letter to the Church at Thyatira (2: 18-29)

Excerpts from Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary shed light on the descriptive language used in the introduction of this letter. *"The city of Thyatira was in the province of Asia, on the boundary of Lydia and Mysia. Thyatira has no illustrious history, and is scarcely mentioned by ancient writers. Thyatira, lying as it did on a great highway linking two river valleys, was a garrison town over long centuries. Its ancient Anatolian deity was a warlike figure armed with a battleaxe and mounted on a charger. An old coin or two shows a female deity wearing a battlemented crown. Thyatira was a center of commerce, and the records list more trade-guilds than any other Asian city. Lydia, whom Paul met in Philippi, was a Thyatiran seller of "turkey red," the product of the madder-root (Acts 16:14). It is curious to find another woman, figuratively named after the princess who sealed Ahab's trade partnership with the Phoenicians, leading a party of compromise in the Thyatiran church (Revelation 2:20, 21). Necessity for guild membership in a trading community must have strengthened temptation to compromise. Thyatira played no significant part in the later history of the Church."*

The records show there were trades such as wool workers, linen workers, dyers, leather workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers, and bronze smiths. Thyatira was situated on the major trade route of the day.

Riches always corrupt the church of the living God. We show this liability of trade and travel so that we might see that while these activities were necessary, they contributed to contact with false religions and worship. Many times this is the cunning of Satan to overcome the people of God and to place them in captivity.

Revelation 2:18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.

Here we find the positive identification of the speaker. He is the “The Son of God.” With His eyes He searches out and burns the dross just by a look. The wise man Solomon said, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” Through Jeremiah we have another warning from God concerning the evil of His people; “For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes” (Jeremiah 16:17).

The description of the Son of God of Revelation 2:18 and Daniel 10:5-6 is the same. He was clothed in linen. His loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His face was as the appearance of lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire. His arms and feet were like polished brass. This one described by Daniel had come to fight with the prince of Persia. Just as judgment was at hand for the prince of Persia, even so judgment was at hand for the evil of this church at Thyatira.

Revelation 2:19. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

As in the other letters to the churches, He who walks among the candlesticks is aware of the condition of the church at Thyatira. However, there is a peculiarity here that is not found in all of the letters: the phrase “I know thy works” is mentioned twice. The question presented to the reader is: why does the word “works” appear twice? We need to find the answer in the last phrase, “and the last to be more than the first.” Have they enlarged on the doing of works? Are these “last works” altogether within keeping of the accepted service of the “Son of God?” Churches may be guilty of incorporating works that are not acceptable to God into their agenda. These works may not glorify the cause of Christ in the world. These things must be examined in the light of the holiness of God. Perhaps the next statement will throw some light on the question of these last works.

Revelation 2:20. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

We know by the severity of this charge that the church is being held responsible. “Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel . . .” The first thing to examine is the role of the woman in the church. “She calleth herself a prophetess (prophetis, prof-ay'-tis; a female foreteller or an inspired woman--prophetess.), . . .” The name Jezebel as used here is explained in the sense of a Tyrian woman (used as a synonym of a termagant or false teacher) --Jezabel (See 2 Ki 9:22; 30 as a description of this figurative woman of Rev. 2:20.). What was the role of this woman who was placed in the same role as Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab? The Jezebel of the Old Testament caused the people of God to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed unto idols. Her influence on King Ahab and Israel was such that God caused her to be killed and the dogs ate her flesh. The Jezebel of Revelation 2:20 must have been comparable in the way she used her influence. The comparison of adultery is that of spiritual adultery versus physical adultery. Spiritual adultery is dangerous because God’s people are led toward other forms of worship.

Revelation 2:21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

God is longsuffering in dealing with His people who are in error. He desires repentance and turning in the lives of those He loves. “The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation*” (Numbers 14:18). The apostle Paul calls attention to our treatment of this longsuffering, “Or

despise thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4). The Scripture declares that God was longsuffering with those who were committing evil prior to the flood, "By which [Spirit] also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1 Peter 3:19, 20).

Revelation 2:22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

The spiritual adultery committed by this Jezebel and her followers will have great consequences. Great tribulation comes because of the refusal to repent and turn back to God. While false teaching is being followed (the church in bed with false teachers) trouble comes with great force.

Revelation 2:23. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Spiritual reprobation to future generations is the result of the rebellious action of those who refuse to turn from false teaching. The infusion of this practice is handed down from generation to generation until reprobation (unable to know good from evil) becomes the lot of those who inherit the role of church members. When this occurs, it is known by all who pass by. There is no desire for brethren to dwell together in godly lives and ways. "I will give unto every one of you according to your works." This is the mandate of a sovereign God who will keep His Church pure. The candlestick will be removed! While God is longsuffering, He is also faithful in His truths.

Revelation 2:24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

The doctrine under consideration is the church submitting to false teaching and submitting to the practice of allowing false teachers to occupy high places in the church. This passage calls this the depths of Satan. There were some left in Thyatira who had kept the faith once delivered to the saints and had not stooped to this practice. To these He says, "I will put upon you none other burden." There is sweet rest when the people of God follow in His paths. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Revelation 2:25. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

This verse can only be examined fairly by using God's written word. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Corinthians 2:12). As we have been given the Spirit of God with which to search out things which affect our lives and the lives of others, we ought to hold that fast. That Spirit can try things that come before us daily. We have also received the gospel that declares the things of God. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand" (1 Corinthians 15:1). Paul continues to tell the Corinthian brethren (and us) that we are saved to the truth by the gospel "if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Paul advises the Galatian brethren, "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9). Let everyone be familiar with the teaching of God's word lest we be found in the ranks of those who seem to have thrown caution to the wind, and have received false teachers such as was this Jezebel. Spiritual adultery is rampant among God's people. Let us watch!

Revelation 2:26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

The first meaning of this passage pertains to Jesus Christ, who overcame for us. True belief, then, is the only thing that will be that power by which we overcome (see 1 John 5:4 -5). “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Revelation 3:9, 10). Paul wrote, “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:9).

Revelation 2:27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

This comes from the Psalms of David concerning the Gentiles out of nations which have not known God: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel” (Psalm 2:8, 9). All that the Father has given to Jesus shall come to Him. They shall be willing in the day of His power. “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron”: (Revelation 12:5). This same Ruler is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

Revelation 2:28. And I will give him the morning star.

Peter calls Him the Daystar, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts”: (2 Peter 1:19). He is the light of the world. He rules the light of our lives, which should shine forth to give light to all who are in the house.

Revelation 2:29. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

As always, the Spirit is speaking to the churches. Only those who have been given ears to hear spiritual things can know of these wonderful instructions. Let us take heed as unto a light which shines in a dark place.

Letter to the Church at Sardis (3:1 - 6)

Sardis was the chief city of Lydia and was situated under a fortified spur of Mount Tmolus in the Hermus valley. Her location was near the junction of the roads from central Asia Minor, Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum. Sardis was the capital of Lydia under Croesus, and seat of the governor after the Persian conquest. Sardis was famous for arts and crafts, and was the first center to mint gold and silver coinage. The Lydian kings were so wealthy that Croesus became a legend for riches, and it was said that the sands of the Pactolus were golden. Croesus also became a legend for pride and presumptuous arrogance, when his attack on Persia led to the fall of Sardis and the eclipse of his kingdom. The surprise attack by Cyrus and his Persians in 549 B.C. led to the capture of the great citadel - and three centuries later by the Romans - may have provided the imagery for John's warning. Zondervan's Bible Pictorial Dictionary states that the great earthquake of A.D.17 ruined Sardis physically and financially. The Romans contributed 10,000,000 sesterces in relief, an indication of the damage done, but the city never recovered.

Revelation 3:1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Due to many circumstances, some of which have already been mentioned above, the church at Sardis must have become overwhelmed by platitudes that gave them a false sense of spiritual security. While in this condition, it was very easy for them to substitute temporal things in their everyday lives. These may even have been morally correct. This would account for the statement “that thou hast a name that thou livest.” Morality cannot replace Spirituality in the lives of God's people. It can supplement Spirituality, but should never be

allowed to take preference. The Law was holy, but it could not give life. So by the knowledge and authority of Him “that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars,” this church at Sardis was dead.

Revelation 3:2. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Some things pertaining to their beginning remained, but were ready to die. These things needed strengthening or total removal of the candlestick would take place.

Jesus gave some very important advice concerning being watchful while here on earth, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up” (Matt. 24: 42). Also, “For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:35-37). The apostle Paul admonished the churches not to sleep, but to watch and be sober (1 Thessalonians 5:6). When the church becomes filled with apathy, the enemy devours. In the midst of all the wealth which commerce and false gods gave, the church at Sardis was toppling toward extinction. He who holds the stars in His hand will not share His glory with another regardless of how much He loves His People. Rather, it is because of this great love that He chastens and rebukes and requires repentance and turning.

Revelation 3:3. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Sardis had a goodly foundation. Lydia, the woman who had so wondrously received the things of God from the preaching of Paul at Philippi must have conveyed to her friends at Sardis (her home) the wonderful experience that she received. They must have had other teaching also and had received that which they had heard. It was the same good tidings of God's love for His people in giving them life. They had been called out of darkness into His marvelous light in the same way as others of God's elect. Now the message is “Remember and hold fast, and repent.” If not, at such a time as they think not He will come as a thief. Sudden destruction awaits God's people who allow themselves to be overcome with the cares of this world. They will not know at what hour He will come upon them. Therefore, watch!

Revelation 3:4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

In all places where apathy is the rule among God's people there are those few who have not defiled their garments with sin and forgetfulness. The word “white” is used in other places describing those who praise and glorify God. “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Revelation 7:9). “And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14). To these who have kept their garments unspotted from the world, there is great promise. “They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.”

Revelation 3:5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

These are the same as those referred to in Verse 4. They have continued fast in their belief that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Even though the candlestick is removed, these shall be remembered that their

names are in the book of life. Malachi speaks of a book of life, “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Malachi 3:16). They have not been ashamed of Him and He shall not be ashamed of them before the Father while interceding for them at the mediatorial Throne in Heaven.

Revelation 3:6. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Again, the admonition given is to those who have been born of the Spirit of God and have been given Spiritual ears to hear the things of God. They are to use these ears. Some in Sardis had closed their ears to the things spoken. Others were watching and still walking with Him in white. May we today learn and be admonished fruitfully in these things lest we be found wearing spotted garments.

Letter to the Church at Philadelphia (3:7 - 3:13)

Philadelphia, a Lydian city founded by Attalus II Philadelphus (159-138B.C.). The king was so named from his devotion to his brother Eumenes, and the city perpetuated his title. Philadelphia was an outpost of Hellenism in native Anatolia. It lies under Mount Tmolus, in a wide vale that opens into the Hermus Valley, and along which the postroad ran. It is on a broad, low, easily defended hill, which explains Philadelphia's long stand against the Turks. The district is disastrously seismic, and the great earthquake of A.D. 17 ruined it completely. Placed right above the fault, Philadelphia was tormented by 20 years of recurrent quakes after the disaster of A.D.17. The district was vine-growing, and a center in consequence, of Dionysaic worship. A Christian witness, in spite of Moslem invasion and pressure, was maintained in Philadelphia through medieval and into modern times.

Revelation 3:7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.

The word *Philadelphia* as used in other places in Scripture mean *the city of brotherly love*. Peter uses this meaning in Rom. 12:10 as *affectionate love* as toward one's kindred.

The Apostle Paul uses two words: “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:9). He uses *brotherly love* in the same sense as does Peter. He goes a bit further using the word *theodidaktos*, *theh-od-id'-ak-tos*, which means divinely instructed: taught of God. In Hebrews 13:1 the writer uses *Philadelphia* (fraternal love) “Let brotherly love continue.” There is one other interesting usage in II Peter 1:7 “And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” The word used for *godliness* is *eusebeia*, *yoo-seb'-l-ah*; and means according to the *gospel scheme*: godliness, holiness.

These Greek meanings as used in Scripture add strength to the statement in the remainder of Revelation 3:7: “These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth...” He who sits upon the throne has the only key that will preserve this great love as a strength to all people of God.

Revelation 3:8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

With an open door, even a little strength will prevail to go in and out. God, who is omnipotent, keeps this door against the winds of adversity. Keeping the word of God is essential to the safety He provides. Thou hast not denied my name. We are aware of the words of Jesus; “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:33). There are many times when we approach our High Priest, Jesus Christ, with petitions that are very important

to us when He remains silent. These may be times that our testimony for Him has been silent. It is very important that we own Him as our God and Saviour. He sits making intercession for us to the Father. What would our action be toward a friend if they had denied us before others? Jesus keeps this door open to those who have maintained a godly (eusebia) life as we walk here on earth.

Revelation 3:9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Again we find some mentioned who are called *them of the synagogue of Satan*. We found this mentioned in Revelation 2:9, “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” Evidently these people were striving for the good will of the Romans. They were actually *anti-christ* in their persecutions of the *sect* who worshiped according to godliness. Paul mentioned the *anti-christ* as being present during his day. John must have also experienced this movement. Jesus gave great consolation in the words “behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” The Church at Philadelphia would be exalted in due time. “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over” (Psalm 23:5).

Revelation 3:10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

What a wonderful promise is given to these brethren (and us) because of the keeping of His words in the hour of temptation (trial, provocation, adversity) that shall come to them that dwell upon all the earth.

Revelation 3:11. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

The hour will come quickly when they must withstand trials and tribulation. When that hour comes, He who *walks among the candlesticks* will fight for them. Those who have a little strength will enter into the open door that is set. That little bit is enough! Hold it fast! Defend the crown that is yours against false teaching by false prophets. The time is at hand. Knowing the battle was not theirs encouraged them. It was the Lord’s battle and He would fight for them.

Revelation 3:12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5). He that sits as King upon the throne of His kingdom is the strength of those who are believers, the children of Abraham by faith. He never leaves us or forsakes us. He is Omnipresent! Paul wrote to the young man Timothy, “Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15). We view Him in Revelation 19:16. “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” This One has overcome for us! He has been made a Pillar in the house of our God and in the city of our God. We being “in Him” are also pillars (supports) in this great city of our God. This city is not the “Old Jerusalem,” but it is called the “New Jerusalem.” Those who dwell in the “New Jerusalem” have also a “New Name.” They do not have the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; they have that circumcision which is of heart. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Psalm 23:6). It has been said truthfully that those who are faithful in the church are the supports of the church. Those who wander in and out cannot be depended upon to hold up the cause of Christ when the test comes.

Revelation 3:13. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

May spiritual ears ever be turned toward Him who walks among the candlesticks. In the epistle of James we are told, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:22-25). The church at Philadelphia was encouraged because their works had strengthened their spiritual muscles.

Letter to the Church at Laodicea (3:14 - 22)

Laodicea lay on one of the great Asian trade routes, and was the head of the Circuit of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. Laodicea was founded by Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.). She was a leading banking center and this brought great commercial prosperity. In 51 B.C. Cicero, en route for his Cilician province, cashed drafts there. It said the rich banking firms that financed the reconstruction of the city after the great earthquake in A.D. 60 which prostrated it. She was “rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17). The Lycus valley produced glossy black wool, the source of black cloaks and carpets, for which the city was famous.

Laodicea was also the home of a medical school, and the manufacture of collyrium, a famous eye salve. The scornful imagery of the apocalyptic letter to Laodicea is obviously based on these activities. It also has reference to the emetic qualities of the soda-laden warm water from nearby Hierapolis, whose thermal springs ran into the Maeander. Laodicea's water supply also came from Hierapolis. Sir William Ramsay observes that the city is vulnerable due to its position and its easy wealth. This caused the growth in the community of that spirit of compromise and worldly-mindedness that is rebuked in Revelation. Laodicea, still prosperous was made the chief city of the Province of Phrygia under Diocletian.³ One writer described as the worst of the Seven Churches.⁴

Revelation 3:14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Authority for the proclamation to follow is pronounced in the very beginning of this admonition (warning). The source of authority is identified as that Power which created the universe with all of its splendor: The amen, *firm, i.e., (figuratively) trustworthy; adv. surely, so be it:--amen, verily*. None can change the determinate counsel of God.

Revelation 3:15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Their condition was described as putrid, and distasteful, with sin-infested works that God cannot tolerate. He will not be persuaded to alter His eternal decrees. The works of the Laodiceans are manifest by their condition. All of the in between conditions are deceiving. Cold conditions are easily detected. So are hot conditions. Lukewarm conditions in God's people will lead others astray. The one who has set His counsel in the highest determinate cannot tolerate this.

Revelation 3:16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

³Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary

⁴Some commentators believe these “Seven Churches” represent the Church in different ages. However, it is my belief that the apocalyptic type shows forth error which could infest any church, and which should continually be “watched” to keep them from becoming rampant in the body.

As the footnote indicates, there is such a sickening condition in the Church that vomiting takes place. When something is taken into the mouth for taste, it consists of a body, or mass. Whether liquid or otherwise it is more or less compacted. But if it is spued out, it becomes misted, or broken up - no longer a compact body. There is no strength because of the divided condition. When the works of God's people are rejected (*emeo, vomit, spued out*) by Him, they are no longer of any strength. They appear as a mist which soon becomes unseen by even the worldly element which might accept the works of a compact body of people. Their works are useless. This lukewarm condition soon becomes extinct to all who follow. Their light is no longer seen!

Revelation 3:17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Riches may suffice in time of natural catastrophes such as the great earthquake that struck this city. Buildings may be rebuilt and damage repaired, yet there are other things riches cannot buy. Because the church at Laodicea had become so embedded in the riches of the city, they evidently considered themselves able to overcome all things with their possessions. Spirituality mixed with the pleasures of the world will soon become distasteful to God. There is a great danger when the body of God's people get entangled in conditions such as these. When our goods become our dependence, we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. It is not until we find the need to approach the Throne of Grace that we realize our terrible condition. Evidently the church at Laodicia was close to passing the last visible landmark. That landmark spoke to them with Godly counsel.

Revelation 3:18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

This gold tried (purified) in the fire is not like their worldly riches. "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Malachi 3:3, 4). The offerings of Laodicea are tainted with greed and full of impurities. The Refiner has carefully tended the fires so the gold has been pulled from the flame when the impurities have been burned. The tainted riches of the Laodicians must be sold (purged) and replaced with the fine gold that is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Their raiment has become dirty from dragging in the worldly dredging, which their tainted gold has bought. Their nakedness is visible to all who will be Godly, but they are blinded and cannot see afar off. They have forgotten that the blood of the Lamb has purged them from their old sinfulness. Their *eye salve* will not cure this blinded condition. Their eyes have need of being anointed with the *eye salve* which only Christ provides. Not only do they need the touch of Jesus: they need the clay (See John 9:1-7.) made spittle that will cause them to see all things clearly. Men will only see things clearly when they see their nakedness, which sin has caused in their lives.

Revelation 3:19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Repentance is a fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is given only to those whom He loves. These are the same ones whom Christ is rebuking and chastening. The remainder of the message on that *last visible landmark* (sign) calls for repentance in the lives of the church at Laodicea - not just a paltry repentance; but repentance with zeal! This possibly called for the same degree of zeal they used in obtaining the riches of the world. However, the zeal which is now required must be well tempered with righteousness. Only the love of a father requires such a stringent degree of repentance. "As many as I love . . ." Special repentance is coupled with special love. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Heb. 12:7).

Revelation 3:20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Here is a clear-cut passage that presents Christ as one who is asking entrance. It is also one of the most misrepresented passages we hear being often presented in preaching. We need to apply this in a proper contextual application. It is coupled with the message of Verse 19, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten...” We often hear it explained as if Christ is knocking at the door of the dead sinner seeking his consent in eternal salvation. One who has not already been born of the Spirit of God cannot hear because of being in a dead state of sin. Reason teaches us that only those ears that are spiritually alive can hear this One who is asking entrance. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

Here is a church that is capable of hearing because it is spoken of as once being lively. Its members are admonished to repent. I believe that a man has an option to act only within the scope of his position. The Apostle Paul writes concerning the sins of the children of Israel committed in the wilderness. “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (I Corinthians 10:11). The children of Israel had an option of will. They chose the wrong option and did not enter the land of promise. Jesus is on the outside knocking to one occupying the room inside who is capable of hearing. The church at Loadicea had a choice to make. They could open and again sup with Him; or, they could ignore the knocking and perish from hunger. Not only is the summon, “if any man hear my voice,” but also “if any man hear my voice, and open the door.”

We hear much said about “freedom of the will.” Let us turn to God's word and recognize that freedom in the exercise of the will belongs to God's people. But God requires His people to act with caution. This was the case with Ananias and Saphira when they covertly agreed to lie concerning the value of the gift they were going to present to the apostles. “Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:4). Because they exercised free will in offering only a part of their gift, along with lying deceit, their lives were taken. We find another clear-cut example in the Old Testament. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken” (Jeremiah 6:16, 17). Because of their obstinacy they were placed in captivity, and they suffered because they heard and would not open to the bidding of God. The option is not just hearing - it is also if they open. There is a great danger in wrongly exercising freedom of will. O what a joy it is when we are in the company of our Saviour while eating.

Revelation 3:21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5). Faith is that which giveth the victory. The redeemed of God can be victorious by exercising that measure of faith that is given them in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is Christ that overcame for us. As He was obedient to the work given Him by the Father, so must we be obedient to that which is committed to our trust. Then, as He has sat down in His Father's kingdom, so can we sit with Him in His kingdom here in the earth.

Revelation 3:22. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Section 3 - Introductory Visions (4:1 - 5:14)

“Go up with John ... and see God’s dealings with His elect people over the all-encompassing four periods of time on the earth.”

Adoration of God in heaven (4:1-11)

Revelation 4:1. *After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet [reverberation] talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.*”

The “reverberation” of this trumpet was to get the attention of John and emphasize the greatness of this voice. The next thing emphasized was, “*I will show thee things which must come hereafter.*” There was coming to pass shortly things that would try the faith and patience of the saints (see Revelation 1:1). Remembering this will greatly illuminate the time signified. We will speak more of this later.

