

A STUDY THROUGH REVELATION

Introduction:

The title, “Revelation” apokalupyij = means “a disclosure,” “a revealing.” Used to describe the revealing of spiritual truth, whether the spiritual truth is a person or a message.

From **v. 1** we are told that this is the **revelation of Jesus Christ**. It is a disclosure from Jesus Christ regarding the end of the age as God destroys His enemies and establish His kingdom.

The book ties all history together. It is the completion of everything.

In Genesis everything begins – in Revelation everything comes to an end.

- In Genesis sin is found
 - In Revelation sin is destroyed
- In Genesis paradise is forfeited
 - In Revelation paradise is regained
- In Genesis death is introduced
 - In Revelation death is done away with
- In Genesis Satan’s reign begins
 - In Revelation Satan’s reign ends
- In Genesis God’s promise of victory is given
 - In Revelation God’s promise of victory is fulfilled
- Without Genesis we would be left wondering how everything started
 - Without Revelation we would be left wondering how everything turns out.

Without Revelation we have little hope. We would be left wondering if God’s promises had any power. We would be left wondering if evil will prevail forever.

In Revelation we see Jesus in a different light.

- In the gospels we saw Jesus as the suffering Servant, as sacrifice and Savior.
 - In Revelation we see Jesus as the conquering King.
- In the gospels we see Jesus in His humility with glimpses of His deity.
 - In Revelation we see Jesus in His glory, power, and authority.
 - We see Him overthrow His enemies, pour out His wrath, and exercise His divine authority to judge the world.

Themes:

The major theme of the book is the wrath of God:

- **Revelation 6:16-17**, and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"
- **Revelation 11:18**, "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."
- **Revelation 14:10**, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.
- **Revelation 14:19**, So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered *the clusters* from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.
- **Revelation 15:1**, Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are* the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.
- **Revelation 15:7**, Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.
- **Revelation 16:1**, Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."
- **Revelation 16:19**, The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.
- **Revelation 19:15**, From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Other Themes:

- God's judgment on the people of the earth – chapters 6-19
- God's establishment of His kingdom – chapters 19-20

- God’s blessing His people – chapters 2-3; 19-22
- “Lamb” used to refer to Jesus 30 times in 28 verses.
- Various new titles and descriptions are given to Jesus.
 - 1:5, 8, 17, 18; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 5:5; 17:14; 19:16

Author:

Revelation 1:1, [The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John](#),

John is the author; the question is which John? Was it the apostle, the son of Zebedee, or some other person named John?

This was not ever a question until the 3rd C. Up until then it was widely believed that the Apostle John was the author.

First century authors, who had firsthand interaction with John, affirmed he was the author.

The basis for any thought that the author was someone other than the apostle was the differences in writing style and vocabulary. The gospel and the three epistles of John has a distinct style and vocabulary that is different from that of Revelation.

The reasons for the differences in style and vocabulary are easily explained. (1) *Much of Revelation was dictated.* Revelation 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5 [In 10:4, John is told not to write what he sees.] (2) *The subject matter is vastly different.* The nature of recording prophecy does not allow for the author to implement his personality. The gospel is mainly evangelistic, the epistles are encouraging Christians to live out their faith. The gospel and the epistles speak a lot about love. Revelation is primarily about wrath and judgment. (3) *The circumstances of writing the books were very different.* John writes Revelation while exiled to the island of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea, off the west coast of Ephesus, when Jesus appears to him and tells him to write down what he is about to see.

Date:

Revelation was written in the mid 90’s A.D., probably around 95 A.D.

The state of the churches and the persecution mentioned in chapters 2-3 indicate a mid 90’s date, which also means that these churches were into the second generation, which is often when ministries veer from the correct path.

It is also during the reign of Domitian (81-96 A.D.) when the persecution of Christians was very significant.

It is a post-Pauline generation [Paul died in 67 A.D.], nearly post-apostolic period as John is the last remaining apostle of Jesus.

Purpose:

The purpose of the book is to facilitate a threefold blessing on the reader, the hearer, and the heeder of the things written in the book (1:3).

It is written to believers (1:1; 22:16) as both an encouragement and a warning. It is a blessing in that it reveals that at the appointed time Jesus Christ will take back control of the earth and will judge and punish every enemy of God.

It is warning in that it gives graphic pictures of the wrath of God and describes the eternal damnation that awaits those who have not trusted in Christ as well as a warning to those who would alter God's Word.

Outline:

There are various ways to outline the book.