Revelation 4:2. *And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.*

The Greek word used here for *spirit* is *pneuma*. The first noticeable thing is that the word *spirit* is not capitalized. This is an indication that this was not the “Holy Spirit.” To rightly divide this passage we must distinguish among three Greek words: (1) *Pneuma*, which is the rational and immortal soul; (2) *Psuche*, which simply means breath. Strong’s Concordance describes it as the animal sentient principal only [capable of feeling or perception; conscious]; (3) *Zoe*, which simply means *life* that is used in the sense of mere vitality, even of plants. The lower animals are endowed with *zoe*, *vitality*. They are not endowed with *pneuma*, or immortality.

The distinguishing point is this: there is a difference between the capabilities of plant and animal life and the capabilities of human life. It seems that John's very life and mortality were involved with this vision of seeing a door opened to view this heavenly scene. Plant life and lower animal life will never be involved in this manner with the omnipotent God.

The word *behold* grasps our attention so that we are able to distinguish between things as they are in heavenly places and as they are in worldly places. Never a potentate sat in such grandeur or before such an audience, whose every wish is to worship Him who sits on the throne. The Greek word for heaven used here is *ouranos* and is used 282 times in 262 verses of the New Testament. It is further interpreted as being the abode of God. It is my opinion that John was allowed to look into the dwelling place of God to see things that show His superiority, or sovereignty. As we continue, we are shown that all creatures of God honor and glorify this one who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Many things shown throughout this book will hinge on this scene in our relationship to God.

Revelation 4:3. *And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*

So here we have the typical Biblical language of the Stone without blemish, and also a Stone of stumbling to the unbeliever. The rainbow round about the throne resembled an emerald (transparent precious stone; green variety of beryl.) One writer says this pleasing green was to show the “reviving and refreshing nature of the new covenant.” John was evidently looking upon one revered by all who were round about the throne. No other individual or object could distract their attention. What could be more refreshing than to look from a state of death to a state of life?

Revelation 4:4. *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of*

gold.

Elders of the Scriptures

Here we see twenty-four seats (translated “thrones”) with twenty-four *elders* sitting thereon. Members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Jewish court, were called elders. Elders were ordained to care for the churches when the Church Kingdom was set up in the earth. In both instances these would be considered “rulers.” Jesus said to His apostles concerning their status in the Church kingdom on earth, “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28). There were twelve tribes of Israel named according to the twelve sons of Jacob. These twenty-four elders seem representative of earthly leaders of God's elect amongst both the Jew and Gentile. There will be a fuller discussion about these “four and twenty elders” later in our consideration of chapter four.

These four and twenty elders were clothed in white raiment. This is the same symbolic clothing as that worn by all “who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:13, 14). These were not of the Jew only, but also of the Gentile.

Revelation 4:5. And out of the throne³ proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

This scene is strange! The lightning and thunderings seem to be reminding us of the giving of the law on Sinai. The word used for voices is G5456, phone [fo-nay] a tone (articulate, bestial or artificial). The sacrifices contained in the Law were artificial when compared with the true Sacrifice provided by God. These voices annunciated plainly as did also the Law. We do not perceive these voices as being embodied, but they seem to be reminding⁵ us of the demands of the Law. He who sits upon the throne has born the judgments of the law upon himself. Now all that is heard is the bestial shadowy groans that could not be satisfied by any other than by the blood of Jesus. He has fulfilled the law to a jot and to a tittle. The thunderings and groans are simply a reminder to those who stand before the throne of His great sacrifice for sin.

“...and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” These seven lamps (seven spirits of God) are never extinguished. God never slumbers nor does He sleep. This was to be the authority of John as he carried this message to the seven churches: “John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne” (Revelation 1:4). The same seven Spirits are mentioned in Revelation 3:1 and Revelation 5:6. Also Peter may have had these in mind when he spoke of things which we were to add to our faith, “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (II Peter 1:5-7). These Spirits should always abound in the churches.

Revelation 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary has this to say about the sea of glass, “It is translucent, 'like unto crystal'. The sea symbolizes God's purity and holiness, and also the victory of the redeemed hosts who have crossed it.” There was a Brazen Sea (brazen vessel) in Solomon's temple, which stood between the altar and the holy place. The priests washed their hands and feet in this sea in preparation for the temple ministry (I

⁵1 Corinthians 10:6 “ Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”

Kings 7:23-26; II Chronicles 4:2-6). They were required to go through this cleansing process before they could stand to minister before God.

Before going any further we should examine some similarities and differences of the symbols used in the books of Exodus, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation.

The seraphim of Isaiah 6:2, 6 give the same meaning as does the root word, *saraph*. As these seraphim were over the throne -- so were the Cherubim of Exodus over the mercy seat where God would commune with the priest.

We know from Exodus 25:19, there were only two Cherubims⁶. Also, Isaiah seems to speak of only two Seraphim. These were angels (messengers) who were attending to the things and people of Israel. When we study Isaiah, chapter 6, we know this pertained to that immediate time and the alignment of Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, against Judah. When Isaiah declared himself as being a man of unclean lips and dwelling among a people of unclean lips, one of these seraphim was sent as a cleansing agent for the lips of Isaiah. Judgment was pronounced on Israel (ten tribes) because of their sinfulness in this matter. Although these angels were "living beings - *zoon*," they do not meet the same standards as the beasts of Ezekiel and the book of Revelations. The book of Ezekiel uses the same living creatures⁷ by way of analogies. It would take a discourse on the book to explain the synonymous usage of these types as showing the sovereign care of God over events and times concerning His people in all ages. Let us examine the types of these four beasts (*zoon*) full of eyes before and behind.

The Four Beasts (Zoon) - Four Distinct Periods of Time

Revelation 4:7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

I realize that I am going beyond any explanation that I have heard concerning these four beasts of Revelations. However, keep in remembrance the actions of the four and twenty elders are always subservient to the actions of the four beasts! We never see these beasts sitting on thrones, as are the four and twenty elders! The *beasts* always moved prior to any action of the twenty-four elders. The events of the age in which men live have always dictated their movements.

Let me say first that **there are four distinct periods of time** in God's dealing with humanity:

- (1) Adam to Moses -- when there was no written word (Law).
- (2) Moses to the advent of Jesus Christ -- when the written Law was predominant in the lives of God's revealed family.
- (3) The brief period when Christ walked on the earth and preached righteousness.
- (4) From the empowerment of the Church by the Holy Spirit until Christ comes for His Bride.

In each period God has had a people on the earth. In dealing with each age, He has gotten glory in some way. Let us also bear in mind that this is a scene set in heaven and shown metaphorically. John sees it through the open door. It is representative of the finality of all things, when time is no more. Let us view the types (figures) presented by this passage Scripturally:

(1) The first beast (Period of time) was like a Lion -- A destructive animal representing death.

⁶Cherub keruwb, ker-oob'; of uncert. der.; a cherub or imaginary figure --cherub, [plural] Cherubims.

⁷The Greek word for *beast* used in Revelation chapter 4 is *zoon*, meaning *living creature*.

Paul states, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come” (Romans 5:14). The law had not yet been given. God dealt with certain individuals, but death ravaged and consumed men. There was no revealed hope found in which men would trust, except in their own strength. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Adam's transgression plunged him, along with all of his posterity, into a state of separation from God. Spiritual death reigned! Though death reigned, there were those who worshiped and served God. After the death of righteous Abel, it was in the third generation before men began to call upon the name of the Lord, “And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD” (Genesis 4:25, 26). The Bible clearly sets forth a lineage that is theologically called the Messianic line. As nearly as scholars can account, there were approximately 1650 years from Creation to the Flood. It is recorded throughout this time that men lived and they died. Not much more is recorded. No spoken record as to organized worship! Throughout this period of time, men lived without any open manifestation of God's promise of future hope. However there are insertions in Scripture such as “And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters” (Gen. 5:22).

Destruction and sin were great upon the earth. Then God looked down to see if there was any righteous, and found none except Noah, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Genesis 6:8). As a result of this condition of reigning death, God sent the flood upon the earth and only Noah and his family were saved alive. Nevertheless, in spite of all this destruction, God received glory and honor throughout that age. In this Messianic line we find Shem, through which Abraham came, then Isaac and Jacob. During this period of time we have instances recorded in Holy Writ concerning animal sacrifices being offered by the descendants of Abraham. Yet, God had not instituted the law of demand for these animal sacrifices and would not do so until Moses was called as a leader of God's people. Yes, in this era (period of time) when death reigned and God only revealed Himself to individuals God received glory, honor, and thanks. We remind you of the scene set in Revelations when all things have been made perfect; “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

(2) The Second Beast (*Period of time*) was like a Calf.

It was through the lineage of Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel that the sacrificial law was given. When God called to Moses and instructed him about the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, there began to be a concerted mode in their actions. From Sinai, God gave specific laws both for government and worship. We will give a brief view of some of these demands to establish the thought in mind.

After God had given instructions for the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, Aaron followed these instructions. Then it was time for a sin offering to be given for the sins of Israel. “And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD” (Leviticus 9:2). As we continue, we find Moses and Aaron obeying the commands of God in the various offerings. Then in Leviticus 9:24, “And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.” God's word records the various animal sacrifices being offered and accepted by God for that particular time. Yet this was only a type of the true Sacrifice that would be Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Yes, also in this era (period of time) when God demanded animal sacrifices as a type of the true sacrifice to come God received glory, honor, and thanks. We again remind you of the scene set in Revelation when all things have been made perfect, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

(3) The third beast (period of time) had the Face of a Man. Jesus Christ - God in the flesh, took upon Himself the fashion of a man.

The writer of Hebrews 10:5-7 said, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God.” Paul states in the Galatian letter, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5). During the time that Jesus walked the earth, He fulfilled the law as no other man could do. Death had reigned! The law had reigned! Now the King of kings and the Lord of lords was in the process of fulfilling all the things that had been prophesied of Him. He came to conquer death and fulfill the righteousness that God demanded. He was born in a manger, worshiped by men and angels, appeared to John the Baptist and declared to be the Lamb of God that taketh away sins. He went about doing good. He was rejected of men and went to the cross where he died for the sins of His people. He was seen by above five hundred as He ascended back into heaven where he took His seat on the Throne to intercede for the present and ever occurring sins of His people. While this period of time was short, it must be considered as the period represented by the third beast having the face of a man. Although He was rejected by men and considered by some to have failed, there was great glory given by those who followed him and gave their lives rather than to deny this King of kings and Lord of lords.

Yes, in this marvelous era (period of time) when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came in the fullness of time to offer Himself a propitiation for the sins of His people: God received glory, honor, and thanks. We again remind you of the scene set in Revelation when all things have been made perfect, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

(4) The fourth beast (period of time) was like a Flying Eagle.

The eagle is a majestic bird that soars far above the earth. His eyes are powerful and he goes where he wishes to go. God's care for Jacob is described as being like the care of the eagle for her young. The eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, and beareth them on her wings. As the eagle cares for and instructs her young, so does the Holy Spirit care for and instruct the children of God. Jesus spoke to His apostles before He went back to the Father, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). Also, by way of identification, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

When Jesus was with His disciples after his resurrection, He told them, “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). It was at the time of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to vitalize the church and endue her with power from on high. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4). Many in our day misunderstand the working of the Holy Ghost. Yet, He is leading the church in all the paths of truth. The Holy Ghost is still stirring up the nest of the church and fluttering over God's children, often picking them up out of the nest and casting them out into the unknown. Yet knowing our frail forms, the Holy Ghost swoops down and takes us upon His wings and saves us from destruction when we fail. Thank God for His wonderful loving care for His own. Throughout each of these ages (periods of time), God has received glory and honor from his people through these beasts and the four and twenty elders. We will learn more as we study verses Revelation 4:8-11 to verify, or deny, this theology.

These four beasts (Revelation 4:8) were full of eyes before and behind. During these four periods (dispensations) God's eyes have watched over the earth and have been in the midst of His people ever

watching over them. He who saw the end from the beginning is full of eyes before and behind. David made this observation, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me” (Psalm 139:7 - 10). “The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:10, 11).

Revelation 4:8. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Isaiah mentions the seraphim hovering above the throne of the Lord in much the same way: “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:1-3). Just as these seraphim declared the holiness of God, so did the four beasts of Revelation 4:8. The six wings were representative of the ability of God to move speedily as He sees fit. He can be swift to recompense; or, He can be longsuffering. However, there is nothing that can hinder Him in the execution of His will. God was worshiped as being holy in times past, present, and future.

Rev 4:9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

Rev 4:10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Here we find another figure of speech in the four and twenty elders. As I stated before, these *four beasts* and the four and twenty elders acted conjunctively and in accord. When the beasts give praise to Him who sits on the throne, the four and twenty elders give praise also. It is my belief that just as the four beasts represented the four periods of time, then these elders represented the prophets, priests and pastors of those periods. God's leaders have always been required to follow the dictates of God in every period of time. Just a few examples: Noah built the Ark as God directed; all of the prophets of the Old Testament preached to God's people things learned from God; Moses led Israel through the wilderness and built the tabernacle according to God's plan; Aaron and the Levites followed God's instructions in preparing the sacrifices and the daily care of the temple; in the fullness of the time Jesus declared, “I come to do thy will O God”; and the Spirit of Truth, which is the Holy Ghost, was manifest. He was given to lead God's people in the paths of truth. The *periods* in which these powers operated all gave a witness of Him who sits upon the throne. These all *“fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”*

Identification of the four and twenty elders:

Four and twenty and *twelve* are expressions used in numbering throughout both the Old and New Testament. Moses and Aaron were chosen out of the Tribes of Israel as leaders of the people. Aaron and his sons were to be the priests, while the sons of Moses were to fill the office of the Levites. “The sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses: and Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever. Now

concerning Moses the man of God, his sons were named of the tribe of Levi. The sons of Moses were, Gershom, and Eliezer” (I Chronicles 23:13-15).

In I Chronicles 24 we are told that David set aside the Levites by *lot* to perform certain things concerning the maintenance of the Temple. Twenty-four of these were divided into a group called a *lot*⁸, “Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God” (I Chronicles 23:28). They were to provide the showbread, and fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes. They were to stand every morning every evening to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even. Their work is described fully in I Chronicles 23:28-32. Musicians were set to praise the Lord. These were divided into twenty-four groups of twelve each: “Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals”: (1 Chronicles 25:1); ...So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight” (1 Chronicles 25:7) The Twenty-four groups are specifically named in I Chronicles 25:9-31. Old Testament writings use the numbers *four and twenty*, and *twelve* in many places throughout the book. These were absolute numbers throughout that era of the temple worship; yet, when we come to the study of the book of Revelation we find them being used as figuratively, or as types. We refer you to these references simply to establish the line of thought concerning the four and twenty elders (designated leaders) who were shown along with the four beasts (periods of time) in the simultaneous praise of Him who sits upon the throne.

Twelve and Twelve:

We will now attempt to show how there were *twelve* from the Old Testament, along with the *twelve* from the New Testament that make up the figurative number *four and twenty*.

Elders under the era of the first beast (Lion):

“Death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them which had not sinned according to the similitude of Adam's transgression (Romans 15:4).” During this period we find God dealing with individuals without any organized form of worship. When Enos was born, men began to call upon the name of the Lord (Numbers 1:44). When wickedness filled the whole earth, God told Noah to build an ark in which eight souls were saved.

God called Abram (of the lineage of Shem) to go into a land that He would show him. Through Abraham and Sarah, Isaac was born. Through Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob was born. From Jacob's loins came the *twelve* sons who would later head the Twelve tribes of Israel. This occurred before the period of the Law. God attributed significance to the number *twelve* during the period of the lion (Adam to Moses) in which death reigned. Even with death reigning, God received glory, praise, and honor from both the period (beast), and leaders (elders).

Elders under the era of the second beast (Calf):

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). It was during this period of the law that directions were given for organized worship of God. Tabernacle worship was ordered with specific instructions as to the mode. This would be according to the pattern shown to Moses on the mount. Every plan for tabernacle and temple worship would be a type carried over into the Church. In these plans we see types and shadows that would be figurative for a later date. It was during this period of temple worship that animal sacrifice would be instituted. The sins of God's people would be rolled forward through their obedience. These sins would be forgiven once for all times by the death of Jesus Christ, the true sacrifice. He would be the propitiation for the body of sin. The blood of animals could never atone for sins. God rolled them forward

⁸That which is assigned by lot as a portion, share, or inheritance. (Zondervan)

until the true atonement should come. But in every act performed during the period that we are calling the *second beast* (Calf), He who sat upon the throne was praised and glorified. Both the period (*second beast*), and its leaders (*four and twenty elders*) who lived during that time gave simultaneous glory and praise.

The number *twelve* is used many other times throughout the Old Testament: there were *twelve* tribes; there were *twelve* princes of Israel; There were *twelve* stones (Exodus 25:7) in the breastplate engraved with the names of the *twelve* tribes of Israel which the high priest wore when going into the Holy of Holies (Exodus 28:9-29); there were *twelve* stones used by Elijah to rebuild the altar in the time of Ahab (I Kings 18:30, 31); there were *twelve* men chosen to spy out the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 1:23); there were *twelve* men chosen to go before the priests into Jordan and take *twelve* stones to be placed on the Canaan side (Head of each 12 tribes.); God commanded Joshua to go back into Jordan and set up *twelve* stones in the midst of the river (Joshua 4:9). The writer believes this to be a hidden type of the foundation of the Church (Ephesians. 2:13-21). We find John baptizing at this same spot when Jesus came demanding baptism of him (John 1:26-31).

To tie these things together the *twelve* of the Old Testament and the *twelve* of the New Testament, we must go study the advent of Jesus.

Elders (apostles) under the period of the third beast (The face of a man):

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took upon Himself the form of a man that He might become the *second Adam*. During His ministry He chose *twelve* Apostles, “And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manners of sickness and all manners of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican, James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 10:1-6).

They were constantly with Jesus as He taught. They learned from Him who commanded them to teach others. All were obedient to His command except Judas, who fell (Acts 1:24-26). Christ delivered to them what is called the *great commission*. “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt. 28:16-20). Paul later informs us that he was chosen to be an apostle as one born out of due time, filling up *the twelve* of the New Testament Church. Today we have received Christ’s teachings which were passed down from them. Even though He was rejected of men and died on a cruel cross, God was glorified above all other things that had occurred in the course of nearly four thousand years. Surely we could say that these *twelve leaders* (elders), and this period (*third beast*); that in unison with the *twelve leaders* (elders) of the other periods, all give praise, glory, and honour to Him who sits upon the throne.

Elders under the era of the fourth beast (like a flying eagle).

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1). “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). The Holy Ghost directed them to gather into churches as many as they found. They were also to ordain *elders* in these churches to guide them into the ways of right doing. “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had

appointed thee”: (Titus 1:5). After Paul and Barnabas had been in Lystra they went about the area strengthening the brethren. “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (Acts 14:23).

After Paul had spent many years among the Gentiles, he returned to Jerusalem to converse with the brethren there, “And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them” (Acts 15:4).

I believe we can see how the *beasts* (periods of time; eras) and the *elders* (leaders; rulers) act in unison to give glory, honor, and praise to God. Believing that God has control of each age (period), it is reasonable to believe that each period is acted upon through His great power. His people who are His and living within that age (period) also fall down and cast down their crowns before the throne in worship. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

How then, you may ask, can we explain the Greek meaning of the word *beast*⁹ as it is used in these passages? Each period (zoon) with which we have dealt through these comments certainly has been alive with the action of God. May God help us to understand His dealings with His people. We are certainly living in the last days. These have been in effect since the ascension of Jesus. The Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) and God's inspired word, the Bible, have been our only means of guidance into the paths of truth. When this glorious period says Amen to the glory of God, the *elders* say *Amen*. The vast numberless throng who are clothed in white and stand before the throne also say *Amen*. “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20, 21).

Adoration of the Lamb of God (5:1-14)

Revelation 5:1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

As we leave chapter four, in which the Sovereign God has been seen and praised by the four beasts and four and twenty elders, we are shown this Sovereign of the entire universe with a book in His right hand. Having seven seals emphasizes the importance of the writings contained therein and on the backside. Seals were important because they show the authority of the writer. The one to whom it is addressed is the only one who can open it. In this case we find the answer to this in Revelation 1:1. “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.*” Having been given this Revelation by God, none could open it but Jesus Christ Himself.

Prelude to This Sealed Document:

We can find the prelude to this sealed document in Daniel 12:4, “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” When Daniel began to inquire about these things, he was told that it would be for “a time, times, and half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished” (Daniel 12:7-b). The power of the holy people (Jews) was scattered when Jerusalem became condemned and destroyed. The Jews were scattered among every kindred, tongue, and nation.

Revelation 5:2 - 4. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open

⁹zoon, dzo'-on; neuter. of a derivative. of zao, dzah'-o; a primary. verb; to live (literally or figuratively)--life (-time), (a-) live (-ly), quick.

the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

The sealing of a document was very important; the opening of that document (book) was equally important. As this search was made (and it seemed to have been made in an instant of time, because it was by the Almighty One who sat upon the throne) none was found who was worthy to open the seals thereon. The tears of anguish shed by John were significant because had none been found there would have been no hope. Mortal man could not do the work of the Almighty. Salvation is not in the hands of man, nor has it ever been. This passage of Scripture is one of the best proofs that can be found. Surely if salvation had been had in man's hands, this search would not have been made. Before the throne was a vast multitude whose garments were spotless. Yet none of these was worthy because no one was the author or recipient of this Book.

Revelation 5:5. "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

Since the book in Daniel 12:4 is sealed (till the time of the end) at the command of this sovereign God, does it not seem that the opening must be by the one to whom the Revelation is given? The appointed time is now. Therefore He who had sealed the book must authorize the unsealing of that same book. The following prophets show this to be the One who was promised. He must come out of the tribe of Judah.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots": (Isaiah 11:1).

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

"And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there" (Isaiah 65:9).

"Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" (Genesis 49:9).

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10).

This is the One who made His appearance on the earth at the time predicted. He fulfilled all the things that were prophesied of Him. He defeated Satan in His death. Now, He must be the One who would reveal things that must shortly come to pass to His saints. These things were sealed in the book that the Lion of the tribe of Judah now prevailed to open and to look thereon.