The simplest is the one John is given in **Revelation 1:19**, [“Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”](#)

Simple: past, present, future

- Prologue: (1:1-8)
- Past: The things which you have seen (1:9-20)
- Present: The things which are (2:1-3:22)
- Future: The things which will take place after (5:1-22:5)
- Epilogue: (22:6-21)

Visions:

- Prologue (1:1-8)
- First vision: Church age – (1:9-3:22)
- Second vision: Great Tribulation (4:1-16:21)
- Third vision: Second coming (17:1-21:8)
- Fourth vision: Eternal state (21:9-22:5)
- Epilogue: (22:6-21)

Key words “Come, I will show you”

Revelation 4:1, After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Revelation 17:1, Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,

Revelation 21:9, Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

Revelation 22:6, And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

Major Events

- Voice and vision of Jesus (1:1-16)
- Seven letters to the seven churches (2:1-3:22)
- Called to the throne room of heaven (4:1-11)
- Seven Seals (6:1-8:1)
 - Six seals 6:1-17
 - Earthly interlude: Two multitudes on earth (7:1-17)
 - Seventh seal (8:1)
- Seven Trumpets (8:2-11:19)
 - Six trumpets (8:7-9:21)
 - Earthly interlude: Little book & two witnesses (10:1-11:14)
 - Seventh trumpet (11:15-19)
- Satan's attempt to destroy Israel, Michael evicts Satan from heaven, the Beast, the False Prophet (12:1-14:20)
- Seven Bowls of Wrath (15:1-16:21)
 - Six bowls (16:2-12)
 - Harmagedon (16:13-16)
 - Seventh bowl (16:17-21)
- The Second Coming of Christ (17:1-21:8)
 - Destruction of Babylon (17:1-19:10)
 - New Jerusalem (19:11-21:8)
 - Binding of Satan (20:1-3)
 - Millennium (20:4-6)
 - Great White Throne judgment (20:11-15)
 - New heaven & earth (21:1-8)
- Eternal state (21:9-22:5)

Interpretive Methods:

- *The Preterist Method*: Claims that Revelation is a description of historical events from the first century Roman empire.
 - It requires spiritualization of the events and interprets the second coming of Christ as being fulfilled in the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.
- *The Historicist Method*: This view, similar to Preterist in that it views all of Revelation as a picture of history. The main difference is that the *Preterist* see Revelation as a history written “after” the fact and the *Historicist Method* is history written “before” the fact. It sees Revelation as a panorama of the history of the church from the time of John to the second coming. Each of the seven letters represent the next successive church age.
 - It requires allegorization in order fit world events into the text.
- *The Idealist Method*: It sees Revelation as a depiction of the ongoing struggle between good and evil.
 - It requires an allegorical approach to most passages.
- *The Futurist Method*: This views chapters 4-22 as predictive prophecy of actual people and events yet to come.
 - This follows a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of the passages, while allowing for figurative language. [pay special attention to the words “like” and “as”]

I. The Prologue (1:1-8)

Revelation 1:1a, **The Revelation of Jesus Christ,**

Revelation = to unveil, to reveal.

God did not give the Revelation to Christ to inform Him, but to exalt Him.

The events in Revelation lead to the fulfilment of God’s promise in **Philippians 2:9-11**, For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The prophecies of this book are not primarily given to give us information about the things that will happen during the end times.

The primary purpose of the book is to point to Christ in His glory.

- 1:12-20 – Jesus is seen in His amazing glory
- Chaps. 2-3 – Jesus is described in exalted terms as He addresses the seven churches.
- Chaps. 4-5 – Jesus is in heaven as the glorified Lamb who is the only one worthy to break the seals.
- Chaps. 6-18 – Jesus is the righteous judge of the earth.
- Chap. 19 – Jesus is the conquering king returning to the earth.
- Chaps. 20-22 – Jesus defeats every enemy and ushers His bride into eternity.

Titles given to Jesus throughout Revelation:

- **Revelation 1:5**
 - the faithful witness,
 - the firstborn of the dead,
 - the ruler of the kings of the earth.
- **Revelation 1:8**
 - the Alpha and the Omega, (21:6; 22:13; cf. Isa. 41:4)
 - the Lord God,
 - who is and who was and who is to come,
 - the Almighty.
- **Revelation 2:1**
 - The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand,
 - the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands,
- **Revelation 2:8**
 - The first and the last, (cf. Isa. 44:6; 48:12)
 - who was dead, and has come to life,
- **Revelation 2:12**
 - The One who has the sharp two-edged sword
- **Revelation 2:18**
 - The Son of God,
 - who has eyes like a flame of fire,
 - His feet are like burnished bronze,
- **Revelation 3:1**
 - He who has the seven Spirits of God (The fulness of the Spirit. cf. Isa. 11:2)
 - and the seven stars,
- **Revelation 3:7**
 - He who is holy,

- who is true,
- who has the key of David, (cf. Isa. 22:22 – speaks of authority to let people in)
- who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens,
- **Revelation 3:14**
 - The Amen,
 - the faithful and true Witness,
 - the Beginning of the creation of God,
- **Revelation 5:5**
 - the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, (Gen. 49:9)
 - the Root of David, (Isa. 11:1, 10)
- **Revelation 5:6**
 - Lamb standing, as if slain, (28x – 5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4(2x), 10; 15:3; 17:14(2x); 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22, 23; 22:1, 3)
 - having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, (Dan. 8; Zech. 3:9; 4:10)
- **Revelation 19:11**
 - Faithful and True,
- **Revelation 19:13**
 - The Word of God.
- **Revelation 19:16**
 - "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."
- **Revelation 22:16**
 - the root and the descendant of David,
 - the bright morning star.