Revelation 5:6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

The position from which the Lamb came is significant. "...In the midst of the throne and the four beasts [four periods], and in the midst of the elders . . ." This throne that was set in heaven is the very place where Jesus came from. He came from the midst of the four beasts, "But when the fulness of the time [period] was come, God sent forth his Son" (Galatians 4:4). He came from the midst of the elders, "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17). John had seen Him coming and declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God." This Lamb had gone to the cross and had not lifted up his

voice. He shed His blood there for the sins of His people. Now, He appeared as that slain Lamb who had become the Lion of the tribe of Judah to loose the seven seals and show those things that must shortly come to pass. We see the seven Spirits of God that are sent forth into all the earth and care for those who are the faithful. There are seven horns that are mighty to the pushing down of strongholds. There are seven eyes that see all things at all times. These things are attributes only of the Almighty One. We see Him come forth to finish the enlightenment of those who were His.

Revelation 5:7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

He who sat upon the throne would relinquish this book to none other than Him who had sealed it until the end.

Revelation 5:8. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

Now we notice something different in the action of the four beasts and the four and twenty elders. At the appearance of the Lamb and His taking possession of the sealed book, these beasts and elders fall down before the Lamb in worship. Beforehand they had worshiped Him who sat upon the throne. They all had harps with which to praise; and, they all had golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.

We are reminded of the words of Paul in the epistle to the Roman brethren, "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:20-22). As the prayers and sacrifices of God's people were poured out on the altar, their odour ascended as a sweet savour unto the Lord. God has always been aware of the groans of His people.

Revelation 5:9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain,

and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

What a song of praise this was! The theme of redemption has always been sweet music to the ears of those who have felt the washing of their sins forgiven. Also now that we are made priests and kings, we can enter the temple worship as those who lived before the coming of the Son of Man could not do. Now we can rule, and are ruling, upon the earth in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which is the Church of the Living God. These are the last days, and if I might use a word that is unbiblical, this is the blessed millennium.

Not only do these beasts and elders sing praises, but also, we hear a great chorus join in this great and glorious song. All of God's creation assembled in this great scene join in this praise to God.

Revelation 5:11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

Revelation 5:12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Revelation 5:13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

The meaning of creature was taken from the Greek (ktizo, ktid'-zo) and carries the idea of the proprietorship of the manufacturer. This meaning is hard to fit into what appears to be the usage of the word (creature) here. We can give nothing more than the passage which is contained in the epistle of Paul to the Roman brethren, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11). Paul continues in verses 12 & 13, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Paul uses the Greek word used here is adelphos, used in the same sense as 'ab, awb; a primary word such as father in a remote application as the word brother, and us. We are referred to Isaiah 45:23, 24, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." Comparing all of these passages the meaning of this is clear. The usage of creatures pertains to God's elect people.

Revelation 5:14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever.

God's power, wisdom, and sovereignty is extolled in all ages by the elders (leaders) of His people.

Section 4 - The Seven Seal Visions (6:1 - 8:5)

“... reveals how God preserved a remnant of those who followed the Lamb of God to establish His New Testament Church.”

Introduction to the three rhythmic cycles of this vision Beginning with the seven seals, we have a rhythmic continuation of the same vision: seven seals followed by seven trumpets. Seven vials follow this. In the three cycles of this vision, we find a silence or period of waiting, between the opening of the sixth and seventh seal. There is a silence, or period of waiting, between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets. There is a silence, or period of waiting, between the pouring out of the sixth and seventh vials. The purpose of this pause seems to be meant to allow concentration on the events that are taking place. Throughout these cycles, we find an ever-increasing intensity in the events. However, they are the same events progressively described in greater detail.

The First Seal Opened: The white horse and its rider (6:1 - 2)

Revelation 6:1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

Chapter five ended with the scene of all creatures giving honor and praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. “Then the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever.” It is of greatest importance that one is found who is worthy to open the seals and reveal the things contained therein. What more can be done than time taken to give honor and praise to Him that controls the destiny of time, and of the inhabitants of the earth?

Now the opening of the seals is the uppermost thing to be performed. The beast that in thunderous tones spoke to John and said, “Come and see” shows this.

Revelation 6:2. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Some have interpreted this person as Vespasian, whom the Roman emperor Nero sent to put down the revolt in Judea and Jerusalem. While there is some symbolic resemblance that could be connected with the coming of Vespasian, we must see the overall meaning of the symbols represented here. (1) This figure was mounted on a white horse. White is the symbol for purity and righteousness. Vespasian, although a conqueror of much territory, could never be pictured as pure or righteous. He caused the death of many of God's people in the land. (2) This One was given a crown. Vespasian was also given a crown, but, it was after he had returned to Rome¹⁰ upon the death of Nero. He was crowned Emperor of Rome. This was not a direct reward for his excelling in battle. It was what any man would receive upon being elevated to the throne of Emperor of Rome. (3) This One is pictured as having a bow in his hand. This is a symbol of going forth to war. Vespasian also did this, but there is another who is greater in battle than any general who ever fought. This One is Jesus Christ, Who waged war against the wiles of Satan. All the symbols represented here truly fit only Him. (1) He is the essence of Purity. (2) He was crowned with a crown before coming to redeem His people. He laid aside that crown and took it on Himself again upon finishing the work that He was sent to do. (3) He conquered death, hell, and the grave and is set down at the right hand of the Father to make intercession for the saints. In this respect, He is still conquering. So I conclude that this One who is seen in the opening of the first seal is none other than Jesus Christ, our Conqueror.

We may find a last proof of this conclusion in Revelation 19: 11. “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and

¹⁰Titus was called to resume the battle against Judaea and Jerusalem. He nor his father, Vespasian would fit the picture of this Conqueror of Revelation chapters 6, and 19.

make war.” Please continue reading through Revelation 19:16 and you will find these words, “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Scriptures concerning God's use of the Bow:

David gives us some insight to the bow seen in the hand of Him on the white horse, “*The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies*” (Psalm 110:2).

Psalm 7:11-13, “*God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.*”

Additional clarification of the bow's meaning may be found in the following Scripture references.

Isaiah 41:2, “*Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.*”

Lamentations 2:4, “*He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that were pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire.*”

Zechariah 9:12-13, “*Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee; When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.*”

Zechariah 10:3-5, “*Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle. Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together. And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.*”

The Second Seal Opened: The red horse and its rider (6:3 - 4).

Revelation 6:3. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

Revelation 6:4. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

After this seal is opened we see an opposing force. Instead of white we find a rider on a red horse. This is not a figure of peace; it is a figure of evil. Some might portray this to be Satan, but I submit to you that it is a power used by Satan. Revelation 12:3 Shows “great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. Upon examination, you will find this dragon as being Satan. We are to understand this Book's original time placement, with the opening of the Book's Seals in the light of the destruction of Jerusalem which was finished in the year 70 A.D. Power was given to him to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another with the sword. During the battle which ensued between the Romans and Jews, many of those Jews who were fainthearted wanted to desert to the Roman Army. As a result of this there was fighting and killing between various factions among the Jews. This further weakened their ability to be successful. Titus penetrated the first wall of the city. He proceeded to penetrate the second wall but was driven back. On the second attempt, he was successful and the slaughter was terrible. The Jewish historian Josephus states that those who continued to fight against the Romans who occupied places around the wall had to trample the dead bodies in the streets. Many other terrible acts took place as men slew one another. “Thus did the miseries of Jerusalem grow worse and worse every day, and the seditious were still more irritated by the calamities they were under, even while the famine preyed upon them, after it had preyed upon the people.” Again, The opening of the second seal of the Red Horse represents the powers of Rome (Titus and his army) and the great slaughter that accompanied the taking of the city of Jerusalem.

The Third Seal Opened: The black horse and its rider (6:5 - 6)

Revelation 6:5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

Revelation 6:6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Titus had been left by his father, Vespasian to continue the siege on Jerusalem. During this period was the time of harvest. The wheat, grape vineyards, and olives seem to be what is meant here. This was in the spring of 70 A.D. On May 25 the outer wall was breached. The Roman army poured into this part of the city. The besieging army took great care so as not to destroy the harvest, as it was the only means of survival of the troops that fought against the Jews. Food was a most precious necessity for the survival of both the Roman army and the Jews inside the city. The price was set as “a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” Great care would be taken not to destroy the harvest. Also, for a time the Jews depended upon slipping past the guard, bringing food into the city for those who were shut up there. This was cut off, and Josephus wrote that the famine was so terrible that mothers began to kill their children and eat them. They reasoned that it would serve two purposes. (1) The children would be spared the agony of punishment at the hand of the Romans. (2) This also would provide food for those who were striving to hold the city from being taken.

The Fourth Seal Opened: The pale horse and its rider (6:7-8)

Revelation 6:7. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

Revelation 6:8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

This rider on the pale horse, whose name was Death, is representative of the multitude of Jews slaughtered by Rome. The hell which followed him was the suffering of those affected by this period of tribulation. Not only was the city ravaged by famine, there were also those who fought among themselves. Bands of renegades roamed the streets robbing and killing other Jews. The streets were filled with dead bodies until it was impossible for the living to go through the city without stepping upon these dead bodies. Also, the houses were filled with dead bodies that could not be buried. Surely the wrath of the Lamb was being poured out upon this great city of Jews who had just recently crucified the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Jesus had foretold this in the earlier gospels, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:38). He makes the same prediction in Luke 13:35. Other references, some of which I will allude to later, are made throughout the Scriptures. The time of vengeance had come.

The Fifth seal opened: Lament of the martyrs (6:9-11)

Revelation 6:9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

Revelation 6:10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Revelation 6:11. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

During the reign of Nero (54-68 A.D.) there was great persecution throughout the entire Roman Empire of both the Jews and Christians. History records that Nero became completely demented and killed his mother, his wife, his stepbrother, and others who rose against him. He participated in the circus events and always had

to be proclaimed a winner even when he lost. When a great fire destroyed a large part of Rome, the people said that Nero had started it to make room for his palace that was called the “golden house.” This fire was blamed on the Christians of the time and many of them were put to death.

We find also in the predictions made by Jesus that the Jews had brought this upon themselves because of their slaughter of those sent to prophesy against them. “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.” (Matthew 23:33-36). These were those under the Altar who cried out for God's vengeance. Their testimony had been faithful by their retaining their faith in the Almighty God and His Son Jesus Christ. Now vengeance was being called for and meted out by the Almighty God who declares, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord.”

The Sixth Seal Opened: Woes of the powers that reign (6:12-17)

Revelation 6:12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

Revelation 6:13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

We will discuss these verses together because of their closeness in accomplishment.

The sixth seal was opened and “there was a great earthquake, the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.” We must remember this was written in figurative language. Chapter V, page 823 of Josephus’ “War of the Jews” states “...When they saw the fire of the holy house, they exerted their utmost strength, and brake out into groans and outcries again: Perea [mountain near Jerusalem] did also return the echo, as well as the mountains round about [the city], and augmented the force of the entire noise.” Titus had broken through the third wall and was even now in the innermost part of the temple area. Fire had been set to the gates of the temple area. The fire burned so fiercely that the Holy of holies was set on fire. The clamor of the fighting was so great that the whole earth shook under their feet. The smoke was so thick that nothing could be seen. History records that men did not know whether they were fighting the enemy or those in their own ranks. Have you ever looked at the sun or moon through a smoked glass? This seems to be the conditions described here.

“And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.”

Daniel uses the word *stars* as meaning people, (Speaking of the great he Goat) “*And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them*” (Daniel 8:10). The Hebrew word used in this passage for *stars* was. *kowkab*, *ko-kawb*; [this was used] fig. a prince: --star (*[-gazer]*). We have already mentioned the great slaughter that went on throughout the city. Bodies were strewn in every passage until it was impossible to walk without stepping on them.

Let us now examine the usage of the word *star* in the Scriptural meaning, which may be clearer. The same word *kowkab* is used in Joel 2:10, “The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.” The word *kowkab* is used to refer to falling dignitaries in Joel 3:15. Obadiah 1:4.

New Testament language most often translates the word *aster*, *as-tare*’ as the same word *stars* used in the text of Revelation 6:13. The only exceptions are when it refers to the stars overhead such as, “Therefore

sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable” (Hebrews 11:12). This passage uses the word. *astron, as'-tron*; prop. a constellation; put for a single star (nat. or artificial):--star. Jesus' own words give us further evidence that the word *stars* refers to the falling dignitaries, “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches” (Revelation 1:20). It stands without controversy that the *seven stars*, are the *seven angels*, which are the pastors, or elders, (men) of the seven churches of Asia.

The meaning in the text seems clear. Especially when we hear what history says about those who had escaped to this part of the temple. Children, old men, and profane persons, and priests [*stars*] were all slain in the same manner. Their bodies were *strewn* over the ground as the stars are strewn over the sky.

Revelation 6:14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Revelation 6:15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

Revelation 6:16. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

The following passages from the history of Josephus, Book VI, Chapter IX, Section 5 best illustrates the fulfillment of these verses; After the Jews had been ejected from the towers [Josephus states] “. . . by God Himself, and fled immediately to that valley which is under Siloam, where they again recovered themselves out of the dread they were in for a while, and ran violently against that part of the Roman wall which lay on that side; but as their courage was too much depressed to make their attacks with sufficient force, and their power was now broken with fear and affliction, they were repulsed by the guards, and dispersing themselves at distances from each other, went down into the subterranean caverns.” I believe that although they did not realize this to be the wrath of God and the Lamb, they fulfilled the Scripture in a figure. They fled to the caves to cover them from the oppressor whom God had sent for their destruction.

Revelation 6:17. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

The language of these verses is highly figurative. I do not intend to imply that they only have meaning for that particular time. History seems to repeat itself because man never learns from the past. However, this was a day when the wrath of God and of the Lamb was upon the Jewish world. They had acted so wickedly and had falsely proclaimed the meaning of prophecy until their people had come into judgment.

Matthew 24:3 gives an account of Jesus as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, “. . . the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Jesus told them to take heed that no man deceive you. There would be many who would come in His name proclaiming to be Christ. “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:6-14). The fulfillment of may be clearly seen in the trials of the early church, and possibly in the opening of the second and third seals of Revelation 6:3-6. The book of Acts gives us a great testimony of what the disciples suffered. In fact, we are told that, except John, none of the original ones who followed Jesus were still alive at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. There were others, however, who were willing to suffer at the hands of the enemies of Christ rather than deny His name. History can only confirm things that God has already proclaimed. John was given this message of

the Revelation of Jesus Christ before the great catastrophe came upon the Temple of the Jews and the city of Jerusalem. Instead of history proving the Bible to be true - the Bible proves history to be that which God had already proclaimed.

Interlude: Sealing of the servants of God (7:1-8)

Revelation 7:1. And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

There is a pause before the opening of the seventh seal. Such woes are coming upon the scene that there must be help from above. God has provided for the sealing of His people, which seems to show a special care and love. This will be their help and protection from the winds of destruction, which will come with the opening of the seventh seal. Those who are sealed include the total of what is called the *Firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*. This is discussed later. Also included are “*they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*” Revelation 7:13-14). I believe this to be a sum total of those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. However, those mentioned in Revelation 7:7 and Revelation 7:13-14 are figurative.

Revelation 7:2. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

Revelation 7:3. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

How will the *Four Winds* affect the people? We are reminded of the prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the great destruction which was coming upon Israel: “And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them that are in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 49:32). The calamity that is coming is expressed in the destruction of all who are without the protecting arm of God. Jeremiah continues, “And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come” (Jeremiah 49:36). There can be no mistaking that when the four winds are released, these of whom Jeremiah is speaking will be scattered among all nations. Just as these *four winds* were the means of destroying Jerusalem in Jeremiah’s time, they are also the means of destroying all of those who have not received this seal of God’s protecting love.

144,000 sealed (Firstfruits among the Jews)

Revelation 14:1-4 calls these the *firstfruits* unto God and to the Lamb.

Revelation 7:4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Revelation 7:5. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 7:6. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 7:7. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 7:8. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Tribes of Ephraim and Dan not Included in this number.

The passage under consideration mentions twelve tribes; however, the tribes of Ephraim and Dan are not included. Why were they not included in this sealing? Had God cast them away forever? In my mind, this has nothing to do with God's eternal love and election. It pertains to the standing of all the tribes at the present time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Dan and Ephraim had committed great sins and no longer existed as tribes. These sins were the worshiping of Idols that were set up in their land. God had long ago ceased to recognize them as being a part of National Israel. Let us look at these particular sins of Dan and Ephraim.

A proverb against Dan was made by his own father, Jacob: "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward" Genesis (49:17).

The prophet Amos said of Dan: "They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again." (Amos 8:14). These prophecies speak of the demise of Dan and Ephraim and their tribes being rejected by God.

How did Ephraim get involved? (Please read Judges chapters 17 & 18 for the entire account of this involvement.) There was a man named Micah who dwelt in Mount Ephraim. This man had a house of idols, called a house of gods. He had made an ephod and teraphim, and he consecrated one of his sons as priest. "In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6). This man, Micah, evidently had known something about the mode of Temple worship: he used the clothing of a priest. With no leadership, the tribe of Ephraim was already bent toward error in worship: Idols were their gods. There was no fellowship with the God who had given them this land. Yet, in their vanity, they wanted to retain something of that which He had commanded concerning worship.

There was a young Levite from the land of Judah who came to Mount Ephraim. "And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed" (Judges 17:8). Why did this Levite leave Judah? Could it have been that Judah no longer carried out God's instruction to provide support for the livelihood of the priesthood? Levites had no inheritance among the tribes of Israel. Because Judah ceased to follow God's plan for the livelihood of the priesthood, they evidently sought their livelihood elsewhere. This throws a reproach on Judah. She has departed from the true worship of God as given under the Law.

The Demise of the Tribe of Dan

The tribe of Dan sent out men to find new territory in which to settle (Judges 18:11). They persuaded this young Levite to go with them and be their priest. They took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, then journeyed northward to Laish, where they captured and burned the city. They built another city, which they called Dan. Judges 18:30 tells us this place of worship continued until the day of the captivity of the land. Jeremiah had prophesied that God would scatter them into all winds and bring calamity from all sides (Jeremiah 49:32). Ezekiel had also prophesied of them, "A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them" (Ezekiel 5:12). God had also said of these same people, "And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it" (Ezekiel 17:21). In this account we find the tribe of Dan already steeped in idol worship long before Jeroboam set up altars, one in Dan and one in Bethel (1 Kings 12:29). Bethel had originally been allotted to the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:21. 22). The house of Joseph went up against the city and took it. (Judges 1:22-26). It remained on the southern border of Ephraim. Ephraim became steeped in this idol worship along with the Tribe of Dan.

Isaiah had prophesied that, because of the unholy alliance of Ephraim with Rezin, king of Syria, Ephraim would be destroyed, “For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people” (Isaiah 7:8). Not only would Dan be utterly destroyed, but so would Ephraim. At the time of the sealing of the twelve tribes, Dan and Ephraim had been scattered to the four winds and their calamity was complete. At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the existence of *Dan and Ephraim* had long since ceased. Therefore, they could not be counted among the Jews who were the *Firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*. This accounts for their not being numbered with the tribes of Israel in the sealing by the angel of God. Again, we must remember this was a temporal destruction. It had nothing to do with eternity.

We find at the day of Pentecost, “And there were dwelling at Acts 2:5 “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” In Revelation 7:4, the number (144,000) that was sealed included only *devout Jews* who were obedient. This sealing is a figurative term and is representative of the *Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb* (see Revelation 14:3-5).

Interlude: The glorified chosen in Christ (7:9-17)

Revelation 7:9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Revelation 7:10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Scripture is careful to include all of the chosen in Christ in this great number. It includes, not only those Jews who have followed the Lamb, but also Gentiles out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. We see here all of the elect of God giving praise to Christ with whose righteousness they are clothed.

Revelation 7:11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

Revelation 7:12. Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

What a glorious scene we have before us! All the angels who carry out the bidding of God are surrounding this huge multitude. All of these who are sealed have the protection of all the heavenly hosts. “For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (Psalm 91:11).

Revelation 7:13. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

Revelation 7:14. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Again we find Scripture interpreting for us.” Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev 19:7-8). Here we see the Church triumphant! The great tribulation is past! These have come out of that great tribulation and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes. Jesus spoke of the great tribulation which should shortly come to pass in Matthew 24:21 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” He continued to add, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

Revelation 7:15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

Revelation 7:16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Revelation 7:17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Let us examine the state of the Church triumphant. We find that the metaphors used here are further explained in Scripture.

- They serve Him day and night in His temple. “. . . Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father”; (Revelation 1:5, 6). Also He, “. . . hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10). The work of the priesthood was to serve God in the temple. Scripture tells us that we are the temple of God, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (I Corinthians 3:16).
- He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. Paul gives us the answer to this in Romans 8:11. “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”
- They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst"(John 6:35).
- Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev 21:23).
- For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “. . . If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (John 4:10)

Jesus is speaking of those who have come out of the great tribulation. Now, instead of weeping, there is joy. He truly has wiped the tears of suffering from their eyes and they now find joy. “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17). We have been left such a rich heritage. The *tribulation* experienced by those who lived during the first century is past. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). Those who advocate that this tribulation spoken of in Revelation is futuristic should take a second look at the Book.

Review of first cycle of seven seals

Let us review the first cycle briefly: In Revelation chapter six we saw what seemed to be a preview of the destruction of Jerusalem. Here we find the second cycle of the destruction being described. The detail is much more graphic. (1) In Revelation chapter six we were shown the rider on the white horse, which was the Conqueror, Jesus Christ. (2) We were shown the rider on the red horse, which was Titus of Rome, who took the peace away from the occupants of Jerusalem. (3) We were shown the black horse and his rider, which was the famine that accompanied this great tribulation. (4) We were shown the pale horse and his rider whose name was Death, and hell followed him. (5) We were shown under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and the testimony that they held. (6) There was an earthquake, the darkening of the sun,

the moon became as blood [red], and the stars [men] of heaven [high places] fell to the earth. Chapter six ended with these words, “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:17).

In Chapter seven, we witnessed the sealing of those servants of God who were still true. We witnessed the vast multitude that was clothed with white robes and with palms of victory in their hands. The Lamb is feeding these. They drink from the fountains of living water: and God shall wipe away the tears from their eyes.