(1:1b), which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants,

The Revelation was given to Jesus to show His douloij, His slaves,

It is not intended for the non-Christian.

1 Corinthians 2:14, But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

(1:1c), the things which must soon take place;

Soon (KJV “shortly”) = takei = “speed” The root of our word “tachometer.” (counts the RPM’s of a shaft or disc in a machine)

This does not mean that the things John wrote about were to happen soon after he wrote them.

It means that the events described in Revelation will take place quickly, that is in rapid-fire succession.

Three will not be great lapses of time between one judgment and the next.

The most severe judgments take place in just a three-year period.

There will hardly be time to recover from one judgement before the next one hits.

(1:1d), and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

The steps of transmitting Revelation: God – Jesus – Angel – John – His servants

The message that was given to John was communicated by...

- Jesus - 1:10-11, 17-20; chaps. 2-3
- His angel – 17:1, 19:9-10
- An elder – 7:13
- A voice from heaven – 10:4

(1:2), who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

John was an eyewitness to most of the things he wrote (5:1; 6:1; 7:1; 8:2; 9:1), In almost every chapter John says, “I saw...” Only five chapters that DO NOT say, “I saw” (chaps. 2, 3, 4, 11, 12).

Apparently, John was transported to heaven and then through time to watch the scene unfold in heaven and on the earth.

In chapter 17 John is carried away to a wilderness on the earth – where he sees the destruction of earth’s religion, political, and economic systems.

In chapters 17-22 John sees things happening from heaven’s perspective and from earth’s perspective.

(1:3a), Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it;

He who reads (anaginwskw)= Blessing for the reader – the word implies understanding of what is being read and also being read publicly.

Those who hear = (akouw) hears and understands

And heed the things = not a third group but applied to the first two groups. In other words, the blessing is not for those who passively hear the reading of the book of Revelation. It is for those who hear and comprehend and heed the warnings and commands.

(1:3b), for the time is near. = Unlike verse 1, this means that the things that are written are going to begin soon.

Our difficulty is that what is “soon” to us is not necessarily “soon” to God.

Psalm 90:4, For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or as a watch in the night.

2 Peter 3:8, But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

That does not mean we are without hints. When asked when He would return, Jesus answered,

Matthew 24:36-44, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. ³⁷ For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will.*”

Verses 4-8 are John’s greeting to the seven churches.

(1:4a), John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Seven churches in Asia Minor (See map).

We will speak of these churches when we get to their individual letters in chapters 2-3.

But they were Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

These were actual churches that existed at the time John wrote.

Only two of these seven churches are mentioned outside of the book of Revelation.

The first one – Ephesus – mentioned in Acts 18, 19; 1 Cor. 15, 16; 1 & 2 Timothy, and of course, the book of Ephesians.

We know more about this church than any of the others.

The last one - Laodicea – mentioned in Col. 2, 4.

The city of Thyatira was mentioned in Acts 16:14, but only as Lydia's hometown.

These were actual churches that had the actual problems addressed in chapters 2-3.

These churches are also representative of churches that exist today.

Every church can identify with some aspect(s) of one of more of the churches throughout its history.

(1:4b), **Grace to you and peace**, = common greeting

Who the book is from – the Trinity

(1:4c), **from Him who is and who was and who is to come**,

This is a reference to God the Father.

It emphasizes His eternity and His immutability.

(1:4d), **and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne**,

Seven spirit = there is only one Holy Spirit

This is a reference to the fulness or the completeness of the Spirit. **See Isaiah 11:2**

Isaiah 11:2, The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

It seems obvious that the greeting is from the Trinity.

- The Father is mentioned in **v. 4a** and the Son is mentioned in **v. 5**.
- It would be very odd that a non-divine being (or beings – such as angels) would be used in such a way alongside the Father and the Son.
- It makes better sense that the **seven Spirits** are a reference to the Holy Spirit.

The phrase only appears in four verses, and all show the close association with and proceeding from the Father and the Son.

There is further connection of the “seven Spirits” with the Father and the Son.

- **3:1** – Christ is said to have the seven Spirits of God (NIV = “holds” not a good translation. ecwn = “I have” I hold is possible but not best here)
- **4:5** – Seven Spirits of God are seen at the throne of God the Father
- **5:6** – Christ, the Lamb, is seen with seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.

See also **Zechariah 4:2-7**

It is best to identify the seven Spirits as the Holy Spirit.

Note about the number “seven”

Not all numbers have special significance in the Bible. However there are certain numbers that seem to have significant meaning attached to them, such as 12 (tribes of Israel, Apostles).

Almost every time the 12 is used in the Bible it is a reference or a nod to the tribes of Israel or the Apostles.

The number forty is often associated with testing.

- It rained forty days and nights – Gen. 7
- The Children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years – Ex. 16:35
- Moses was on Mt. Sanai for 40 days – Ex. 24:18
- Spy spent 40 days in the Promised Land – Num. 13:25
- Goliath taunted Israel for 40 days – 1 Sam. 17:16
- Jesus fasted and was tempted by Satan for 40 days – Mat. 4:2

The number seven seems to be associated with completeness

- God rested from creation on the seventh day – Gen. 2:2
- Jacob served Laban for seven years (then another seven) to get Rachel for his wife – Gen. 29:18
- Pharaoh dreamed of seven years of plenty followed by seven famine years – Gen. 41
- When Jacob died, his sons mourned him seven days – Gen. 50:10
- The altar of the Tabernacle was dedicated by sprinkling it with blood seven times – Lev. 8:11
- Israel marched Jericho seven times – Josh. 6:4
- Naaman was told to dip in the Jordan river seven times to be cleansed of leprosy – 2 Kings 5
- Nebuchadnezzar was insane for 7 years until he worshipped God – Dan. 4
- There are seven beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount – Mat. 5
- Jesus fed the multitudes with seven loaves of bread – Mat. 15
- Jesus made seven “I am” statements – John 6:35; 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 11; 14:3; 15:1

In Revelation the number seven is used 54 times in reference to at least 15 different things.

- Seven churches (1:4)
- Seven Spirits (1:4)
- Seven lampstands (1:12)
- Seven stars (1:16)
- Seven lamps of fire (not lampstands) (4:4)
- Seven seals (5:1)
- Seven horns & seven eyes of the lamb (5:6)
- Seven angels (8:2)
- Seven trumpets (8:2)
- Seven peals of thunder (10:3)
- Seven heads & seven crowns of the dragon (12:3)
- Seven heads of the beast (13:1)
- Seven plagues (15:1)
- Seven golden bowls of wrath (15:7)
- Seven mountains (17:9)
- Seven kings (17:10)

(1:5a), and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Normally, when the Trinity is listed, Jesus would be second and the Spirit third.

Here John lists Jesus last because he is going to say so much about Him that the mention of the Spirit afterwards would have been anticlimactic.

In addition to the name/title Jesus Christ (which is the last time it is used), John gives three additional titles for Jesus.

- **The faithful witness** = Jesus is faithful.
 - See **Psalm 89:34-37**
 - Speaking of God's covenant with David and David's offspring.
- **The firstborn from the dead** = the first of His kind.
 - See **Psalm 89:27**
 - **Colossians 1:18**, He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

- **1 Corinthians 15:22-23**, For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,
- Jesus is not the first person to be resurrected from the dead – but He is the first person to be resurrected in an everlasting body – fit for eternity with God.
- **The ruler of the kings of the earth** = King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - See **Psalm 89:27**
 - See **Rev. 19:16**

These exalted titles cause John to launch into a doxology (words of glory to God).

(vv. 1:5b-6, To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood-- ⁶ and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father-- to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Notice “**To Him**” John writes a dedication to Jesus.

While the book was written to the churches, it is dedicated to Jesus.

It is like interviewing the President, writing a book about his presidency, and dedicating the book to him.

The book is from Him (1:5a), it is about Him, and it is dedicated to Him (1:5b).

John lists three reasons to praise Jesus:

who loves us = That Jesus loves us is established multiple times in Scripture.

- **John 3:16**, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
- **Romans 5:8**, But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17**, Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, ¹⁷ comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

and released us from our sins by His blood--

God established, from the beginning that the shedding of blood was needed for the remission of sin.

The visual cost of sin started in the Garden of Eden when God killed animals and used their skins to make clothes for Adam & Eve.

The reality of the cost of sin continued in the Law when one would bring their lamb to the Tabernacle/Temple for a Burnt Offering and the one offering it would lay his hand on the head of the lamb and with the other hand, cut the throat of the animal and catch the blood in a container.

Romans 5:8-9, But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Acts 20:28, Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Ephesians 1:7, In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

⁶ and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father

He did not make us “kings.” He made us a kingdom of priests.