The Seventh Seal Opened. Preparation for the seven trumpets to sound (8:1-6)

Revelation 8:1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

When this seal was opened, a space of time was given to take in the awesome events that were about to occur. Seven angels are about to sound the *seven trumpets*. They were about to pour out the wrath of God upon the people of Jerusalem and their beloved temple. This would be so terrible that there was complete silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. This time limit is figurative, giving time to take in the supremacy of God.

Revelation 8:2. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

We find another occasion when God commanded *seven trumpets* to be sounded. This was at the battle of Jericho (see Joshua 6:1 - 16). “And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams’ horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets” (Joshua 6:4). As these *seven trumpets* finished their sounding and the people gave a great shout, the walls of Jericho fell down flat, so that the people went into the city. “And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword” (Joshua 6:21). There is a parallel that we see here. The city of Jericho must be destroyed before Israel could enjoy the riches of the Promised Land. Later we will see the necessity for the destruction of Jerusalem, with her law system, before the New Jerusalem (Church kingdom) could be enjoyed (Revelation 3:12). The place of animal sacrifices must be taken out of the way before there could be complete liberty in the Church kingdom. Paul wrote of these things to the church at Colosse, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:14. 15). Jesus had said to those self-righteous Jews, “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43). In 70A.D. Jerusalem was destroyed and the kingdom was given to those who were following Christ. There was no visible temple, but Jesus dwelt with men through the habitation of the Holy Spirit within.

Revelation 8:3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Revelation 8:4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

There are many instances of prayers of saints being sent up as a sweet incense to God. “And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he [Peter] said unto him [Cornelius], Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4). Another instance is found in the case of widows indeed: “Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day” (1 Timothy 5:5). We also see this in the case of Jesus, Who was said to be made after the order of Melchisedec: “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and

supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Hebrews 5:7). Peter wrote of another instance, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (1 Peter 3:12). Throughout Holy Writ we find God being true to His promise of hearing and answering prayer when it is offered up as sweet incense.

Revelation 8:5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Notice that this is the same angel that offered the incense with the prayers of the saints. Now he took the same censer that had burned the incense and filled it with fire. When the sufferings of God's people have sought relief with prayers unto God, the censer has been emptied. God has received those prayers, and now the same instrument is filled with the fire of God's indignation that will be poured out on the guilty. We find this to be the case in Deuteronomy 29:28 when Israel went after other gods and served them, “And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.” The greatest direct retribution toward the evil of the unbelieving Jews is now in process, as recorded in Revelation 8:5. We find the words of Jesus toward this end in the inspired writings of David, “Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous” (Psalm 69:20-28). As this angel fills the censer with fire from the altar, Jerusalem is about to suffer the indignation of the Lord.

Revelation 8:6. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

God always makes preparation for things that are most important with Him.

Section 5 - Woes of the Seven Trumpets (8:7-11:19)

“Discover ... the gathering of the destructive forces God would use to remove Jerusalem and the Temple, the figures of the now-defunct Jewish religion.”

First angel sounds first trumpet: hail and fire (8:7)

Revelation 8:7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

As this angel poured out the fire that had been taken from the altar, and poured it out on Jerusalem, it meant destruction to these who thought they were the chosen of God. They had defiled Jerusalem and the temple in many ways. They had killed Jesus, the Bridegroom. Now Jerusalem was a desolate widow who had become the harlot. “And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matthew 3:10).

Jude spoke of some who had gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. He went on to describe them and called them trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, he called them raging waves of the sea, wandering stars. (Jude 1:12-13).

Ezekiel prophesied against Jerusalem, “A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them” (Ezekiel 5:12-13). Now these who should have been trees of righteousness, and this place, which should have served as pastures of green grass, would be burned without mercy.

Second angel sounds second trumpet: Burning mountain falls into sea (8:8-9)

Revelation 8:8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

Revelation 8:9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

This mountain that had smoked (see Exodus 20:18) with fire now was about to be cast into the sea. The people had once been able to remove themselves from this terror of God. Now this mountain of the law, in which they trusted to save them, would be cast into their midst and prove to be their destruction because of their whoredoms and murderous acts.

The word sea is used to represent people and their wickedness “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Isaiah 57:20.) Isaiah speaks of the abundance of the sea being converted and the forces of the Gentiles coming (Isaiah 60:5). Daniel saw a vision in the night of certain things which pertained to this very time of destruction, “Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts [kingdoms] came up from the sea [from among the people], diverse one from another” (Daniel 7:2, 3). Zechariah spoke of the kingdom of Christ in the earth, “And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea [former generations], and half of them toward the hinder sea [generations to

come]: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zechariah 14:8, 9). The *living waters* shall give life and cover the sins of God's people in times past, present, and future.

When the Bible speaks of seas, it often speaks of people. Verse eight tells us “and the third part of the sea became blood.” Verse nine continues with “And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.”

There were three parts of the temple: the outer area where the people gathered, the central section where the animals were sacrificed, and the inner part which was the Holy of Holies. When the Roman army had fought and gained ground to the innermost part, this was the point to which the people inside had retreated. Here utter destruction took place and the people in this third part died. Not only did the people die, but also the Holy of Holies was burned with fire. By this destruction, those who had made their livelihood supplying the costly furnishings of the temple (much of this being brought in by ships) no longer had any occupation as far as this place was concerned. (This explanation of the “Great Whore” will be explained later in greater detail. See Revelation 17:1, 15, 16, 19:2.) “And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate” (Revelation 18:19).

Third angel sounds third trumpet: Blazing star falls into sea (8:10-11)

Revelation 8:10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

Revelation 8:11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood [bitter]; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

The water inside Jerusalem became so polluted that it was unfit to drink. This contributed to the *calamity* of those inside. There was an aqueduct that, along with cisterns, supplied the water to the city. When this became polluted, there was no way of quenching their thirst. All of this contributed to the great distress of Jerusalem. It is easy to see that God, who was bringing retribution on the Jews because of their wicked condition and acts, was in control of this great catastrophe.

Fourth angel sounds fourth trumpet. Darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (8:12)

Revelation 8:12. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

Whether these are spiritual terms or literally the heavenly bodies, it is easy to see that darkness prevails in the absence of light. When the means of light is cut off, darkness is present. The religious condition of these people was such that God closed their spiritual eyes. His word declared, “For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27). God's people closing their eyes to the warnings of coming disaster bring about apostasy. Afterward, God simply leaves them in this condition. The length of time their eyes remain closed is His option.

Interlude: Warning of woes yet to come (8:13)

Revelation 8:13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Here is warning of the terrible things that are still to come upon this city. The description which has already been given of this great destruction is very graphic, but nothing to be compared to that which is to come as the other three angels sound. It seems there was yet time for repentance of their evil deeds and turning to God for deliverance. However, we will find that they, “Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” (Revelation 9:21). Revelation, as well as the prophets, extends the meaning of fornication to include political and religious unfaithfulness (Revelation 14:8; 17:2,4; 18:3; 19:2).

Fifth Angel sounds fifth trumpet. The bottomless pit opened (9:1-12)

Revelation 9:1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

We observe that this *star* fell from heaven [*a heavenly place*]. The temple was no longer being used as an acceptable place for the worship of God. Satan, whose purpose had been served by these self-righteous Jews, was given full rein to open the bottomless pit. The fullness of the time had come and they had rejected the Savior, who was the Bridegroom. Now coming into effect the words of Jesus when He said, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43). The temple, in which they still took much pride, was being destroyed. The bottomless pit was their wickedness. Jesus had said to them, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matthew 21:13). They had chosen to loose the powers of Satan by serving the lusts of the flesh. Now he would turn to their destruction.

Revelation 9:2. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

There is no ending of the depth to which suffering descends because of sin. When God's people open the pits of hell, their vision is dimmed and their spiritual minds are darkened by reason of the fires of hell. We see the suffering of Jesus on the cross as an example of this. Our sins were laid upon Him. The suffering was of such great depth that He who had done no sin cried out in agony, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The great furnace is a symbol of the burning agony that consumed the sins of His people. We see much the same circumstances there at the day of the crucifixion as we see now described.

Revelation 9:3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

We have already mentioned that the power of Satan is being used to carry out the things that God has determined upon Jerusalem. These locusts, which came out of the smoke, are none other than the armies of Titus that had come to destroy Jerusalem. We find locusts mentioned seventeen times in Scripture using the plural meaning, and eleven times using the singular meaning. Usually, it refers to destruction by the locust's devouring. The word *scorpion* is used only twice and means piercing. The devastation that was to come would completely devour the temple, piercing to the darkest corner and depth. Nothing would be left to testify of the innumerable animal sacrifices. The temple worship consisting of animal sacrifices would no longer be used in the kingdom of God in the earth.

Revelation 9:4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

This refers to the seal mentioned in Revelation 7:4, “and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” These were among those of whom Jesus was speaking when He told the apostles “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5, 6). These who were to be garnered

out of the Jews would be the firstfruits¹¹ to God and to the Lamb. Those who rejected Jesus were those “which have not the seal of God in their foreheads” (Revelation 9:14). Destruction was sure to them.

Revelation 9:5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

Vespasian, the father of Titus and a great general of the Roman army, had been called from Alexandria to put down the revolt of the Jews. When he received word that Nero was dead, he withdrew his attack on Jerusalem until “the political waters of Rome were tested.” He returned to Rome and was elevated to the office of Emperor. Titus was left to continue the war against the Jews. Less than six months passed from the time Titus gathered the legions (troops) in Caesarea to the siege at Jerusalem. During this time the seditious groups of Jews led by *Eleazar, John, and Simon* persecuted greatly those who were in Jerusalem. Could this have been the five months “that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months?”

During this time many of those who were gathered at Jerusalem would have deserted to the Romans, had it not been for the seditious groups mentioned above. They were held inside the city by the threat of death. Their persecution, according to Josephus, was of the worst kind. These who would have deserted were treated terribly by their own blood relatives.

Revelation 9:6. “And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”

Revelation 9:7. “And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

Revelation 9:8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

Revelation 9:9. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

Revelation 9:10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

Revelation 9:11. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Again the Bible uses symbolic language. This is the destroyer and his army. The fierceness of this Roman army is such that there is no withstanding their force or destruction. There were many who were shut up in the temple area who would have gladly chosen death if it were possible. Yet they must suffer this period that was set by the Almighty. I have discussed earlier some terrible suffering which these people underwent because of famine, death, and other pestilences which came upon them during this time. The Jews had chosen to unlock the fiery darts of Satan in exchange for what they thought was their freedom under the Law of Moses and the Roman government. Now the *king of the bottomless pit* leads these same legions to destroy them. His name is *the destroyer - Satan*. This terrible destroyer is determined to afflict them as none had ever been afflicted before, neither shall be thereafter. This is the great holocaust that many still put in the future. There are so

¹¹Let us remember this is a symbolic number, and is used to show a type of completeness: all that God had chosen out of each tribe. We will find this same number shown as being a symbol of their completeness in the church kingdom, (Revelation 14:1) And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion (See Hebrews 12:22-24), and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. (14:4)...These were redeemed from among men, *being the firstfruits* unto God and to the Lamb.

many prophecies that we dare not ignore them lest we be found in the same blind condition that these Jews were in.

Revelation 9:12. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

This woe concerns the vast numbers of those who marched against Jerusalem.

Sixth angel sounds sixth trumpet. Horsemen from the Euphrates (9:13-21)

Revelation 9:13. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

Revelation 9:14. Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

Revelation 9:15. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

Who are these *four angels*? The word angel is interpreted in the Greek as being a messenger. Here there were four messengers loosed to carry on the assault against Jerusalem. Their work was to slay [destroy] the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

This corresponds with the four different groups Titus assembled at Caesarea to begin the march on Jerusalem:

- 1) Those who came out of Egypt with Titus. This was the core of the army of Titus that he would gather to go into Caesarea. They had formerly fought under Titus' father when he laid Judea waste. Along with these were those who had been formerly defeated along with Cestius, ruler of Syria¹² under Rome. This occurred in 66AD. These were eager to avenge themselves against the Jews because of the defeat they had formerly suffered from the Jews. There are others whom Josephus calls *auxiliaries that come from the kings*.
- 2) Those who came to the assistance of Titus from Syria.
- 3) When Vespasian was declared to be emperor, Mucianus had been sent to Rome with four legions to keep peace there. These also returned to fight with Titus.
- 4) Three thousand drawn from those that guarded the *river Euphrates*

Again, the time element mentioned in Revelation 9:15, (an hour, a day, a month, and a year) is simply a figure of speech. I find no matching significance elsewhere.

Revelation 9:16. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand and I heard the number of them. (Note: [200,000,000])

This simply means that these legions assembled at Caesarea waiting to march on Jerusalem were very many.

Revelation 9:17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

The figurative expressions used are again simply to show the fierceness and determination of this great army. Quoting from Barclay's, *The Revelation of John*, "They seem to be armored in flame, for their breastplates are fiery red like the glow of a blazing furnace, smoky blue like the smoke rising from a fire, and sulphurous yellow like the brimstone from the pit of hell."

¹²Josephus on the "War of the Jews", chapter XX, page 703. Nero was emperor of Rome from 54AD - 68AD. This would have been in the year 66AD.

Revelation 9:18. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

(See Ezekiel 5:12 for a parallel scripture) The fire, smoke, and the brimstone took the lives of all who resisted the great surge of this terrible army that marched on Jerusalem.

Revelation 9:19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

The work that was assigned this army was carried out in the most terrible way. There were famine, drought, sickness, and killing.

Revelation 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.

Their interest was in the things of the temple. Yet temple worship was meaningless in the sense of true worship of God. Also, they desired to continue in their role of worshiping self rather than God. They had become entwined in the worship of idols made of material things - gods that neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. The time of the fullness of their iniquity had arrived when God would no longer bear with them.

Revelation 9:21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

In spite of all of this malaise, those who still were left were not capable of repentance. God had absolutely removed all mercy and they were not able to see that only further destruction awaited them.

Interlude: John commanded to eat the little book (10:1-11)

Chapter nine gave an account of the fifth angel sounding. As this angel sounded a star fell from heaven having the key to the bottomless pit. As this pit was opened, there ascended terrible catastrophes that caused men to seek death, wanting to die, yet *death shall flee from them*.

When the sixth angel sounded, the armies that had guarded the boundary of the Euphrates River were loosed. This great army marched against Jerusalem and by these three groups of men was a third part of men killed.

The seventh angel is withheld from sounding until Jerusalem had received to the fullest for her sins.

Revelation 10:1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

The rainbow describes the glory of God. This angel has come from the very presence of God and of Christ. The reflection of God covers the very person of this angel. He is clothed with a cloud; his face is as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. Some think this is Christ Himself. However, we read in verses five and six that this angel stood upon the sea and earth. Scripture teaches that Christ did a finished work before ascending into heaven. According to the teaching of Paul in I Thessalonians 4:17, His elect shall meet him in the air. This angel lifted up his hand and swore by Him who created heaven and earth, and all things therein. We know that God does swear by Himself when there is none other. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself" (Hebrews 6:13). Also Isaiah said, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63:9).

Revelation 10:2. And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

Revelation 10:3. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

He has in his hand “a little book open.” We are not told the identity of this “little book.” Some think it to be the same book that was sealed. Regardless of the identity of the book, we know it is revealed only as Divine sentence commands. His decree that follows is with a loud voice as when a lion roars and shows the awful intentions of God.

Revelation 10:3. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

Revelation 10:4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

Although God shows John all of which is to follow, He commands him that these should not be revealed until God’s time comes to reveal them.

Revelation 10:5. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

Revelation 10:6. and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

The last phrase of this may present a problem to us if we use it in the sense of the end time of the earth. We must keep it in the context of the destruction of Jerusalem that will end the old Temple worship and replace it with the Church Kingdom.

We learned in Revelation 9:21 that “Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.” Now time has run out for them and sudden destruction is about to come upon them. This is self evident by the words of Jesus in the following passages: “And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:2), “And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Mark 13:2), “And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:44), “As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Luke 21:6).

As we have said before, the only way to negate this mode of worship was to destroy the temple. He said to the Samaritan woman, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him” (John 4:23). The places of worship, both in Samaria and Jerusalem, would be destroyed. Worship of God will not be confined to particular places. Time had continued for approximately forty years since that warning. Now it was too late for further forbearance by the Almighty. This time given for repentance is shown by the order in which the gospel was to be preached. His own apostles, believing that Jesus was going to restore the kingdom of Israel to its former glory, asked if this were the time. Jesus told them this was not theirs to know, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Everywhere they were sent, the preaching of the gospel was to the Jew first.

Revelation 10:7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

This reveals that it is only when the seventh angel begins to sound that the mystery of God should be finished “as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” The time of God’s forbearance has been long. Nothing further shall be revealed until the seventh angel begins to sound. Then God will finish this work of destruction on Jerusalem and the temple.

Revelation 10:8. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

Revelation 10:9. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

Revelation 10:10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

There is a great significance to the command to “go and take the book.” We will especially find this manifest in verse eleven. The things contained in the little book were sweet to the taste because it was the word of God. The Psalmist David speaks of these, “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:9-11.)

When John had digested the things written in the book of the great destruction, they became bitter to him. God’s ministers are often commanded to preach things which, when digested, makes them bitter to the heart and mind.

Revelation 10:11. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

When those things contained in the book were digested, they became bitter because they were the judgments of God against Jerusalem. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, had to speak these same things to Israel of old, “Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?” (Jeremiah 2:19-21). We find this bitterness has been the lot of many of God’s men in the past.

Amos prophesied concerning Israel, “And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day” (Amos 8:10). Now John must go and prophesy to people whom he loved. This burden of prophecy was bitter to John.

I mentioned earlier that John was commanded to go and take the little book out of the hand of the angel. The significance is that there must be willingness on the part of John because this is the word of God. Though it is sweet to be endowed with God’s word, it can be bitter to have to preach words of warning to God’s people. Both sweetness and bitterness are bound together. Therefore John must go and take the book as a willing

servant. Every man who is called of God must be willing in the things commanded him by God. Things are sweet to the taste because it is the word of God. Yet, these same things are bitter to preach, because they speak of destruction from God if His people are not willing to repent and turn from their wicked ways.

Interlude: The two witnesses (11:1-14)

Revelation 11:1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

This is speaking of the New Jerusalem, “which is the mother of us all.” This Rod¹³ was used to detect the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship. This Rod, Scepter or Staff signifying royalty would determine all those who should be housed in this New Jerusalem.

Revelation 11:2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

These forty and two months correspond to the time taken for the destruction of Jerusalem. I believe there is a deeper meaning in the former part of this passage. In the old temple there was a space in which the Gentiles could congregate. Under the New Covenant Church there must also be a place for the Gentiles. This will be explained with more clarity as we examine the following verse.

Two witnesses - Old Covenant and New Covenant:

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

Note: [Three and one-half years, the length of the war against Jerusalem by the Romans]

“Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:24-26).

God made a Covenant with Abraham concerning natural Israel. God also made a New Covenant concerning spiritual, or heavenly Jerusalem. Now, because of the sinful condition of God’s people, there was no live witnessing. These two witnesses lay dead (ineffective) in the street, but were not allowed to be put in the grave. After the devastation made by the Roman armies (three and one-half years of tribulation such as were never before nor will ever be again) these two witnesses arose as the Church of Jesus Christ in the earth. The old and the new combined (both Jew and Gentile), testified again concerning God’s care for His elect.

Revelation 11:4. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

By these two covenants the oil is emptied into the Candlesticks. The prophet Zechariah 4:1- 9, gives a similar account in his vision. He was shown a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it. Two olive trees stood, one on the right side of the bowl and one on the left side of the bowl. The angel explained to him “These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” [anointed - ben, bane; a son (as a builder of the family name), +steward, + stranger, etc.] This seems to include both those under the Old Covenant (steward) + those under the New Covenant (Stranger). These two Olive trees are one and the same.

¹³rhabdos, hrab'-dos; a stick or wand (as a cudgel, a cane or a baton of royalty)--rod, sceptre, staff.

Zechariah is speaking of Christ and the New Covenant “*behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH*” (Zechariah 3:8-b).

Revelation 11:5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

A curse of death was put upon any who would attempt to hurt the cause of these two Covenants from God. Jerusalem experienced this because of their disobedience and evil ways before God. They had despised God's Covenants.

Revelation 11:6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Power given unto men under both covenants:

Under the Old Covenant we learn of these things. “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months” (James 5:17). Moses, at God's bidding, caused the plagues to come upon Egypt.

Under the New Covenant: The apostles were given power to work all kinds of miracles that showed the power of God.

Prior to, and during, the destruction of Jerusalem spiritual death reigned regarding the covenants. They had crucified Jesus and evil men reigned over the temple worship. God had taken away the benefits of the Old Covenant from these evil Jews. The beast had ascended out of the bottomless pit to strive to overcome the power of both covenants. (See next verse.)

Revelation 11:7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

The influence of these two witnesses was dead to the minds and hearts of these wicked Jews. They denied the God of the whole earth. They not only denied the power of the law covenant, they also denied that Jesus was the Anointed One who should come in fulfillment of the law. He was delivered to the Romans who nailed Him to a cruel cross where He died for the sins of His people. By this we can see the death of these two witnesses. The flow of the oil that came from the two olive trees was stopped during this terrible time. Jesus told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. At the day of Pentecost this flow was resumed in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 11:8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

We are aware that our Lord was crucified just outside of Jerusalem. It was Jerusalem, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. Jerusalem was, as Lot in Sodom, in spiritual enslavement. Jerusalem, as Israel in Egypt, was in physical enslavement to Rome. The whole world (flesh) was glad when this occurred. This is not particularly speaking of the crucifixion of Jesus. It is referring to the deadness of the Jews toward either the Old or the New Covenants

Revelation 11:9. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

Those who remembered God’s covenant with Abraham still clung to these promises though they had lost the spiritual meaning of it. They denied Christ as their Messiah. They would not bury these promises out of their sight even though they reaped no benefits from them.

Revelation 11:10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

The prophecies of both Old and New Covenants tormented these people in their lusts because they condemned their sinful actions. When the righteous flourish Satan’s element is made to fear. When the righteous are cast down Satan’s element is made to rejoice. These false prophets who now reigned over the kings of the earth made merry because of the seeming lack of power retained by these two witnesses.

Revelation 11:11. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

As we search the Scriptures of the gospels we find the apostles were without hope. They had forgotten that Jesus had promised new life through His resurrection. But as hope was made alive again for them, great fear fell upon all that saw this new surge of life.

Revelation 11:12. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

Both Witnesses or Covenants had their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Revelation 11:13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

God showed His great power in this raising of the Covenant’s (Old fulfilled in the New) by causing the earth to reel and to quake. “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many” (Matthew 27:51-53).

Revelation 11:14. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

On the heels of that which has already been described, there arises a beast out of the sea. Can this be what is spoken of as the third woe? The powers of this beast are great and the devastations caused by it give rise to martyrdom to those who stand against the powers that be and still declare the majesty and grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Seventh angel sounds seventh trumpet. God’s impending assumption of power. (11:15-19)

Revelation 11:15. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

This angel announced the complete disarray of animal sacrifices and temple worship under the law. He also announced the complete victory of the Lamb. Christ reigns forever, and ever. His kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed. The Church is alive and the witness is very active in the world.

Revelation 11:16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God,

Revelation 11:17. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

In these passages we find the rejoicing of the four and twenty elders [the Church in all ages]. The Church declares the great attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence of God who reigns over the whole universe.

Revelation 11:18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

This was prophesied against the leaders of Israel, “Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:1-2).

Jeremiah also describes the latter part of this verse by carrying its meaning into the total reign of Christ in the earth. His Church is now triumphant because He has interceded for His people who were given Him in the Covenant of Grace. “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jeremiah 23:3).

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

This portrayal is of the temple at Jerusalem being destroyed. They hide the Holy of holies from the view of the people. This temple of God was seen in heaven. They clearly see the ark of His testament and they portray His grace in His testament. The lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and great hail shows power which man cannot bridle. They are greater far than the legions of Rome, which had gotten the victory over the earthly temple.

The two witnesses (Old Covenants and New Covenant) are alive in the Church. Both witness to the coming of our Savior and His triumph over death, hell, and the grave.

Section 6 - The Dragon’s Kingdom and the Church Triumphant (12:1-13:18)

“... Observe the means Satan used to attempt to defeat Christ’s kingdom. Then rejoice as you see the triumph of the Church of Jesus Christ in the face of such strong persecution.”

The Wife of God (12:1-6)

Revelation 12:1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

The interpretation of this passage could be thought to pertain to Mary. She was indeed the earthly mother of the Christ child. Nevertheless, we need to look further into the plan of God and find the figurative language and its meaning. God has spoken in other places concerning this woman.

This woman being clothed with the sun resembles the one referred to by the Psalmist as he speaks of God.” Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment” (Psalm 104:2). His Spouse then, must take on this image by association. “Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun?” (Song of Solomon 6:10).

The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel, which sprang from the sons of Jacob. It was from this human lineage that Jesus sprang. “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda” (Hebrews 7:14).

Paul identifies this woman in “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). Isaiah identifies Israel as the wife of God. “For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called” (Isaiah 54:5). We find more about this woman, in Hosea, “And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD” (Hosea 2:19, 20).

In His human lineage, Jesus came from Jewish heritage. He, being the promised seed of Abraham, must come from this lineage. This woman then who was clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars must be the chosen Israel, the wife of God (Isaiah 54:8), under the law.

Revelation 12:2. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Paul gives us some insight into this travailing in the letter to the Church at Rome. “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:19-22). Much was the suffering among God’s people under the law. This woman, who was the wife spoken of in Revelation 12:1 and Isaiah 54:5, suffered in the pangs of birth. Where life comes forth from the womb, there is travailing by the mother. God’s people had suffered long while waiting for this great work of God in manifesting the Church. In the fullness of the time Christ came to finish the work of the Father.

Revelation 12:3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

In the New Testament Revelation describes the dragon as a great, red monster with seven heads and ten horns. This dragon is clearly identified as Satan (the Devil) and is called the deceiver and the accuser of the saints. Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." As in the Old Testament texts, see (Job 7:12). The dragon is placed under guard (Revelation 20:1-3); and later released for final destruction (Revelation 20:7-10; see Isaiah 27:1).

The Dragon is described as "having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." This description shows the power of the "great red dragon." This seems to be pointing to Rome, which is said to be located upon seven hills, or mountains. "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth" (Revelation 17:9). (We will make a more thorough study of this passage in Revelation, Chapter 17).

Revelation 12:4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

These Jews, to whom the Roman Government gave great power, were drawn (enticed) by Satan to do whatever he desired. Herod, of course, was king of Judaea under Roman authority when Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1), received the Wise Men and sent them to the Christ child. He gave them orders to return to him and let him know where he could find the newly born "King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2-8). He gave the orders to kill the babies of Bethlehem two years old and under. By doing this He hoped to kill the One whom he saw as a successor to his throne (Matthew 2:16). Herod was carrying out the will of Satan who stood ready to destroy the Christ child when He was born.

Revelation 12:5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

We find here a forecast of the sacrifice of Jesus. The account is very brief, but it gives us the effect of His death, burial, and resurrection. God accepted the propitiation of Himself and Jesus sits now at the right hand of the throne of God.

Revelation 12:6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

As we search for the meaning of Revelation 12:6, we will find that following the destruction of Jerusalem, the woman (Jews) has been lost in the wilderness of the peoples of the world. Hosea tells us that God has betrothed her to him in righteousness and judgment and lovingkindness and in mercies. He also states that she shall know (intimate knowledge) the Lord. This is the mystery of which the apostle Paul informs us in the Roman letter, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Romans 11:25-28).

Michael's Victory over the Dragon (12:7-9)

Revelation 12:7. And there was war in heaven (heavenly places): Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

Revelation 12:8. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven [heavenly places].

Revelation 12:9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Satan meets wherever God's people meet. In Job 1:7, God asked Satan where he had been. The reply was "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." However, Satan is not allowed to prevail in the congregation of the righteous. He is cast again into the earth, his only dominion of deceit.

Song of Woe and Rejoicing (12:10-12)

Revelation 12:10. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Satan was not allowed to prevail over Michael when in the dispute over the body of Moses (Jude 1:9). The place of Moses' burial has never been made known to men. (See Deuteronomy 34:5, 6)

The messenger of God was delayed from coming to Daniel but it was not allowed to be a permanent thing. Michael prevailed and the victory was God's.

The blood of Jesus, which was shed on Calvary, is sufficient to bring salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ. Satan was cast down and Christ prevailed.

Revelation 12:11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

All of the persecuted saints of God have overcome Satan, that great red dragon, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. All of the works of human flesh, all the striving which man can do cannot overcome Satan. The blood of Jesus Christ can only overcome him. Their testimony simply attested to what Jesus had done. In this testimony, they were willing to lay down their lives.

Revelation 12:12. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

The very heavens do rejoice because of this great work of Jesus Christ who died for the sins of His people. Even as we live here on the earth, the wrath of Satan plagues us. However, his time is limited to this earth. He will not hinder our entering into heaven and immortal glory.

Satan Persecutes the Woman and her Seed (12:13-17)

Revelation 12:13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

Again we must rightly divide this passage. The woman here represents the Church of Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile. She is now the raised witness (two in one) spoken of in Revelations, chapter 11. She witnesses to the power of God, through Christ Jesus her beloved Husband. Although Satan persecutes her, his anger is powerless in the eternal sense. He knows that the time is short in which to vent his wrath. In the end he shall be cast into the pit that burns with fire and brimstone.

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

The Holy Spirit bears her upon His wings into a safe place. He nourishes her and cherishes her as the lovely bride for the designated time that only God knows. She is in the world, yet she is not of the world. She is a pilgrim and a stranger who look for a city, which hath foundations.

Revelation 12:15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

Satan’s power is limited. He cannot rise to the heights of the Holy Spirit. The water spewed out of his mouth can never satisfy the Church as can the Water of Life. Satan may tug at the skirts of the Church, but he can never swallow her up.

Revelation 12:16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

When Herod had all the young children of Judaea killed, Joseph and Mary took the young child Jesus into Egypt. Egypt swallowed up the flood of Herod’s venom. God has used nations who knew not God in delivering his people. The lustful actions of those in the world are hateful to the Bride. The apostle Paul stated to the Roman Church, “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Romans 7:6).

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

Jesus gave us a great consolation concerning the wrath of the dragon (Satan). The commandment of God is love. “These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:17-19). We have the testimony of Jesus Christ, our Lord. He died that we might live. He became sin for us that Satan might not condemn us. Let us live so that we might rejoice as we keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

A Beast Rises out of the Sea (13:1-4)

Revelation 13:1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Three other passages speak of this beast, having seven heads and ten horns, (Revelation 12:3) (Revelation 13:1) and (Revelation 17:3). These all signify the beast as the Roman Empire at one period or another. At the time of this vision, the Roman Empire was the incarnation of evil and satanic power.

We find recorded in Revelation 17:3-5 “So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” We know the beast is speaking of Rome, or the Roman Empire. But the woman who sat upon the beast must be Jerusalem which at this time was serving the whims of the Roman Empire from whence she received her power. We will learn more of this woman in later lessons that will serve to identify this one who sits upon this scarlet beast. In Revelation 18:24 we find a passage to further helps us identify this woman, “And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon

the earth.” Matthew gives us the words of Jesus, “Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation” (Matthew 23:34-36). Let us lay side by side all these passages which describe the woman and the scarlet beast upon which she rides, We can conclude that the harlot, who has shed all the righteous blood upon the earth (See Revelation 18:24), is none other than Jerusalem.

These seven heads are the seven hills upon which Rome sits. The ten horns with ten crowns stand for the emperors of Rome while Caesar worship was prevalent. These began with Tiberius, who ruled from A.D. 14-37; Caligula, A.D. 37-41; Claudius, A.D. 41-54; Nero, A.D. 55-68; Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, A.D.68-69; Vespasian, A.D. 69-79; Titus, A.D.79-81; and Domitian, A.D. 81-96.

Revelation 13:2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”

In Daniel 7:3-7 we find a vision of four great beasts who come out of the sea. These beasts are symbolic of the great empires that have held world power. The first three of the empires were Babylon (Lion with an eagle’s wings), Medo-Persian (like a Bear), and Greece (Leopard with four wings). These powers were so savage and cruel and inhuman that they could be typified and symbolized with nothing but beastly and bestial figures. In John’s vision these beasts were combined. This beast in Revelation 13:2 is like a *leopard with bear’s feet and a lion’s mouth*. This beast is Rome, the fourth world empire. The Roman Empire has incorporated all the terrors of Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian empires that had gone before. The symbols of these three are combined in the Roman Empire. All of the evil that the Roman Empire spewed from its mouth was derived from the dragon (Satan).

Revelation 13:3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

Domitian, who was the last of the evil emperors, was assassinated in A.D.96. Thus the head was wounded. The reign of “good emperors” that followed lasted for 84 years (A.D.96 to A.D.180). Marcus Aurelius was the last of these good emperors, dying in the year A.D.180. Magoffin and Duncalf’s history quotes thus: “The people of the empire had little chance to recover from these troubles, for the rule of their ‘good emperors’ was ended.”

Following the reign of Marcus Aurelius the army again began to elect emperors. These Roman emperors again brought pagan worship into being. Along with this evil they brought great prosperity to the ancient world. People wondered at this prosperity and began to flock to it. Thus the head that was wounded is healed (Revelation 13:3-b). During the time of the so-called good emperors, pagan worship came to a halt. As soon as this rule was ended, pagan worship entered again into the picture.

Revelation 13:4. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

“The peoples of the empire worshipped the *Pax Romana* [Roman Peace] as a goddess.” (Excerpts from Magoffin and Duncalf, pp-358, 369) “Everywhere, people showed their appreciation by worshiping the emperors and the *Pax Romana*, by desiring Roman citizenship, and by imitating Roman ways.” Thus the deadly wound was healed and the entire world wondered after the beast. This worshiping of emperors and the *Pax Romana* was of Satan. In worshiping the emperors and the *Pax Romana*, they worshiped Satan.

The Beast from the Sea Exercises Authority (13:5-10)

Revelation 13:5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

God limited this time for speaking of blasphemies. They could be spoken only during the time that God allowed.

Revelation 13:6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Revelation 13:7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

This is spoken in a figure as lasting only for a season. Yet, it is a reality that power is given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations who worship him. When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, “And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it, if thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine” (Luke 4:6, 7). Having this power, Satan exercised it by blaspheming God, His Name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heavenly places. For three centuries the Christians had to endure persecution, not because they had a different religion, but because they would not worship as the Romans wished (Ancient and Medieval History by Magoffin and Duncalf). They did not resist authority because Jesus had said, *Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s*, but they did not cooperate with emperors or with their fellow-citizens. They were insulted and mobbed. They were thrown into prison, and torn to pieces by wild animals before jeering crowds in amphitheatres. But they faced martyrdom with such confidence that many began to think that their religion must be true. The number of Christians steadily increased because of the manner in which they bore up under persecution. ‘The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church,’ one Christian writer remarked. Furthermore, the Christians had learned to answer the questions of philosophers and other educated people.

“As a result when Diocletian (A.D.284-A.D.305) became emperor, probably a tenth of the people in the empire were Christians. When he commanded that all who refused to worship him should be put to death, the Christians suffered the worst persecution they had ever known.”

Nevertheless, the Christians were about to win a great victory. In 311A.D. Galerius (A.D.305-A.D.311), who succeeded Diocletian as emperor in the East, decreed that Christians should have religious freedom. Meanwhile, Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which granted toleration to the Christians. Later, Constantine himself became a Christian and was the first Christian emperor of the Roman Empire.

Revelation 13:8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Those who worship Satan and the beast are those *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. There is a difference between being deceived by Satan, and knowingly worshipping him.

Revelation 13:9. If any man have an ear, let him hear.

Revelation 13:10. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Who are they that have an ear to hear? This is proven repeatedly in Scripture to be the people of God who have been born of His Spirit. The patience and faith of the saints is to believe the word of God. He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom

were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). God's people are not to use swords or weapons to further the Kingdom of God in the world. The patience of the saints gives them the power to persevere in the face of danger. God protects them with the power of his might. "Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chronicles 20:15).

A Beast Rises out of the Earth (13:11-18)

Revelation 13:11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

John saw the first beast rising out of the sea. He sees this second beast coming out of the earth. Satan's realm is in the earth. He cannot raise himself into heaven. Therefore, this beast coming up out of the earth is coming from among the evil domains of Satan. That domain is in the hearts of those whose names are not written in the Lambs book of life from the foundation of the world. This beast is an imposter in the fact that he had two horns like a lamb. That which seems good dislodges many people from the truth. Satan knows that the best way to rule God's people is to make himself appear as religious.

Revelation 13:12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Revelation 13:13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Revelation 13:14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Satan will give any power or device needed to this beast that resembles a lamb. He is only interested in deceiving. Although the deceived are not knowledgeable of their plight, Satan knows that he is the one whom they really are worshiping. Matthew Henry says, "There were methods by which this second beast carried out his designs. Lying wonders, pretended miracles, by which they should be deceived. They would pretend to bring down fire from heaven. God sometimes permits his enemies to do things that seem very wonderful, and by which unwary persons may be deluded." As the emperors had decreed that emperor worship should be enforced, now Constantine would declare that Christianity would be the religion of the entire Roman Empire. In this respect he used the power of an emperor to enforce upon man that which only God could do. Following this decree, there were wars that were called *holy wars*. Many children of God were forced to march against other children of God. This is the image of those rulers who were before Constantine. Christianity does not imitate evil. This second beast with the two horns was a deceiver used by Satan for his purposes.

Revelation 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

The Greek word for *image* used here is *eikon*, *I-kone'*: a likeness, i.e. (literally) statute, profile, or (figuratively) representation, resemblance:--image. Representative figure. *Likeness* from *demuwth*, *dem-ooth'*; resemblance; concr. model, shape; adv. like: fashion, like (-ness, as), manner, similitude. For a literal meaning of the *beast and his image*, let us go to the literal meaning of *Christ and His image*. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (*Genesis* 1:26). "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (*Genesis* 1:27). *Image* from (*tselem*, *tseh'-lem*) figuratively means illusion, resemblance; hence represents the deeds that we do here in this life. We can draw the conclusion that the same meaning is used for those who worship the beast and his image and those who worship Christ and His image. The mark in the forehead represents our mind and our thoughts. The mark in the right hand represents the works coming forth because of the mind and thoughts.

The world has always persecuted God’s people. It is recorded in Daniel, chapter three that Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, then made a law that whosoever did not fall down before this image would be put to death. As a result, the three Hebrew children who refused to bow down were cast into the fiery furnace. God delivered them out of this death. God has in all ages been with those who obey His decrees.

The life that is given to the beast is portrayed in those deceivers who preach and teach the power of the beast. Even in our day, we have those who speak great things that deceive God’s people.

Revelation 13:16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

Revelation 13:17. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Revelation 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

There have been many interpretations of the identity of this man. Six hundred sixty-six when translated to Latin could be many men, or many things. Hassell’s Church History explains the number 666 as being the corrupting elements of the world. He writes, “Let it be especially remembered that ‘the only two Greek *nouns* in all the New Testament, whose numerical value is exactly 666 are *Paradosis* [tradition] and *Europia* [wealth]. These are precisely the two terms that express the grand corrupters of the church: *Tradition*, the corrupter of doctrine; and *wealth*, and the corrupter of practice. The only unquestionable 666 in the Old Testament is the 666 talents of gold that came in yearly to Solomon, and were among his chief corrupting influences (I Kings 10:14; II Chronicles 9:13).”

Section 7 - Those Who Worship the Lamb; Those Who Worship the Beast (14:1-20)

“The power of Almighty God in preserving and establishing His Church, and in punishing and disestablishing the wicked, can be clearly seen...”

The Ingathering of the Firstfruits unto the Lamb (14:1-5)

Revelation 14:1. And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Revelation 14:2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

Revelation 14:3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Revelation 14:4. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Revelation 14:5. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

These first five verses describe the position and condition of the *hundred and forty and four thousand* who were sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel. Therefore, I will use these verses collectively. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb (Revelation 14:4-c). These are the same as those who were sealed in Revelation 7:4 “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

Revelation 14:2, “And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder.” Luke records in the book of Acts that when they were gathered together in one accord on the day of Pentecost there was the sound of a mighty rushing wind. This sound ushered in the revealing of the Holy Ghost, Who would guide the hearts of men. Revelation 14:2 seems to exemplify this very event. So great was the power of the Church that these firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb from among the Jews were added - as many as should be saved - out of every tongue and nation under heaven. These, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb, were converted as the gospel was first preached to them (Matthew 10:5-7). There was great joy in heaven over these *lost sheep* who repented upon hearing the gospel.

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne. None can give the title of this new song. It must have been concerning the redemption of God's people from the chains of sin and the Law. These were they who had not defiled themselves with Rome nor subscribed to the worship of emperors as gods. In this respect they were virgins. They were converted Jews who followed the lamb whithersoever He goeth. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. These who are the *firstfruits* are without deceit as they follow the Lamb.

Gospel to be Preached to all Nations (14:6-7)

Revelation 14:6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

The everlasting gospel was to be preached to all nations, kindred, tongue, and people. Only those whose hearts God has opened, however, will receive this gospel. "...and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them" (Isaiah 63:9). This angel seen flying in the midst of heaven was carrying the good news of their salvation to those whom God had quickened. In Acts 10:35 we are told who will receive this good news, "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." We also are given the time when this gospel of good news was preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. At Pentecost, "there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). On this occasion the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost and preached the gospel. "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:6). These witnesses carried the gospel message back to their homeland.

Revelation 14:7. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

This is the message of the omnipotence of God and His Son Jesus Christ. The hour of His judgment was spent on the Cross of Calvary. Paul writes in the Hebrew letter, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrew 9:27-28).

This Creator is the same as mentioned in John 1:3, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." David expresses it wonderfully in Psalm 72, "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

The Doom of Babylon Proclaimed (14:8)

Revelation 14:8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Immediately following the declaration of the gospel message, there goes forth a shout of joy. This Babylon that is fallen is none other than Jerusalem that shed the blood of the saints of God and Jesus Christ her husband. Although God had declared that Israel was his wife, He now calls her a fornicator. She has sold herself to the powers of Rome. Now there is rejoicing that she has fallen. "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (Revelation 18:21).

Proof Scripture: "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (Revelation 18:24). Jesus identified this city of Jerusalem (Babylon) when he said, "Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation" (Luke 11:48-51). The same wording, *the blood of all the prophets*, is used in the judgment of this wicked city, Jerusalem.

The Condemnation of the Worshipers of the Beast Proclaimed (14:9-11)

Revelation 14:9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast [therion] and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

For a literal meaning of the *beast and his image*, let us go to the literal meaning of *Christ and His Image*. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27). We find the word *image* defined in the Roman Letter. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Corinthians 15:49). The image of God and of Christ is *righteousness and holiness*. This was the first image of Adam, which was lost through disobedience.

We can conclude that the same meaning is used for those who worship the beast and his image vs. those who worship Christ and His image. The mark in the forehead pertains to our mind and our thoughts. The mark in the right hand represents the deeds that we do here in this life. Knowledge and Works measure our lives.

Revelation 14:10. The same¹⁴ shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

Those who worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, shall drink of the pure wrath (*without mixture*) of the indignation of God. These *fornicators*, who had received the favor of Rome, now received the torment of fire and brimstone in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ and the holy angels around the throne of God witnessed this scene. This gave great cause for rejoicing in heavenly places to learn that God had avenged His own.

Revelation 14:11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

When God’s wrath is poured out upon those who worship the beast and his image, and do the works of Satan, there is no rest. None can resist the wrath of God, nor is there any rest day or night.

Benediction of Those who Rest in the Finished Work of the Lord (14:12-13)

Revelation 14:12. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

The saints are given patience through keeping the commandments of God. Their faith in Jesus Christ is the source of this patience. They shall not be disillusioned by waiting for the work of God upon the ungodly.