KJV says “kings and priests.” Probably derived at “kings” by examining 5:10; 20:4, 6 “Reign upon the earth”, “reigned with Him”, “Will reign with Him.”

The conclusion of the doxology:

-- **to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

That is precisely what this book points to!

(1:7), BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

This is essentially the theme of the book. The second coming of Christ.

This is not a reference to the rapture of the church, but a reference to the second coming of Christ.

When the rapture takes place, we will meet the Lord in the air.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then

we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Jesus will return to earth after the Tribulation

See **Matthew 24:29-30** – notice it is after the “tribulation of those days”

Clouds have played a significant role in God’s interaction with man.

- God led Israel through the wilderness with a pillar of cloud. (Ex. 13:21)
- God was in the cloud when He spoke with Moses on Mt. Sinai. (Ex. 19:9, 16)
- A cloud filled the Tabernacle to signify the presence of the Lord among His people. (Ex. 40:34)
- When Peter, James, & John saw the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, a cloud covered them then God spoke. (Lk. 9:34-35)
- When Christ calls His church home, we will meet Him in the clouds. (1 Thess. 4:17)
- When He returns, it will be with clouds. (Dan. 7:14; Mt. 24:30)

and every eye will see Him,

The first time Jesus came, He came as the servant and many overlooked Him, particularly the rulers of the land.

The religious and political leaders of Israel failed to recognize Him as the King He is. They rejected Him and killed Him, thinking His memory would fade from the minds of people and the pages of history.

But, when Jesus comes the second time, there will be no mistaking who He is.

He will come in such a dramatic fashion, and after seven-years of judgement and the wrath of God.

He will come in the clouds and everyone will know who He is. There will be no guessing or wondering.

“Every eye” is divided into two groups:

even those who pierced Him;

This is a reference to the Jews. Specifically, it is referring to unbelieving Jews.

Acts 2:22-23, Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

While the unbelieving Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Christ at His first coming, many will repent

and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.

This is the rest of the people, the unbelieving Gentiles.

The Jews will mourn

See Zechariah 12:10-14

They will mourn because of their sin and unbelief and because their ancestors murdered their Messiah.

The Gentiles will mourn over their rejection of Christ.

Everyone will know that Jesus is the Messiah – but for most it will already be too late.

So it is to be. Amen. = affirmation that this is the way it will be.

(1:8), "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

The Alpha and the Omega – the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet. A a W w

God is the beginning of everything and the end of everything. This is certainly a fitting title.

God sort of signs His name to the letter.

He authenticates all that is going to be recorded.

who is and who was and who is to come = God is eternal and unchangeable.

The Almighty = He is all-powerful.

II. The First Vision: The Church Age (vv. 1:9-3:22)

John begins to explain how this book came to be.

a. The Circumstances of John (vv. 1:9-11)

(1:9), I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

John is addressing Christians **brother(s) and fellow partaker(s) in tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus.**

By the end of the first century Christians were being blamed for much of the problems in the Roman world.

They were viewed as enemies of the pantheistic way of life and were therefore seen as threatening to the only lifestyle that many of the people knew.

Additionally, Christians would not engage in emperor worship, as most others did (at least publicly). That made them the enemy of the various Roman Emperors.

At the time John is writing, the Roman Emperor was Domitian. Like many other emperors was wicked and disliked Jews and Christians.

John identified with his Christian brothers and sister who were enduring persecution for Christ.

was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Patmos is a small island off the west coast of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).

It is about 13 sq. miles. At the time it was primarily a military outpost

because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus = The grammar allows that John was on the Island of Patmos *in order to* preach Jesus to the people on the Island or he was banished there *for* preaching Jesus.

Tradition and early church fathers hold that John was banished to Patmos for preaching Jesus. This is almost certainly the case.

(1:10), I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

I was in the Spirit = John was under the control of the Holy Spirit in a unique way. This is something beyond normal Christian experience.

Others in the Bible were given vivid visions:

- Ezekiel
 - Ez. 9-10, The departure of God's glory from the Temple
 - Ez. 37, The valley of dry bones
 - Ez. 43, The return of God's glory to the millennial temple
- Daniel in Dan. 7, the four beasts and the tribulation period
- Peter in Acts 10:9-17, the sheet full of unclean animals
- Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, an apparent preview of heaven

God transported John through space and time (probably not physically – though John might not be able to tell the difference. In other words, John was not missing from the island for several hours and then reappeared) to the day of the Lord, the Tribulation, and beyond.

On the Lord's day = not the "Day of the Lord," a phrase most often used to describe the Tribulation and other end time events.

Rather, it was a Sunday. By the second century, Sunday was often referred to as "the Lord's Day," so named because it is the day that Jesus rose from the dead.

and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, = A loud attention getting voice.