Revelation 14:13. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

A proclamation is declared toward this *patience of the saints*. They are dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus. Wherever they go, their works follow them. “For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9). They are known by the fruits of their labor.

The Time for Reaping has Come (14:14-20)

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

¹⁴Those who worship the beast and receive his mark in the forehead and in the hand.

Here is the beginning of reaping. This One had been sitting and beholding the sins of His people who had wandered far from Him. Now the time was come that His wrath should encompass this city that had played the part of the harlot. This place where fornication had been the rule among those who pretended to carry on the work and will of God was ripe for harvest. The *sickle* was sharpened and ready to reap. No longer would these imposters have the opportunity to deceive. The Church Kingdom, wherein there was no visible temple, would reign.

Revelation 14:15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

How could it be possible that an angel could command our Lord? This is a representation of the cries of those under the altar (see Revelation 6:9-11). They had received the white robes and waited patiently for this occasion of the destruction of their tormentors.

Revelation 14:16. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

The Son of Man (Christ) is the reaper. When His sickle is thrust in, there is sudden reaping. Moreover, Christ's reaping is effectual; the work He intends to do is the work He does.

Revelation 14:17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

Now the temple will no longer be upon the earth. The old temple was destroyed and useless.

Revelation 14:18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

The fire of incense was no longer a sweet smelling savor unto the Lord. The harvest was ready but God's people had offered no sweet incense unto the Lord. Now the angel of the altar would thrust in his sickle into the earth and gather the vine to be cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Revelation 14:19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Revelation 14:20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs¹⁵.

This *great wrath of God* was carried out by the legions of Titus, who were besieging the city. They were fast shedding the blood of those who had cast themselves into the role of defenders of Jerusalem. The figure of 1600 furlongs is used to show the terrible amount of bloodshed during the siege of Jerusalem. The angel who had the sharp sickle accomplished the great wrath of God. There are other interpretations of these events that place them as futuristic. However, I would again refer you to the message to John that called them "things which must shortly come to pass." Jesus speaking of Jerusalem, said, "Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation" (Matthew 23:36)

¹⁵ Furlong -stadion, stad'-ee-on; (in plural) stadios, stad'-ee-os; (as fixed); a stade or certain measure of distance; by implication a stadium or race-course: furlong, race. [Zondervan's Bible Dictionary calls a *furlong* a distance of about 606 feet.]

Section 8 - Vials With the Seven Last Plagues (15:1-16:21)

“...Reveals the awfulness of God’s wrath on those who worship the Beast, and illustrates the impending destruction of Jerusalem.”

Introduction: Preparation for the seven last plagues (15:1-16:1)

Revelation 15:1. And I saw another sign in heaven¹⁶, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Examine the following passages, where *ouranos* (heaven) is used to express an idea: “And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). “ Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:12). “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). These passages use the word “ouranos” to express happiness and joy in the kingdom of God in the earth.

The Old Testament uses the Hebrew word *shamayim*, for *heaven* and Strong’s Concordance defines it as a dual of an unused singular *shameh*; from an unused root meaning, to be lofty; the sky (as aloft; the dual perhaps alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve)--air, X astrologer, heaven (-s). The following verses are some examples: “And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven [shawmeh], which hath made the sea and the dry land” (Jonah 1:9). “Behold, the heaven [shaw-meh] and the heaven [shaw-meh] of heavens [shamayim] is the LORD’S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is” (Deuteronomy 10:14). “But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?” (II Chronicles 2:6). As we examine these verses we will find they are not intended to describe the final abode of the saints. They simply declare that God cannot be bound to any ethereal or geographical boundaries. Upon closer examination of Revelation 15:1. this sign of the seven angels with the seven last plagues contains the wrath of God. God was saying, “It is enough” because of the hypocrisy of His people. His wrath would be vented by any means He would choose.

Revelation 15:2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Let us review Revelation, chapter 4 where we see the same sea of glass. “And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts¹⁷ full of eyes before and behind” (Revelation 4:6). This scene is the same as in Chapter 15. From here God will direct the movements of the seven angels having the seven last plagues.

Revelation 15:3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

¹⁶Heaven: ouranos, oo-ran-os'; perhaps (through the idea of elevation); by implication, happiness, power, eternity; specifically, the Gospel (Christianity)

¹⁷Four periods of time upon the earth: (1) Adam to Moses, the Lion; (2) Moses to Christ, the Calf; (3) Time in which Christ set up His Church in the earth, face of a Man; (4) Reign of the Holy Ghost [Spirit] leading and guiding the Church till the end of time, Flying Eagle.

This includes all of “them¹⁸ that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, [who] stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.” The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb combines the praise of Israel of old and the praise of those who would come later serving and worshiping Christ “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea” (Exodus 15:1). David gives a Psalm (song) of praise, “For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep” (Psalm 92:4, 5).

Now these songs of praise (by both natural and spiritual Israel) could be combined into the song of *Moses* and the *Lamb*. These had won the victory by the blood of the Lamb out of every nation, tribe, and people. He is indeed the King of saints!

Revelation 15:4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Isaiah gives us the root prophecy, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isaiah 11:1). Again we hear, “And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted” (Isaiah 49:11-13). Peter spoke of this on the day of Pentecost, “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). His judgments are made manifest in all the sins that were borne by Jesus as He hung on the tree. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:27, 28). This now being realized, His saints could sing praise as the seven angels made ready to pour out His wrath upon all the wicked.

Revelation 15:5. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

The (pattern) tabernacle which is before the testimony, “In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel” (Exodus 27:21). This was outside the veil of the Holy of Holies. The testimony abode inside the veil which none except the High Priest was allowed to view. Now the veil that hid the testimony from view was opened.

God provided manna for the children of Israel in the wilderness, “And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept” (Exodus 16:33, 34). Paul spoke of this testimony which remained unseen by the congregation, “And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly” (Hebrews 9:3-5).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the opening of the temple of testimony that would cause great rejoicing among those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in

¹⁸**Revelation 5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;**

twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” (Matthew 27:51); “And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Mark 15:38). “And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst” (Luke 23:45).

Revelation 15:6. “And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

These seven angels who came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, were clothed in the attire of the priesthood, “And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest’s office” (Exodus 28:41). Seven is a complete number of perfection. We may conclude that these seven angels represented the entire priesthood, which would no longer be used by God in the administration of the Mosaic Temple. These plagues would be to the destruction of this mode of worship. It was finished with the pouring out of these vials.

Revelation 15:7. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

Could this beast be the era of time in which animal sacrifices were offered to appease the anger of God? It seems possible because the priesthood came out of the temple. They no longer had a place of service. The offerings of animals could never atone for sin. God’s anger had never been satisfied with these sacrifices. The wrath of God was completely satisfied when He accepted the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son when He became sin for us on the Cross.

Revelation 15:8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

God’s glory had filled the temple at various times under the law. In the beginning of congregational temple worship, when Moses had made the Tabernacle as God had commanded, “So Moses finished the work” (Exodus 40:33b). “Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34, 35). God now performs the same miracle at the ending of temple worship. No longer would man enter into this last Temple to worship. God’s wrath was now ready to be poured out upon Jerusalem.

Revelation 16:1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Since the glory of God filled the temple until none could enter, this must be the voice of God who is the only one in the temple. He gave the order for the seven angels to pour out the vials of wrath of God upon the earth.

The First Vial poured out: Grievous sores afflict all who worship the image of the beast (16:2)

Revelation 16:2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.

In the 14th chapter of Revelation, we interpreted the mark of the beast as being those Jews whose minds had been captured by the works of Satan. We learned of their torment, “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his

name” (Revelation 14:9 - 11). We interpreted the image of the beast as being in direct conflict to the image of Christ. The mark of identification was received in the forehead (mind) and in the hand (works.) As the first angel poured out his vial upon these men, “there fell a noisome and grievous sore” upon them.

We are again faced with language that is very figurative. Instead of repenting of their evil deeds, they became more and more corrupt and vile both in mannerism and thinking. Truly the mark of the beast was taking over their lives.

The Second Vial poured out: Sea turned into Blood (16:3)

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

This verse is the second cycle of Revelation 8:8. In that passage a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood. We find the source of that blood is that of a dead man. The mountain of the Law of Revelation 8:8 brings about the death of these rebellious Jews. The waters of that sea cast up its dirt and mire. God’s wrath is being poured out on these who had rejected their Messiah (husband). God rejects now these who had rejected Him. Their kingdom was desolate around them.

The Third Vial poured out: Rivers and Springs turned into Blood (16:4-7)

Revelation 16:4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

Here we find the same language as found in Exodus, “I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood . . . and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river” (Exodus 7:17, 18).

We have already spoken of the aqueduct at Revelation, chapter 8 which brought water into Jerusalem being stopped. We also spoke of the great slaughter which took place as the armies of Rome, led by Titus, slew such great numbers that their blood ran like water. This certainly polluted the water until there was great drought and many more died because of famine and drought. Revelation 8:8, 9, has shown us the first cycle of this vision. The Bible speaks often of seas as people (Isaiah 57:20; Isaiah 60:5; Daniel 7:2, 3; Zechariah 14:8, 9). Quote from chapter 8, “There were three parts of the temple: the outer area where the people gathered, the central section where the animals were sacrificed, and the inner part which was the Holy of Holies. The Roman army fought and gained ground to the innermost part, this was the point to which the people inside had retreated. Here utter destruction took place and the people in this *third part*¹⁹ died.” This figurative language used in Revelation, chapter 8, and in this chapter 16 applies to the lives lost in this part of the temple.

Revelation 16:5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

This angel over the waters could only declare the judgment of God to be righteous. We are reminded of Paul’s remarks in the Roman letter, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?” (Romans 9:20a).

Revelation 16:6. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

¹⁹Revelation 8, 9. Again, remember this is written in figurative language. It refers to the great bloodshed that was in Jerusalem.

The blood²⁰ of the saints and prophets was required of Jerusalem.

Revelation 16:7. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Here is a second witness testifying of the righteousness of the judgments of God. “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (II Corinthians 13:1a).

The Fourth Vial poured out: Scorching Heat because of Unrepentance (16:8-9)

Revelation 16:8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

Here again we find a reference which leads us back to the first cycle of this great destruction. “And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea:” (Revelation 8:8). This mountain (Sinai)²¹ that had smoked with fire now was about to be cast into the sea. The people had once been able to remove themselves from this terror of God. Now this mountain of the law in which they trusted to save them would be cast into their midst and prove to be their destruction because of their whoredoms and murderous acts.

Revelation 16:9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

This verse is self-explanatory. The law could not give life. It could only speak of death. The works of the law could not set God’s righteous anger aside. Non-repentance only brings greater suffering.

The Fifth Vial poured out: Beast’s Kingdom bathed in Darkness (16:10-11)

Revelation 16:10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

Jesus spoke to the church at Pergamos, “I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth” (Revelation 2:13). Jesus continued with the accusation by saying, “because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication” (Revelation 2:14). This also was the sin of the Jews who were defending Jerusalem against the messengers of death.

Revelation 16:11. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

Repeatedly we learn of the unrepentant hearts of these Pharisees, hypocrites, who continued in their course. Only suffering remains to those who fail to repent of their evil deeds.

²⁰Matthew 23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. (These are the words of Jesus to Jerusalem.)

²¹Exodus 20:18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.

The Sixth Vial poured out - Armies assembled for Battle (16:12-16)

Revelation 16:12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

God made it possible for those legions that had been in Egypt to join Titus in this fight against Jerusalem. Let us review some passages already used in the command to the sixth angel: “Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates” (Revelation 9:14). The four angels [messengers] were loosed to carry on the assault against Jerusalem. Their work was to slay [destroy] the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This corresponds with the four different groups that Titus assembled at Caesarea to begin the march on Jerusalem:

1) Those who came out of Egypt with Titus. This was the core of the army of Titus that he would gather to go into Caesarea. These had formerly fought with Titus' father when he laid Judaea waste. Along with these were those who had been formerly beaten with Cestius, who was the leader of Syrian legions which had invaded Judaea (66A.D.) prior to the campaign led by Vespasian. Cestius was defeated by the Jews and retreated to Syria. These were eager to avenge themselves against the Jews because of the defeat they had formerly suffered from the Jews. There are others who Josephus refers to as *auxiliaries that come from the kings*.

2) Those who came to the assistance of Titus from Syria.

3) When Vespasian was declared to be emperor, Mucianus, a Roman general, had been sent to Rome with four legions to keep peace there. These also returned to fight with Titus.

4) Three thousand drawn from those that guarded the river Euphrates.

When God's wrath was loosed it was as though the Euphrates River had dried up. Nothing could stop these hordes because God was using them to do His work in destroying the wicked city of Jerusalem.

Revelation 16:13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

The identification of this passage is difficult in that there are types of evil that must be identified. First of all, Satan tries to duplicate the trinity of God in the three that are mentioned: The dragon, which is Satan; the beast, which is Rome; and the false prophet. This last is the one that may be difficult to identify. Let us see what God says about false prophets. “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). “And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee” (Deuteronomy 13:5).

The Christian Church was warned that false Christs and false prophets would arise, and would work impressive signs to deceive, delude and seduce Christ's people (Mark 13:22). The false prophet was one who both the Old and New Testament writers expected to appear. We shall see the end of this false prophet later. “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20). “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

The *second beast* of Chapter 13 and the *false prophet* can be identified as the same. Thus, being identified with the provincial organization and administration, the whole apparatus of priests and magistrates and

officials, the false prophet stands for the whole organization that seeks to make men worship the emperor. This evil organization eventually advocates abandonment of worship of God and of Jesus Christ, His Son. A false prophet is any man, or organization, who tries to introduce the worship of other gods. Also any man or organization, which preaches another gospel than that which the early Church and Apostles preached, can be classified as a false prophet.

The three unclean spirits which were seen coming out of the mouth of this ungodly trinity appeared as frogs. Frogs are identified as one of the plagues of Egypt. “And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt” (Exodus 8:6). Verse 7 informs us the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. We gather from this that Satan, the beast, and the false prophet are allowed to demonstrate certain miracles. The significance of typifying these spirits as frogs is that frogs multiply quickly and abundantly. They can jump from place to place. Therefore, the identification of these spirits with frogs seems to be made to show both the evil destruction and the speed with which they spread their carnage.

Revelation 16:14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Revelation 16:15. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Revelation 16:16. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Strong’s Greek-Hebrew concordance gives the word *Armageddon* taken from two Hebrew words: (1) har; a mountain or range of hills. (2) meged, means to be eminent; a distinguished thing; hence something valuable, as a product or fruit: pleasant, precious fruit (thing).

Could this *mountain or range of hills (sometimes used figuratively)*, plus *eminent, distinguished, valuable, pleasant, precious fruit (thing)* be the place where the victory was won by Jesus Christ on Mount Calvary and the Cross? (Armageddon). Now the aftermath of all this is seen by John as the destruction of Jerusalem (Babylon, the great whore) situated on a range of hills (Har), Jerusalem was an *eminent, distinguished, valuable, pleasant place* (mege) known by the whole world as the place where God had visited His people in time past. When these two are put the two together, we have *Armageddon*, The place where the battle of our salvation was fought and won!

The Seventh Vial poured out: Impending Destruction of Jerusalem (16:17-21)

Revelation 16:17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

Seventh denotes the final angel and biblical number to show perfection. As this angel poured out his vial into the air, there came a triumphant voice out of the *temple of heaven, from the throne*. The battle of Armageddon had been fought and it was done, Jesus uttered these final words from the Cross, “It is finished.” The temple was now in the heavenlies. This throne was the place where Jesus sat down after finishing the work given Him to do. This was the voice of Jesus, the Victor over death, hell, and the grave.

Revelation 16:18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

The voices that spoke were those, such that no man could number, who made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. We saw the same scene at the ending of the first cycle, “And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and

lightnings, and an earthquake” (Revelation 8:5). At the end of the second cycle, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). Now at the ending of the third cycle, the wrath of God is poured out on Jerusalem and her sin.

Revelation 16:19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

Revelation 16:20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Revelation 16:21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Man had never before felt the wrath of God as it was felt at this time. Neither shall that wrath be felt again in such fullness. Every island over which Jerusalem’s power had reigned would no longer be seen. The mountains upon which her old temple sat were not found. God reigns supremely through Christ Jesus our King.

Section 9 - Visions of the Fall of Babylon (17:1-19:10)

“... A vivid picture of Jerusalem in her putrid, completely apostate condition is presented here, along with the rejoicing of heaven’s hosts over her impending and final destruction. No more will Jerusalem be the figure for the “top of the mountains” of God’s people. No more will she represent spiritual Zion, the mountain of God’s holiness!”

The Judgment of the great whore, called Babylon and Jerusalem (17:1-6)

Revelation 17:1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.

God gave a commandment to Israel concerning prostitution and whoredom. “Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness” (Leviticus 19:29).

The reputation of this “great Whore” had gone out to all the nations roundabout Jerusalem. She is the daughter of God in the respect that she remains under the judgment of God. Ezekiel gives us great insight concerning Jerusalem. “Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied” (Ezekiel 16: 28 - 45). He continues by saying that she had multiplied her fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea. He says this is the work of an imperious whorish woman. She is as a wife that commits adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband! We understand this to be speaking to Israel before she was taken into captivity. Yet, like so many of today that have forgotten the goodness of God, Israel had not learned. Her heart remained adamant. Because of all these things, God pronounced Judgment on her. “Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: Israel shall be judged as women that break wedlock and shed blood. I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy” (Ezekiel 16:35). Jerusalem’s sins were as bad in John’s vision as when Ezekiel wrote of them. The prophecy seemed identical. “And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with fire” (Ezekiel 16:39-41).

Revelation 17:2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Fornication is described by the Greek word porneuo, to act the harlot, i.e., indulge unlawful lust (of either sex), or practice idolatry, commit (fornication). Porneuo is used in the parable of the prodigal son who had wasted his inheritance among harlots.

The kings of the earth knew Jerusalem’s idolatry. Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (Matthew 23:15).

Some might argue that this could not be Jerusalem because the verse ends with “the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” Let the Scripture be its own interpreter. “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15). The Jews were scattered abroad among all nations. Many of these were still faithful to Jerusalem. On the day of Pentecost there were “dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven”

(Acts 2:5). This indicates strongly that this great whore is indeed Jerusalem. These Jews had gathered for the celebration of Pentecost commanded under the law.

Revelation 17:3. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

This woman, who was situated spiritually in a wilderness, is still identified as Jerusalem. She is the same as the one identified in Revelation 13:1. The *scarlet coloured beast* on which she sat is still the same as in Revelation 13:2. This beast, which seems to be the fourth world empire, is Rome. It has incorporated all the terrors of the evil empires that had gone before. All of the evil which the Roman Empire spewed from its mouth was derived from the dragon (Satan) which John saw rising out of the earth.

The Clothing of the Woman

Revelation 17:4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

This *woman* is the same as the great whore. The clothing with which she is arrayed is the same as clothing designated for “Temple attire.” Let us examine this in the light of Scripture. Beginning with Exodus 28:4, we find the Temple attire of Aaron and his sons; “And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office” (Exodus 28:4). This attire would be of gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. It would have shoulder pieces of *onyx stones* engraved with the names of the children of Israel. They would also have on a breastplate with the names of Israel engraved thereon. These would be fastened together with golden chains. This woman (Jerusalem) would still bear the outward appearance of those who worshiped God. However, their hearts would be far from Him. Although Jerusalem still carried out the work of priestly observance, this was only in the fulfillment of the letter of the law.

Revelation 17:5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Like those who would wear the number of the beast upon their forehead and in the palm of their hands, so would the working of her mind identify this woman, Babylon²² the great. This woman has not changed identification. It must be concluded that she is either Rome, or she is Jerusalem. She does not switch identification. In Revelation 11:8, she is *spiritually* called Sodom and Egypt, “where also our Lord was crucified.” This is the terrible condition of Jerusalem that she should be called the mother of harlots. *Spiritually*, she is in the same league with Sodom and Egypt. Wickedness prevailed at every turn, so much so that Jesus called her religious leaders hypocrites.

Jeremiah spoke of Babylon and the golden cup, “Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad” (Jeremiah 51:7). This and Revelation 17:4 are the only passages that speak of *Babylon* and the *golden cup* in the same context. It would not be truthful to say that Jeremiah was speaking of Jerusalem. He was not. The Babylon of Jeremiah's writing was speaking of the Babylonian empire of which the Children of Israel were in bondage. Now Jerusalem is in the same league.

Woman Drunken with the Blood of Saints (17:7-18)

²²Babulon, bab-oo-lone'; of Hebrew or.Babel; Babylon, the capital of Chaldaea (literally or figuratively [as a type of tyranny])--Babylon

Revelation 17:6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration (theaomai, to look closely at, behold).

In Jeremiah, Babylon had made all the earth drunken with the wine that represents her wickedness. Now we see the woman of Revelation drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. We again identify this last part with Jerusalem as Jesus said “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (Matthew 23:35). She is charged with that blood because of her demeanor. Ever more she became enthralled and drunken by taking the lives of those who were followers of Christ.

These words were spoken to John on Patmos. The beast is explained to him as having been in power, yet at this time is not in power but shall ascend out of the pit and shall again practice the acts of perdition that once were practiced. What were these terrible acts that God hated?

Idolatry was practiced in Judea in the act of Caesar worship. Temples were built for the purpose of worshiping the Caesars as gods. However, this was not the meaning of this verse. We must go back to Nero, A.D. 55-68, who was the most evil of the emperors up to his time. He was the fifth Emperor of Rome. He is described figuratively by John as “the beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition.” History verifies that this was the belief of some who believed that Nero would reappear. The character and disposition of Nero re-appeared in the Emperor *Domitian*.

Revelation 17:9. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

These seven heads are the seven hills upon which Rome sits. “And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (Revelation 13:2). Let us go to the vision of Daniel to find this beast.

In Daniel 7:3-7 we find a vision of four great beasts who come out of the sea. These beasts are the symbols of the great empires that had held world power. The first three empires were the Babylonian (Lion with an eagle’s wings), the Medo-Persian (Like a bear), and the Grecian (Leopard with four wings). These powers (three *world empires*) were so savage and cruel and inhuman that they could be typified and symbolized with nothing but bestial figures. The fourth beast of Daniel’s vision was diverse from all the rest: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: “and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.” In John’s vision these first three beasts were combined. This beast in Revelation 13:2 is like a *leopard with bear’s feet and a lion’s mouth*. This beast, which is the fourth world empire, is Rome. It has incorporated all the terrors of the evil empires that had gone before. All of the evil that the Roman Empire spewed from its mouth was derived from the great red Dragon, (which is Satan). We read in Revelation 13:4, “And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast [This is the great red Dragon (Satan) of Revelation 12:3], saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” History tells us “The peoples of the empire worshiped the Pax Romana (Excerpts from Magoffin and Duncalf, pp-358 - 369) [Roman Peace] as a goddess. Everywhere, people showed their appreciation by worshiping the emperors and the Pax Romana, by desiring Roman citizenship, and by imitating Roman ways.” This worshiping of emperors and the Pax Romana certainly was of Satan. And they worshiped the dragon that gave power unto the beast.

Revelation 17:10. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

To interpret this verse we must bypass the Emperors, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius who were never really emperors. They were placed in office by the Roman army. They never really exercised any power, but were more or less figureheads. The entire time of the reign of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius spanned only one year, A.D. 68 - A.D. 69.

Following these was Vespasian, who was appointed Emperor and reigned from A.D. 69 - A.D. 79. He was the one who reigned when Titus, his son, destroyed Jerusalem. Vespasian would be considered this one spoken of by John in Revelation 17:10 as being “*and one is.*” He is the sixth, “*and the other is not yet come and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.*” Titus followed his father, Vespasian, and remained in power a short space of time, A.D. 79 - A.D. 81. This makes Titus the seventh. There is logic in this reasoning, as we will see during the explanation of the next verse.

Revelation 17:11. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

Domitian, who was Emperor from A.D. 81 - A.D. 96 would be counted as the eighth. How could he be of the seven? How could he be the “*beast that was, and is not?*” If we view this through the eyes of the Romans of that time, maybe we can interpret this as John saw it.

We have already studied the life of Nero, who was the fifth Emperor of the Roman Empire. He was looked upon as the incarnated Satan because of his madness and cruelty. Certainly we could say that Nero was one of the seven. John was condemned to the isle of Patmos during the persecution of Nero. John was very well acquainted with the ways of Nero. Now he speaks of this one who is to come (the eighth) which is of the seven. This was Domitian who was the brother of Titus, and the eighth Emperor (excluding Galba, Otho, and Vitellius) who reigned during the time of emperor worship. (Review the explanation of Revelation 17:8. Domitian would become as bad, if not worse than Nero. These rulers were described as being beastly and bestial. This would allow them to carry the name of “beast”). At first, Domitian was an excellent ruler. He rebuilt much that had been destroyed by rebellion. According to history “Caesar and Christ”, in A.D. 86, Domitian’s army suffered a defeat at the hands of the Dacians (Dacia - Rumania, or Romania). This was the dividing line between his better and worse sides. “He filled the Capitol with statues of himself, announced the divinity of his father, brother, wife, and sisters as well as his own, organized a new order of priests, the Flaviales, to tend the worship of these new deities, and required officials to speak of him, in their documents, as *Dominus et Deus Noster* - ‘Our Lord and God.’ He sat on a throne, encouraged visitors to embrace his knees, and established in his ornate palace the etiquette of an Oriental court.” He banished from Italy all who refused to adore the godhead of Domitian, and among these were Jews and Christians. It is said that no citizen of any prominence could feel safe from spies, even in his home. They killed and tortured many, even by having “fire inserted into their private parts.”

In this respect, Domitian could be figuratively called Nero, or that one who would go into perdition. Domitian was the last of those History calls the evil emperors. He was assassinated in A.D.96.

Ten Horns are Ten Kings

Revelation 17:12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

Revelation 17:13. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

We are brought back to the interpretation of the ten kings. We can only do this by looking at the time period of emperor worship. In his history called “Caesar and Christ” by Will Durant, of Roman civilization and of Christianity from Their beginning, (Simon & Shuster) relates that seven of these ten Emperors met a violent end; nearly all of them were unhappy, surrounded by conspiracy, dishonesty, and intrigue, trying to govern a world from the anarchy of a home. They indulged their appetites because they knew how brief was their

omnipotence; they lived in the daily horror of men condemned to an early and sudden death. They went under because they were above the law; they became less than men because power had made them gods. These ten who are mentioned as beginning with Tiberius and ending with Domitian are absolute. They include the three (Galba, Otho, and Vitellius) who are not mentioned in the seven of Revelation 17:10, 11. Although these three were emperors for a season, their kingdoms were unstable. They possessed none in their own right. It was during the reign of Augustus Caesar that Christ was born. It was permissible under his rule for Herod to seek to kill the Christ Child. As we come through the reigning periods of the ten emperors, we find great persecution and murder being experienced by all who will not worship the beast. This great whore was under the command of Rome for a season. Together, with Rome they made war with the Lamb. Jesus said, "But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me" (John 15:21). Again Jesus said as He prayed to the Father, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14).

Revelation 17:14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Here is a promise to all that are with him and are called, and chosen and faithful. This fulfillment and finality is realized in Revelation 19:11, 13, 14, & 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 he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God -- And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean --. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The Lord of Lords directed the armies of Rome against Jerusalem, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2).

Revelation 17:15. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

This is referring us to Jerusalem "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (Revelation 17:1). The seven vials are poured out on Jerusalem. She is this whore who will receive the terrible judgment of God.

Revelation 17:16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

The ten horns with ten crowns stand for the emperors of Rome while Caesar worship was prevalent. These hated Jerusalem and in their zeal they devoured, "ate the flesh" of these because Jerusalem had dared to rebel against their great power.

Revelation 17:17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

God is sovereign in His will. He has a perfect right to turn the evil thoughts, works, and ways of wicked men to perform the foreordained things of God. Peter told those wicked Jews on the day of Pentecost, speaking of Christ, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain": (Acts 2:23). Also we find it recorded in Paul's letter to the Church at Rome, concerning Pharaoh. "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Romans 9:17, 18).

Revelation 17:18. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

How did Jerusalem reign over the kings of the earth? To reign means possessing, and using, power to rule. Jerusalem ruled over these kings in an economic respect. When she was alive and well these kings were indebted to her because they furnished her with the rich furnishings of the temple. Therefore, these kings did her bidding. This is proven by their actions as they saw Babylon (Jerusalem) fall. “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8).

Exultation and Wailing over the Judgment of Jerusalem (18:1-20)

Chapter 17 ended with a statement about the power of Jerusalem, “the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” The fact that the destruction of Jerusalem affected all nations verifies this, especially the destruction of the temple. All the kings of the earth whose nations furnished these rich adornments of the temple mourned over the loss of this income. We will know more about this loss as we go through Chapter 18.

Revelation 18:1. And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

Scripture does not reveal the identity of this powerful angel. We do know that he came from the presence of heavenly beings because of the light that emanated from his being. He came with a joyful proclamation to those being persecuted, and a sorrowful proclamation for those who thrived from income received for merchandise that they furnished.

Revelation 18:2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

We will find this is no new message concerning Jerusalem (Babylon). How can Babylon correspond with Jerusalem? Examine the word used for Babylon. *Babulon*, bab-oo-lone'; (*literally or figuratively [as a type of tyranny]*). An important declaration is made in Revelation 14:8, “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” [The same Greek word (*Babulon*) is used meaning literally, or figuratively [*as a type of tyranny*]]. We find another passage in Isaiah that use practically the same words, “And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground” (Isaiah 21:9). The Hebrew word used here for Babylon is Babel, meaning *confusion*.

Another angel made this announcement following the angel who flew through the heavens having the everlasting gospel to preach to every kindred, tongue, and nation. The gospel he preached was, “*Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship he that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters*” (Revelation 14:7, 8). This announcement is made during the second cycle of God’s Judgment on Jerusalem.

Revelation 18:3. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Revelation 9:21. Revelation 14:8, Revelation 17:2, and Revelation 18:3 all speak of the fornication of this city. She has been more interested in having fellowship with the world than she is in having fellowship with God. We must consider another point here. If this city under consideration were Rome, Scripture would not have called this sin *fornication*. Rome had no obligation toward a husband for she had none. Isaiah had called Jerusalem the wife. Now she is the harlot and God is in the process of destroying her.

Revelation 18:4. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

God now cries from heaven warning of this disaster and calling for His people to come out of her. Her sins are so great that no child of God can continue to be in her midst. We have stated earlier that God has not changed. He still hates sin among His people and will mete out punishment accordingly. The plagues that come on the world will reach even unto those who love the sins of the world.

Revelation 18:5. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

God is aware of her sins. Jerusalem has forgotten the God who led her through the wilderness and planted her here in the tops of the mountains.

Revelation 18:6. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

God has been longsuffering, even waiting long past the single filling of the cup of her iniquities. Yea, even to the double fullness.

Revelation 18:7. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

God first glorified her with the temple of God where he met with his people. Jerusalem has gone much further than that. She has added line upon line, precept upon precept. She has enlarged her borders until now she now feels completely self-sufficient. "I sit as a queen. I am no widow. No sorrow shall come to me."

Revelation 18:8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Jerusalem Utterly a Putrefied Place

Jerusalem has become an utterly putrefied place. She now is a habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. She is utterly burned with fire. Famine has taken her people by surprise. Mourning instead of gladness now is her lot.

Revelation 18:9. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

The great Whore who was so careless with the things of God and sold herself into whoredom now sends the smoke as a signal to all who have enjoyed her favor.

Revelation 18:10. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

God's judgment has moved with great speed. None could withstand the ire of Rome, which would have become the destroyer of God. The power of His arm has lashed with fury on the iniquity of this woman.

Revelation 18:11. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

The Church Kingdom is now in force. This merchandise is not needed in the worship of the Church kingdom. There is no demand for all the things that follow in the next verses. These were used in the temple worship.

Revelation 18:12. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

Revelation 18:13. And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

The loss of merchandise with which she would have filled her house, now lies in the storehouses of these merchants and none will purchase it. The Temple has no place with the angel who flies swiftly having the everlasting gospel to preach. Law and Grace simply do not mix.

Revelation 18:14. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

The departure of these things that were dainty and goodly leaves a smoldering heap that sends its stench into the heavens.

Revelation 18:15. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

Revelation 18:16. And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

Revelation 18:17. For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

Revelation 18:18. And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

Revelation 18:19. And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

These merchants, shipmasters, and sailors of ships were not mourning because of their love for the House of God that was destroyed. They did not love God! They loved the gold and silver that lined their tills.

Revelation 18:20. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

What rejoicing there is when the cause of trouble is destroyed. These holy apostles and interpreters of prophecy were given great cause to rejoice. This rejoicing is the signature of those called of Christ and taught by Him.

Millstone thrown into the Sea, Metaphor of the Destruction of Jerusalem and Final Dirge over the City (18:21-24)

Revelation 18:21. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

God's presence would no longer occupy this place of animal sacrifice in the Holiest of Holies. It would occupy the same place as our sins, never to be remembered anymore by God.

Revelation 18:22. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee”;

What a desolation it is, now that those things which once caused great rejoicing in the streets are as silent as death.

Revelation 18:23. And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

The source of light had gone out. The rejoicing of the bride and bridegroom would not be heard any more at all. The sorceries of this woman who had once been in league with all nations, and deceived them, would no longer be used.

Revelation 18:24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Again, we find our God identifying this woman called Babylon. Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem in the writings of Matthew 23:35-38 said, “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Her bloody works have not been hid. God has found this wickedness and destroyed her with her works.

Rejoicing in Heaven because of God's Righteous Judgment (19:1-5)

Revelation 19:1. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

Alleluia - praise ye Jah! This is an adoring exclamation. Salvation has come! Praise, and esteem, and dignity to the highest degree, and mighty and wonderful works, unto our God who is supreme ruler of all! Great rejoicing is always the case with God's people when deliverance has come to them. Recall the heavenly scene that we saw at the beginning, with the Throne of God set in the heavens and a great multitude that no man could number around that throne. Their rejoicing and praise to Him who sat on the throne is beyond description.

Revelation 19:2. For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

“He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth” (I Chronicles 16:15. There is no reason for Jerusalem forgetting the judgments of God. She has been chastened many times because of her obstinacy in doing. “For true and righteous are his judgments.” Now Jerusalem, who has played the harlot, can only bow in shame until her hour is past.

Revelation 19:3. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

Again, the Alleluia Chorus rises in rejoicing as her smoke rises for ever and ever. She hath descended to the depths where her fire is not quenched, and her worm dieth not.

Revelation 19:4. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

This has always been so! The leaders of God's people and the multitudes in every age give praise to God who rules all.

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

These are the same ones we heard in Revelation 6:10, "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Now they are avenged of the suffering cast upon them by this great city that is judged, and that judgment is executed. At last they can give praise for deliverance.

Praise to the Lamb and the Bride (19:6-10)

Revelation 19:6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The next verse will justify this rejoicing of the multitude, and the thunderings of God's wrath being finished. The Omnipotence of God has again been shown.

Revelation 19:7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Revelation 19:8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Now all obstacles have been removed. The marriage of the Lamb is now consummated with the wedding supper. His wife is not dressed with the gaudy apparel of the harlot. "And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart. She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house" (Proverbs 7:10, 11). Not so with the wife. She is clothed in fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. She is under subjection to her Husband.

Revelation 19:9. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

Jude expressed it in Jude 1.1. "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." Paul spoke of this calling as being "an holy calling" (II Timothy 1:9). Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven as being like unto like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, (Matthew 22:2).

Revelation 19:10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, see thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Only the Author and Finisher of our salvation is worthy of our worship. There are times when those who are seeking for fame and glory deceive God's people. Worship is lavished upon them. Here God's word tells us that we are not to worship men or angels. All who have received the testimony of Jesus Christ have received

the spirit of prophecy. Jesus once said to the Pharisees, “Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (Matthew 21:42).

Section 10 - The End of Satan's Evil Age and the Beginning of God's Righteous Age (19:11-21:8)

“Rejoice in *The End of Satan's Evil Age and the Beginning of God's Righteous Age*. Christ the victorious conqueror is clearly shown to have won the battle of Armageddon at Calvary, binding Satan in the bottomless pit.”

Christ, the Victorious Conqueror (19:11-16)

Revelation 19:11. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Now we view the Victor! In Revelation 6:2 John viewed this one who was leading the armies forth to destroy the Harlot. “And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.” Now it is declared Who this Victor was, at the beginning of this judgment, and Who He is at the finish of the judgment that God has finished in righteousness.

Revelation 19:12. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

It was not given to those rebels in Jerusalem to know the time, and the Executor of their judgment.

Revelation 19:13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

John was enlightened earlier to write glorious truths concerning this Victor. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:1, 2, 10 - 13). Jesus (the Word) went to the cross and shed His own blood for the redemption of the Bride. He purchased her with that same blood and now appears in the early Church age as Victor.

Revelation 19:14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

John saw a vast multitude clothed in white. “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:13, 14).

Revelation 19:15. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Paul tells us that this sharp sword is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). The writing of Isaiah becomes relevant to the day of this great destruction. “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine

anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (Isaiah 63:3, 4).

Revelation 19:16. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Now they could read His name and know Who He is. Yet they repented not of their wickedness. Destruction awaits those who go day after day with an unrepentant heart.

The beast and the kings of the earth array themselves against Jerusalem (19:17-21)

Revelation 19:17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

Revelation 19:18. That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

Jesus fought His Armageddon and won the victory on the hill called Golgotha. Now the Armageddon of Jerusalem, because of their unbelief, is about to be fought. The banner of eagles being carried by those sent to fight against Jerusalem is already in view. So He calls them to devour the carrion of this body of legalistic Judaism, which is already dead. Nothing will be left, not one stone standing on another that shall not be torn

Revelation 19:19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" [An eminent range of mountains where there is pleasant, precious fruit (thing)] (Revelation 16:16). See chapter sixteen of Revelation for a review of this definition.

Revelation 19:20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

At the ending of the first cycle, we saw a great change, "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." (Revelation 8:5). At the end of the second cycle, we again saw a great change, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

At the end of this third cycle we see Jerusalem destroyed by the very beast that had deceived her. Not only is she taken into the net of God, but also the beast was taken, "and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Revelation 19:21. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

This sword of the Spirit, which proceeded out of the mouth of God and of Christ, slays all deceivers. None can stand before Him which sat upon the white horse.

Review:

“At the end of this third cycle we see Jerusalem destroyed by the very beast which had deceived her. Not only is she taken into the net of God, but also the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Excerpt from Chapter 19).

Sandwiched between the destruction of Jerusalem in Chapter 19, and the description of the New Jerusalem (Church Kingdom in the earth) Chapter 21, we are shown the end result of the battle between Christ and the Devil. Not only was the battle eternally won, but also Satan was cast into the bottomless pit. Here he is bound during the reign of Christ and His Church. His power is limited to the degree to which God will allow him to test the children of God. Then John saw Satan cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. The victory is forever won!

Satan bound in the bottomless pit (20:1-3)

Revelation 20:1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Revelation 20:2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

The main thought of these verses is the word bound. In the Greek the word translates *deo*, a primary verb meaning to bind (in various applications, literally or figuratively). Let us examine the following passages. “Then said the king to the servants, Bind [*deo*] him hand and foot,” (Matthew 22:13), “Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied [*deo*]” (Matthew 21:2), “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind [*deo*] on earth shall be bound in heaven” (Matthew 18:18). In the verses under consideration the Scripture uses another powerful metaphor. We are approaching the highly descriptive language John uses to describe the Church²³. We must not lose this meaning of the binding of Satan. The binding angel was one with authority: he had the key to the bottomless pit. He comes with a great chain²⁴ in his hand. This bottomless pit does not mean the same thing as the lake of fire and brimstone. This bottomless pit is not the place of eternal punishment. Satan is bound in the sense that he can do no more than God will allow him to do. This binding of Satan is for a period of time. The terminology, a thousand years, is expressed in metaphoric language. David uses this metaphor in Psalm 90:4, “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” Peter uses this same metaphor, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8). Time is not the primary factor. Purpose has more to do with the actions of God than does a limited time. Let us examine the purpose for this binding of Satan.

Revelation 20:3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

God uses the decline of civilization to work His purpose:

The purpose of God in this binding of Satan was for a limited time. He should deceive the nations [ethnos, a race (as of the same habit), i.e. a tribe] no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled. The *nations* under consideration are God's people of every kindred, nation, or tongue. God uses the decline of civilization to work His purpose.

²³Revelation, Chapter 21 and 22.

²⁴*halusis*, hal'-oo-sis; of uncertain derivation; a fetter or manacle.

History records the third, fourth, and fifth centuries A.D. as the most discouraging periods in Roman history. The culture and civilized life, which had been so long in the making, slowly declined. When large estates replaced small farms, commerce and industry declined. As it became difficult for men to farm and carry on business, most of the people in the empire became discouraged with life, and cared little about their civilization or their empire. What does this have to do with Satan being bound? Allow me to quote you two paragraphs from history²⁵. "These discouraged people sought comfort in religion - but what religion? As most of them had lost faith in their own gods, they tried various cults that came from the Near East. But the more men tried other gods, the more they came to think that some one god must be greater than all others, perhaps the only god. The Christians believed in one God, and they would worship no others, not even the gods of the Roman state. For this they were persecuted. But they were so sure about their God, and their faith gave them such comfort in their troubles, that they increased in numbers and organized themselves into a Christian church." Eventually they won a great victory. The Emperor Constantine gave them freedom to worship, and later emperors recognized their church.

This church, as we shall see, became stronger than the Roman Empire because men came to be more loyal to their church than they were to their empire. This condition could not have been possible except *the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan*, had been *bound* for that particular time and purpose of God.

The peace of the Church Kingdom (20:4-6)

Revelation 20:4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Now the saints of God were in charge. We have the words of Jesus, "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration [paliggenesia, pal-ing-ghen-es-ee'-ah; spiritual rebirth, the state or the act, i.e. figuratively spiritual renovation; specifically Messianic restoration--regeneration] when the Son of man shall sit in the *throne* of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). The apostolic teaching was the judgment spoken of here. While Satan was bound there was not the opposition to the worship of God. Rather, there were those who could find no peace any other place who flocked to the Church. When God limits the power of Satan as He did during this period of time, the *ideals* for which martyred saints had died lived and reigned with Christ in the actions of saints during this period. These saints had chosen martyrdom rather than bow to the worship of Caesar. They had not received the mark of the beast in their foreheads, nor in their hands. They retained the *mind of Christ* and the *work of their hands* bore witness of their Godly lives. Saints of God again chose to die if necessary. God does not allow one effort to fall to the ground without bringing forth fruit.

The First Resurrection (Spiritual)

Revelation 20:5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Let us again go to the sayings of Christ concerning this *first resurrection*. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:25-27). This is a spiritual resurrection. "*The hour is coming and now is.*" It is put in the same realm as the words of Jesus and John the Baptist when they both said, *repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Neither of these events was

²⁵Ancient and Medieval History - page 374.

futuristic: they were now, in time! The execution of this judgment concerns the sinner being raised from that dead state of sin and given life (Ephesians 2:1. 6). Jesus bore the judgment of our sins on the Cross of Calvary. The life that is in Christ touches the dead sinner and he receives life. *This is the first resurrection!* Without this regeneration (*spiritual resurrection*), those dead in trespasses and sins will only live to experience banishment from God in eternity. They will only live in a devil's hell.

Revelation 20:6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Paul wrote to the Roman brethren, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:9-11).

The second death is *eternal damnation* (See John 5:29). Only those who shall never know God in the realm of salvation will experience this.

The Millennialist View

There are many who believe this passage to be speaking of a time when Jesus will return to restore the kingdom of David on the earth. Barclay, in his "Daily Bible Study" has this to say about the subject. "In the first resurrection only those who have died and suffered for the faith are to be raised from the dead, according to this picture. The general resurrection is not to take place until after the thousand-year reign of Christ upon earth. There is special privilege for those who have shown a special loyalty to Christ."