- Cf. Exod. 19:16, 19; 20:18; Heb. 12:19 (1 Thess. 4:16)

(1:11), saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

KJV adds "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." This phrase is not found in the best manuscripts, though it does appear in **v. 8**.

Jesus gives John instructions: write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia Minor.

b. John's Vision of Jesus (vv. 1:12-16)

As John turns around, he sees something that overwhelms him to the point of passing out.

(1:12), Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

Verse 20 tells us that the **seven golden lampstands** are the seven churches.

It is best to picture these as seven individual lamps rather than one lamp with seven branches.

The picture is the lampstands are surrounding Jesus and He is tending to the lamps.

Why **lampstands**? Cf. Matthew 5:14-16

Why **golden**? Probably speaks to the value of the church.

As John gives the description of Jesus notice the words "like" or "as" (simile)

(1:13), and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

in the middle of the lampstands = Jesus is involved with His church. He is mindful and aware of what is happening in His churches.

I saw one like a son of man = the title originally comes from **Daniel 7:13-14**, "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed."

Also implies that Jesus looked human, with the notable exceptions.

The description:

- **clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.** = Robe points to royalty - King

- **Isaiah 6:1**, "...I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple."
- The **golden sash** is reminiscent of the priestly outfit.
 - **Exodus 28:4**, These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me.
 - **Leviticus 16:4**, He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments).
 - The priestly outfit would not be identical since Jesus is not a Levitical priest – but a priest after the order of Melchizedek
 - Jesus is called our High Priest in Heb. 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:6; 6:20; 7:17; 9:11-12
- **(1:14), His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow;**

Verse 12 described His clothing, now John describes His physical appearance

- **White** hair is often associated with wisdom
- Compare this description that John gives of Jesus and the description that Daniel gives of God in **Daniel 7:9**, "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took *His* seat; His vesture *was* like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, Its wheels *were* a burning fire."
 - While Daniel attributes this to God the Father, John is describing Jesus.
- **White** is also associated with purity.
- **White** hair implies age or longevity.
- **and His eyes were like a flame of fire.** = The revealing eyes of Jesus.
 - cf. Rev. 2:18; 19:12
 - Similar use in Daniel 10:6 – describing a good angel who visited Daniel.
 - There is nothing hidden from His sight.
 - Penetrating vision = supernatural intelligence.
 - **Matthew 10:26**, Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.
 - **Hebrews 4:13**, And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

- **(1:15), His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace,**
 - Bronze (or brass) was used to cover the items used for sacrifice in the Tabernacle and then the Temple.
 - The Altar of sacrifice was covered in bronze, the laver used for purification (Ex. 27:2, 30:18) was made of bronze.
 - The serpent Moses made to stop the plague was made of bronze (Num. 21:9)
 - Bronze was associated with the sin and burnt offerings, as well as judgment.
 - **Burnished, made to glow in a furnace** = purity
 - Feet are associated with judgment and dominance. (Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25)
 - It seems best to see this as pointing to the pure judgement of Jesus.

- **and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters.**
 - Loud and authoritative. Cannot be ignored.
 - **Ezekiel 43:2**, and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.

- **(1:16), In His right hand He held seven stars,**
 - **Right hand** is the place of honor and protection
 - Psalm 110:1
 - **Seven stars** = Either angels or human messengers – most likely human messengers.
 - Not likely that each church has a guardian angel.
 - It would not be necessary for God to tell John to write a letter to his angels and then deliver it to the churches.
 - A human messenger fits best.

- **and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword;**
 - a large broad sword
 - **sharp two-edged** = cuts both ways.
 - See **Rev. 2:12, 16** – judgment against His own
 - See **Rev. 19:15, 21** – judgment against enemies

- The sharp two-edged sword is also identified as the Word of God. (Eph. 6:17)
- **and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.**
 - Glory
 - Matt. 17:1-2 – the Transfiguration.

Summary of what John saw and what these things indicate about Jesus.

- Jesus is seen in the midst of His churches tending to them
 - He is the King/Priest who has the authority to command the churches
 - He has perfect wisdom and supernatural knowledge that enables Him to see the truth of each of the churches.
 - His judgement of the churches is pure and undefiled.
 - His authority cannot be denied
 - He has the authority over and the right to judge the churches.

c. The Message of Jesus to the Churches (1:17-3:22)

[Excursus on the seven churches representing eras in church history]

Jesus gives John instructions: write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia Minor.

Why those seven churches?

There were certainly more churches at that time: Thessalonica, Corinth, Colosee, Galatia, Jerusalem, Rome, etc.

There are few theories as to why these specific churches were chosen.

One that has become very popular is that these seven churches represent seven successive stages of church history.