To combat this idea, we need only to go to the words of Christ concerning the resurrection of the dead. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). This will be the general resurrection, of both the righteous and unrighteous. There is another resurrection, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:25 -27). This resurrection is *spiritual* in nature.

Gog and Magog defeated and Satan cast into the lake of fire. (20:7-10)

Revelation 20:7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Revelation 20:8. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

These verses raise at least three questions that need to be answered.

- (1) What is meant by the term Gog and Magog?
- (2) What is this battle that is to be fought?
- (3) What is the difference between this battle and the battle of Armageddon?

(1) These names *Gog and Magog* are used metaphorically. They are a people who no longer exist. Therefore, the names are used because of their battle orientation. Ezekiel 39:1 tells us that Gog is the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. Genesis 10:2 gives us the origin of all three: "The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras." Genesis 10:5 says, "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations." According to Josephus they inhabited lands beginning at the mountains of Taurus and Amanus, then proceeded along Asia, as far as the river Tanais, and along Europe to Cadiz; and settling themselves on the

lands which they lighted upon, which none had inhabited before, they called the nations by their own names. Those that sprang from Magog were named Magogites. These Magogites are called *Scythians* by the Greeks. Paul refers to the "Scythians" (descendants of Magog), "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11). Scythia was the name given by the Greeks to an ill-defined area between the Carpathians and the Don River, the western portion of which included the black earth wheat lands of the modern Ukraine. The European tribes who occupied this area in the seventh century B.C. are those to whom most properly the term Scythian is applied. The Scythians appeared in upper Mesopotamia and Syria between 650 and 620 B.C. and another force reached the middle Danube. In the last three centuries before Christ, the Scythians were displaced with the Celts and Samaritans (Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary).

(2) This battle called *Gog and Magog* was to be a spiritual battle. It was carried out during the time when Rome had become complacent because of social conditions. These fierce cavalry legions of Scythians (*Gog and Magog*) are representative of the Apocalyptic conflict of Revelation 20:8. They were so fierce and oriented in the art of desert battle by use of swift archer-cavalry that they frustrated an attack of Darius in 512 B.C. They also beat off Alexander's general, Zopyrion, in 325 B.C. No truer figure of speech could be found for this conflict than the battle of *Gog and Magog*. However, we know they were no longer in existence as a nation at the time John received the Revelation experience. These ungodly nations from the four corners of the world were deceived by Satan and therefore suitable for the conflict. But again we are faced with metaphoric language. The terrible persecution of the Church and the battle against the saints of God was typical of *Gog and Magog*. Satan's best tool was being employed for this battle.

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

They compassed the camp of the saints about. Everywhere individual congregations are gathered this force has compassed them about (360 degrees, full circle). The saints of God were beheaded for the word of God. They were driven from post to pillar as they sought to worship and serve the Christ who has shown them the way. He was delivered up by the Jews, but crucified by the hands of the Gentiles, The offspring of Japheth.

Here is the battle. Rome and her powers in Jerusalem sought every way possible to annihilate the Church. *The beloved city* is the *New Jerusalem*, the Church in the earth. Not only do Satan's forces attack individual saints of God, they attack the very foundation of the Church. The belief of God's people is being tried every day. In the day in which we live, the morals of the Church are being tried as though by fire.

Following what "Ancient and Medieval History, by Magoffin and Duncalf" calls "the reign of the good Emperors," the Roman emperors had again instituted Caesar worship throughout the Roman Empire. There was persecution upon all who refused to worship the Caesars as gods. Upon the destruction of Jerusalem, Christians were driven into all parts of the Empire. As they refused to worship these gods, the Romans surrounded them with persecutions as never before. They literally compassed the camp of the Lord round about. For three centuries Christians had to endure persecution, not because they had a different religion, but because they would not worship as the Romans wished. They were thrown into prison, and torn to pieces by wild animals before jeering crowds in amphitheatres. Even in the face of this awful persecution the number of Christians steadily increased, because of the manner in which they bore up under persecution. As a result, when Diocletian became emperor, probably a tenth of the people in the empire were Christians. When he commanded that all who refused to worship him should be put to death, the Christians suffered the worst persecution they had ever known. Nevertheless, the Christians were about to win a great victory." More and more they gained religious freedom.

God Intervenes by Displacing the Persecutors:

Galerius, who succeeded Diocletian as emperor, decreed in 311 A.D. that Christians should have religious freedom. In 313 A.D., Constantine became the first Christian Roman emperor. In 391 A.D., the emperor

Theodosius decreed that pagan temples should be closed and that old rites and ceremonies should be observed no more. Henceforth, there was to be only one god for all in the empire, the God of the Christians.

Thus the zeal, *fire and brimstone*, of these Christians who were willing to give their lives for the cause of Christ, burned those who had compassed the camp of the Lord. Rome was captured by the Germanic tribes in 410 A.D. (Ancient and Medieval History by Magoffin and Duncalf). This scarlet beast upon which Jerusalem had once ridden ceased to be the power of all the earth. These Romans received the wrath of God being poured out upon them.

Let us observe some passages where God is in charge of the devouring of the wicked. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psalm 11:6). "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:10-12).

This destruction is for all to see. There is a destruction of sin which is as a fire. As the gospel was preached throughout the known world, it burned as a fire that could not be quenched. The more Satan tried to destroy those who followed and preached Christ, the more power came of their preaching. As we consider this great empire and her sins, we should also consider our position as a nation before God. Our morals and carnal desires are parallel with these of the citizens of Rome just prior to her fall.

(3) What is the difference between this battle and the battle of Armageddon?

We have discussed the *Battle of Armageddon* in Revelation, chapter 16. The word *Armageddon* is taken from two Hebrew words, (1) *har*, a mountain or range of hills, and (2) *mege*, a distinguished thing; hence something valuable, as a product or fruit--pleasant, precious fruit (thing). This precisely describes the place where the victory was won by Jesus Christ on Mount Calvary²⁶ and the Cross (Armageddon). Now the aftermath of all this is seen by John as the destruction of Jerusalem²⁷ (Babylon, the great whore), as she sat on the range of hills which make up the site of Jerusalem. An *eminent, distinguished, valuable, pleasant place* known by the whole world as the place where God had visited His people in time past.

By these two events (actually three) we know that the battle of *Gog and Magog* against the early Church was *not* the same as the battle of *Armageddon*. We can say positively that God was the Victor in all of these events.

Revelation 20:10. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

This time Satan is not cast into the bottomless pit, but is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. There is no biblical account of his being brought forth again to be loosed with all of his powers. Yes, God's people are faced with the spirit of Satan from time to time. He can never be loosed again as he was during the persecution of the early Church. We can be assured of the power of our God in this binding up of the full power of Satan.

The White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)

Revelation 20:11. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

²⁶Armageddon - pertained to Christ and Jerusalem.

²⁷Gog and Magog pertained to the persecution of the early Church. NOTE! There was a vital battle fought at Meggido. It was at Meggido that King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah. Jerusalem, along with the temple was destroyed at that time. Now at *har-megged* spiritual Israel is set free. Confusion no more reigns.

After John saw the casting of Satan into the lake of fire and brimstone, he then was shown the One who sits upon a great white throne. Such is His omnipotence that nothing else exists except His righteousness. This is what is commonly termed the *Great White Throne Judgment*. Let us examine this in the light of Holy Scripture.

Revelation 20:12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Jesus taught us concerning this occasion. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). These are all the dead, small and great. This is the general resurrection. This includes all who have died naturally. Jesus simply speaks of this as a division of those who have done well, and those who have done evil. So it seems these are the same as those in Revelation 20:12. We are not told what these books are which were first opened. Yet it seems they contained things that are termed as works. We are very much aware of the self-exalted human nature of man. He desires to be judged on works that he has done. So the books of the law are brought out for the examination of those dead in trespasses and sins. Self-exalted human nature can find no justification of its works when judged out of the books of the law.

“...And another book was opened, which is the book of life.” Under the old Jewish jurisprudence this would have been the book of lineage. Under the Church Covenant this is called “The Lamb’s Book of Life.” The book of Jewish family lineage could be altered, because names were written therein when children were born to a family. The *Lamb’s Book of Life* was written from the foundation of the world. Names cannot be taken from this book. They were given to Christ as His inheritance. Their names were not written there because of any good that they had done. Rather, they were written there based on the work that Christ did. They are *His inheritance!* Their works are imputed as good because of the work that Christ did for them. “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:28-29). The answer of Jesus is very simple as to the nature of this work. The ability to believe on Jesus Christ is the work of God. Heaven and immortal glory cannot be gained by any work which man is able to perform.

This *White Throne Judgment* was not set to judge individual sins! Rather, it was set to show the love of God showered down on undeserving man. These whose names were found in the *Lamb’s Book of Life* entered into the joys of their Lord.

Revelation 20:13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

The sea in Scripture is used often in a metaphorical sense as referring to people. We will not strive with the meaning here, because it will make no difference whether it is a *body of water* or whether it is referring to people living at the end of time as we know it. They shall each come forth at the bidding of Him who created them. However, the phrase *the dead which were in it* is very important. The reason is that this is speaking of all who know not Christ in a salvation sense. They have never been called out of that body of death that plunged all men into sin. They have had no part in the first resurrection (*regeneration*). Not only are they bound in natural death; they shall also be a part of the *second death*. They represent *death and hell*, which are spoken of in the next verse.

Revelation 20:14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Why is this called the second death? Let Scripture speak for itself as the very word of God. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power,” (Revelation 20:6). “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in

that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:9-11). By these blessed words we are assured that they, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life are alive forevermore. They have died in Adam (spiritually, first death) and have been raised (first resurrection) through Christ, and they will never experience the second death. They have passed from death unto life.

Revelation 20:15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7).

All others were cast into the lake of fire. Some might question the justice of this fact. It is self-evident that the better question might be, why were there any whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life? Only God has the answer to these questions. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Romans 9:20).

Section 11 – The Kingdom Changed from Sacrificial Offerings to Grace (21:1-22:5)

...*The Kingdom Changed from Sacrificial Offerings to Grace* shows the final end of this means of temporary, figurative propitiation. No longer will there be an earthly system of figurative offerings to appease the wrath of God, because the only true offering that could ever accomplish this has been sacrificed. Jesus Christ died for the sins of His people, and was raised triumphantly for their justification. Never again will God accept an animal sacrifice. He took away the Temple to add the final emphasis to His ending the defunct system that was still being emptily maintained by the Jews in Jerusalem.

The New Heaven and New Earth (21:1-8)

Revelation 21:1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Revelation 21:2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

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

Here we find a description of the Church being changed from Law to Grace. We have reasons for our interpretation. John calls it *the holy city, new Jerusalem*. He views this as *coming down from God out of heaven*. He sees this as a *bride adorned for her husband*. We shall go into detail as to our interpretation.

The terminology *Holy city New Jerusalem* is used in other places in Scripture. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:12). This is contained in the letter written to the Church at Philadelphia. It is only fair to say this is not pertaining to the eternal heavens. The Church at Philadelphia was more perfect in their love than possibly the other Churches. This is certainly typical to the *Bride of Christ* - the Church in the earth.

Paul wrote to the Galatian brethren, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26). This relationship is spoken of as being established by a birth. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah" (Psalm 87:3-6). The Book of Hebrews speaks of this as the Church, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:22-24). Peter calls Jesus the *Chief Cornerstone* of the Church. Contained in all of these passages is evidence that the Church, *The New Jerusalem*, is now in the earth. I would add hastily that this is not necessarily a body whose names are added to the roll by men. It is the Heavenly Church which was chosen in Christ Jesus from the foundation of the world and whose names are found on the Lamb's Book of Life. John saw her as coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. If this is the eternal heaven which is spoken of here, then the eternal heaven is left empty. Heaven cannot come out of Heaven unless it is a symbol. So the Bride adorned for her husband is a symbol of the Church. At the river Jordan John looked upon

Christ as being the bridegroom. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled" (John 3:29). John considered himself as being part of the Bride and therefore rejoiced because of the voice of the Bridegroom. Paul compared marriage to the Church, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). The spiritual Church -- The body of Christ -- is perfect and without peer in the earth.

Next we hear the proclamation, "the tabernacle of God is with men." Here is another proof of the Church in the earth. "God himself shall be with them, and be their God." *Tabernacle* in the Greek is *skene*, meaning a tent or cloth hut, *habitation*, tabernacle. The proper meaning of this passage is that God will make His abode with His people. Paul spoke of this abode of God in the letter to the Ephesian brethren, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21- 22). Jesus testified to this as being an abode, " If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode (*mone*, residence) with him" (John 14:23). A fulfillment of the words of Jesus, "Behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Revelation 21:4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Revelation 21:5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

These are the words of Jesus Christ and John is told to write them to the redeemed Church. He has given joy instead of mourning, life instead of death. The former accusations against the brethren have been set aside by His death as a substitution for our sins. Former things have passed away and all things are made new in Christ Jesus. Our faith grasps the fact that no sin debt remains against us.

Revelation 21:6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

The words of Christ on the Cross-were, *It is finished*. The One who chose us in the beginning (Alpha) is the same who finished our salvation in the end (Omega). This same One is the Water of Life. He gives to those who are quickened this water to quench their thirst. We can approach at any time we feel that thirst in our lives.

Revelation 21:7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Again we are shown that this refers to an earthly kingdom. If Jesus overcame all things and finished the work of salvation, there remains nothing else to be performed for Heaven and immortal glory. This same one who is receiving the revelation from Jesus Christ gives us the answer to the problem presented in this verse. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5). The word *believeth* in the Greek is *pisteuo*, meaning to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing). Considering that *faith* is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), this *overcoming* is not a condition to be met. It is met in one who is already a believer. Only those who are spiritually alive have *faith*. We cannot leave this passage without quoting from the writer of Hebrews: "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:6). For two other passages concerning this statement, please read Romans 11:20 and Hebrews 3:19.

Revelation 21:8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which

burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

When we consider the Bride of Christ and the unblemished garments with which she is clothed, there is no place for the blemishes herein named. These reside already in the first death (sin of Adam), and they shall have their part in the second death which is the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

External appearance of the city (21:9-14)

Revelation 21:9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Attention is now drawn away from the Old Jerusalem to the Holy Jerusalem. As we view this city shown in the following passages, we look through human eyes. We see a description adorned with the things of highest values to the human mind. Therefore as we read through the next passages, let us realize that things in heaven will be far greater than these.

Revelation 21:10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

Revelation 21:11. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

Revelation 21:12. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel

Revelation 21:13. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

This is the same City as seen by John in Verse 2. This is also a metaphor taken from Ezekiel, "It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there" (Ezekiel 48:35). This is interpreted as "Jehovah-Shammah is there." The metaphor concerns the twelve gates with the names of the tribes of Israel being written thereon. These gates are reserved for the firstfruits of God unto the Lamb. These are the hundred forty and four thousand of Revelation, chapters 7, and 14:1. and the *firstfruits* of Revelation 14:4. They were the first of the Jews who were reaped in the gospel harvest as the apostles followed the route of preaching outlined by Christ. They were to begin at Jerusalem, then to Judaea, then to Samaria, then to the uttermost parts of the earth. The Jews were to have the gospel preached to them before any further outreach. Those Jews who responded were the *firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*.

Revelation 21:14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

We find the counterpart of this in the Ephesian letter, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

Measurement of the city (21:15-17)

Revelation 21:15. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

Revelation 21:16. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

The Greek translation for *furlong* is *stadion*, (*as fixed*); a *stade* or *certain measure of distance*. This is God's measurement of the Church kingdom. The number of God's elect is fixed. None can be added nor taken away. The room is sufficient for all of the chosen of God.

Revelation 21:17. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

Composition of the city (21:18-21)

Revelation 21:18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

Revelation 21:19. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

Revelation 21:20. The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

Revelation 21:21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Again we stress that the beauty of the building is the utmost comprehension of the human mind. The Church can only be seen by the spiritual mind. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10).

Divine glory of the city (21:22-27)

Revelation 21:22. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The Church kingdom is set up in the hearts of men. No literal temple is needed to house God. He cannot be contained in a literal building.

The sustenance of the church in the earth (21:1-5)

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

Revelation 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

This is that water of life which Jesus promised to the Samaritan woman whom He met at the well. "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Revelation 21:6). "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17-b). This water of life is needed to quench the thirst of the Church in the earth.

The tree of life gives the healing balm of Gilead. All nations which bring their praise into the Church are blessed with this tree of life which draws sustenance from the river of life. The Word of God declares that a man blessed whose delight is in the law of the Lord. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3). The Church in the earth is blessed when she depends upon God for her every need.

Revelation 22:3. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

Revelation 22:4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Revelation 22:5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

God has removed the curse of the law by His death on the cross for our sins. He has removed the trappings of the law by the destruction of the temple. His throne is far above all principalities and powers. He sits in the midst of the congregation and is ever present in the worship of the Church when it is done in truth and verity. His servants serve him by glorifying His name and adorning the Church with praise. They indeed see His face in the mirror of their hearts. His name is written in their foreheads and all who converse with them see the evidence of His high calling. And they join in singing a new song before the throne, and no man can learn that song but the redeemed.

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it” (Revelation 21:23-24-a). The natural things of the world cannot furnish light to the Church. Neither light of day nor darkness of night can alter the light which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:4-5).

Section 12 - Epilogue (22:6-21)

The fear will be removed as you finally read the sweet testimony of His eminent return, “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” (Revelation 22:20-21).

Revelation 22:6. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

Revelation 22:7. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Jesus is indeed the Lord God of the holy prophets. The message is that these things must shortly be done. In the beginning of this book, the message was the same: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;” (Revelation 1:1). The message at the end of the book is *behold I come quickly*. All who obey and flee from destruction are blessed. The prophecy of this book is sure and certain.

Revelation 22:8. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

Revelation 22:9. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

This was a strong angel - one of the angels which had the seven vials of wrath. Yet, he was also a servant of God sent to testify of the things which were shown to John. Many follow the worship of angels and the elements of the earth. None of these is worthy to receive the same honor due to God and to His Son Jesus Christ. John was told to *worship God*.

Revelation 22:10. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

Revelation 22:11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Revelation 22:12. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Daniel was told to seal up the vision and prophecy until the time of the end. “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4). John is told the time is at hand. God has closed the door of the congregation against these self righteous Jews and all who reject the prophecy of this book. All men will come before God even as they are now. Every man will receive a just recompense for his deeds. The Greek word for reward is *misthos*, meaning to pay for service. Reward, or payment for services is not a condition of eternity. Grace is not conditioned upon services rendered. Therefore, this is speaking of the time world. The time of no return is past. Let all men remain as they are at present. Jerusalem has passed the time of God’s leniency, and the day of His mercy has passed.

Revelation 22:13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Here are the words of the Just Judge of all the world. There is no higher court to which men may appeal. He is the *First and the Last*.

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

Revelation 22:15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Revelation 22:16. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Here we find further proof that these passages are speaking of the Church. This verse places the responsibility upon the individual. The responsibility lies in doing His commandments. The rebellious Jews did not come to Jesus. He told them, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:39-40). We also hear Him say by way of invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). There were in the time of Jesus, and may be now, those who are outside enjoying the things of the world. They are among the dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. These will receive a just recompense of reward for deeds done in this body.

This testimony is to the Churches. None other than Jesus Christ warns us. He is the root and offspring of David. He is the Bright and Morning Star. We are warned of His sovereign power to do whatsoever is right. Neither the inhabitants of the earth, nor the armies in heaven can question that right.

The Great Invitation (22:17-19)

Revelation 22:17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Quickening the dead sinner to life is the work of the Holy Spirit. Now we recognize a precious truth! This same Holy Spirit, which gave life, now calls to the one God has quickened to come. Also the Bride, the Church of the living God, joins with the Groom in the sweet invitation; then all who hear the chorus join in saying, Come! Now *whosoever will*, the sinner who has his will changed in regeneration, is bid to take of the water of life freely.

Revelation 22:18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

Are you a hearer of the things of God? The hearers are the ones who are endangered by adding to these sayings of Jesus Christ. Read again the plagues which were poured out on those who disobeyed throughout Jerusalem. Jesus says these shall be added to those who go further than the word teaches.

Revelation 22:19. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

There is also a woe pronounced on all who shall take away from the word of God. God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city. I would call your attention to the fact that this is not *The Lamb's Book of Life*. David calls on God to "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psalm

51:12,13). Under the Jewish laws a man was subject to having his name removed from the Jewish book of genealogy. This had nothing to do with eternal things. The *Lamb's Book of Life* is an eternal roll of those chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world. To remove any part of these names would question the foreknowledge of God. David spoke of those who hated him without a cause: "Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart" (Psalm 109:13-16). Their memory would be cut off. Many have been blotted out because of rebellion. Their names and works have been forgotten among the righteous. Jesus spoke again of this in the parable of the branches. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:5-8). The good works of many children of God have been burned because of careless living.

Revelation 22:20. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

As there was great rejoicing among the saints of God when the great whore was destroyed, so is there great anticipation among the saints of God when Jesus comes into the midst and cleanses the body of sin. They can truly say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is His good pleasure to say to His children who are found doing the things commanded them, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."



About the Author



Elder Charles Taylor was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry in 1959. As an Elder in the Primitive Baptist Church, he served churches in North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, and Tennessee. His last pastorate was Grace Primitive Baptist Church in Loudon County, Tennessee, which he helped to constitute in 1987. He was her first pastor, laboring in that vineyard until 1994. Elder Taylor's zeal for the work of the Lord was as great the day he passed from earthly life in 2008 as it was in the beginning of his pastoral ministry, even though the years took their toll on his eyesight and strength. May the God of all grace, and His Son Jesus Christ bless the memory of this humble servant.

Elder Charles Taylor's Testimony: "My desire is that God will bless the work of this book. May all who read it be led through the careful study of it in the same manner of the writer in compounding this work. It is not intended to go through all avenues of God's written word. It is hoped that the era in which the early Church was so active will be seen through the eyes of the reader as [it was] seen by the author. I pray that this study will provoke all who read it to strive for a godly life in Christ Jesus. Let us both give thanks and rejoice in the God of our salvation as we reap the rich harvest of this God given country. God bless you as you read and study."