I do not know when this theory started, but Luis Talbot included it in his commentary on Revelation that was published in 1937.

There is no textual reason to take this view, but because it has been so popular, I want to explain it to you and then give some reasons why it is not as strong of a reason as many people think.

- Ephesus – the Apostolic Church age – 70 A.D. – 150 A.D. [80 years]
 - Commended for their love but condemned for leaving their first love.
 - Smyrna – the Persecuted Church age – 150 A.D. – 314 A.D. [164 years]
 - Estimates that five million Christians were martyred during that period of time.
 - That ended when Constantine declared Christianity to be legal in the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D.
 - Pergamum – the Church that Married the World – 314 A.D. – 590 A.D. [276 years]
 - The church overlooked idol worship and accepted the pagan worship of false gods.
 - Thyatira – the Church in the Dark Ages – 590 A.D. – 1500 A.D. [910 years]
 - The church was heavily involved with paganism, though they did some good.
 - Sardis – the Dead Church – 1500 A.D. – 1750 A.D. [250 years]
 - This was the church during the Reformation
 - Philadelphia – the True Church – 1750 A.D. - ?
 - No condemnation for this church
 - Laodicea – the Apostate Church - ? – the return of Christ
 - This is a nauseating church that excluded Christ for its worship.
-
- The dates can only be assumed in retrospect.
 - In truth, there have been persecuted churches throughout its history.
 - There were persecutions during the Apostolic age – in fact probably more persecutions per capita than in the next era.
 - There was plenty of persecution happening between the late 1400’s – the mid 1500’s.
 - It all depends upon what part of the world you are in as to whether or not you are part of the persecuted church. China has been persecuting Christians for hundreds of years.
 - There have been worldly churches since there have been churches.
 - Corinth was a very worldly church
 - There are many “Christian” churches that look and act just like the world today.
 - It depends on which church you are standing in at the moment as to whether or not they are worldly.
 - There have been dead churches for over a thousand years.
 - At the same time there were dead churches, God had His remnant of holy churches.
 - The true church has always existed
 - If it had not, there would not be a true church today.
 - The Apostate Church
 - While there are certainly many apostate churches today – they have always existed.

It is best to see the seven churches actual churches that existed at the time and were experiencing the actual problem (or successes) that John writes about.

In every era of church history – each church could relate with one or more of the seven churches. They were experiencing the same challenges or problem to one degree or another.

In the history of each individual church, it can identify with one or more of these churches throughout its lifetime.

The admonitions at the end of each letter are applicable to every church.

John acts as a secretary to Jesus. As Jesus dictates the letters to the seven churches John writes them down.

Each letter is addressed to the “angel,” the human leader of each church and each letter ends with the same statement: “[He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.](#)”

The seven letters (mostly) follow the same pattern: Introduction, commendation, condemnation, exhortation. The exceptions are no condemnation for Smyrna, or Philadelphia, no commendation for Laodicea. Ephesus and Sardis have statements of commendation before and after the condemnation.

1. Message to Ephesus (2:1-7)

Ephesus was a port city in what is modern-day Turkey.

The church had some of the best-known pastors of any church in history.

The gospel came to Ephesus through Paul during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-22). He left the husband & wife team of Aquila and Priscilla.

The church was established during Paul’s third missionary trip when he met some disciples of John the Baptist there (Acts 19:1-7).

Paul performed many miracles there (Acts 19:12)

There was a tremendous moving of the Spirit there, many who practiced magic brought their magic books, etc. and burned them, the value of which was more than 50,000 pieces of silver, which was approximately equivalent to 138 years wages for the average rural worker (Acts 19:19).

Paul stayed in Ephesus for three years, longer than any other city where he planted a church (Acts 20:31).

Paul’s protégé, Timothy, was one of the church’s early pastors (1 Tim. 1:3).

The great preacher Apollos preached there (Acts 18:24-28).

Tradition says that the Apostle John was the pastor of the church after he was released from banishment.

More inspired Scripture was written to or from Ephesus than any other church (Eph., 1&2 Tim., 1,2&3 John, Rev. 1 Cor. was written from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8). It is possible that they were the first to receive a copy of the Gospel of John.

- Introduction: (2:1)

Revelation 2:1, To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

The **angel** – the human messenger, leader, pastor of the church. The one responsible for communicating the contents of the letter to the people.

The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand = Jesus. See **1:16, 20**

the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands = Jesus. See **1:12, 20**

The titles show the authority of Jesus to make the statements and commands that He does. They are ultimately His churches and He has a right to commend, condemn, and command.

- Commendation: (2:2-3, 6)

Revelation 2:2-3, I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false; ³ and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.

Christ was well aware of what was happening in the church. He has full and complete knowledge

I know your deed = this was a church with a lot of things going on. The church calendar was full.

They were busy doing ministry, there was always something happening, there was plenty of opportunity to be involved.

They were doing good things; they were doing ministry things.

Your toil and perseverance = They worked hard. They worked to the point of exhaustion.

that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false = They defended the faith. They confronted false doctrine and false teachers.

As the notoriety of the Apostles grew so did the number of men who claimed to be Apostles but were not. Word would have gotten around, “Don’t bother going to Ephesus if you are not a true Apostle, they will run you out of town!”

The prevalence of false apostles - **2 Corinthians 11:12-15**, But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. ¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Paul’s warning to the Ephesian church - **Acts 20:28-30**, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Revelation 2:6, Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

These were followers of Nicholas.

Early church fathers seem to believe that it is the Nicholas mentioned in Acts 6:5 as one of the deacons of the first church in Jerusalem.

It is uncertain if Nicholas, the proselyte from Antioch, became apostate or his teaching were misinterpreted.

In either case, the Nicolaitans promoted a very loose Christian liberty that included eating meat that had been sacrificed to an idol and sexual indulgence.

They were antinomian (no law) and had Gnostic (special knowledge) tendencies.

So, Ephesus was a hard-working church and practiced correct doctrine.

- Condemnation (2:4)

Revelation 2:4, But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

They *left* not lost their *first love*.

It was most likely a gradual leaving.

They were still busy – but their effort became more mechanical, more habit or duty than passion and desire.

Their love had diminished and grown cold.

Like a fire that slowly dies out leaving everyone cold. The flame of their desire for Christ was nothing more than a dimly glowing wick.

They left their love for God, for Christ, for each other, and for the lost.

- Exhortation (vv. 5, 7)

Revelation 2:5, *Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.*

Three imperatives (commands):

- **Remember** – from where you have fallen. (A present, active, imperative of *mnēmoneuō*)

Remember when you were aware of your first love.

- Remember when you expressed it regularly
- Remember when you studied God's Word
- Remember when you were not embarrassed to tell others about Christ
- Remember when you wanted to know Christ better and better
- Remember when your sin grieved your heart
- Remember when you promised God that you would do whatever He wanted you to do

Remember! Search the archives of your memory for the love that you once had for Christ.

You have **fallen**, as it were, off a cliff.

- **Repent** – (aorist, active, imperative of *metanoō*)
 - Turn from the current path you are on.
 - You must recognize the sin of loveless orthodoxy and passionless procedures in the church.
- **Return** – **and do the deeds you did at first**. (aorist, active, imperative of *poieō*)
 - Do the things you did when you were first motivated by love.

- God is more pleased by imperfect, imprecise service that comes from a heart of love than He is by highly polished service that comes out of habit.
- Labor is not a suitable substitute for love.

Warning: or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.

Failure to remember, repent, and return will result in putting out of their light. God wants His churches to represent Him correctly and when a church is no longer motivated by love for Him and for others – God will eliminate the church.

A church is accountable to Christ. We must be the church He calls us to be. He has the authority to command and even condemn us.

Revelation 2:7, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches = this sentence appears at the end of all seven letters.

Notice that the word “churches” is plural. In other words, it does not say, “Let him hear what the Spirit says to you.”

The exhortations given to each church are for all churches.

To him who overcomes = true Christians.

1 John 5:4-5, For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith. ⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

To overcome is to be a believer in Christ. It is to be separate from the world by being made a citizen of God Kingdom.

I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God. = Speaks of the eternal state.

See Rev. 22:2, 14

This signals the return to Paradise – the end of the curse and return of perfection.

Genesis 2:9, Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:22, Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever "

Revelation 22:3-5 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

2. Message to Smyrna (2:8-11)

Smyrna (a form of the word “myrrh”) it was a port city about 35 miles north of Ephesus. Today the city is Izmir, the 3rd largest city in Turkey.

At the time John was writing, the city of Smyrna was loyal to Rome. There were multiple temples to false gods in the city.

In Smyrna there were temples to At least six different gods & goddesses (Zeus & Aphrodite and their children Apollo, his twin sister Artemis, and sister Tyche. Additionally, there were temples to Cybele, and Dionysus).

Polycarp (who was a disciple of John the Apostle) was a leader of the church of Smyrna. At some point he was burned at the stake and stabbed to death in Smyrna, possible 155 A.D.

- Introduction (v. 8)

Revelation 2:8, [And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:](#)

[The first and the last](#) – See **1:17, 22:13**

This is an Old Testament title for God the Father.

Isaiah 44:6, Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

Isaiah 48:12, Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last.

[who was dead, and has come to life](#) = Clearly this is a reference to Jesus. See **1:18**

The use of this title gives assurance to the severely persecuted church where believers are going to be killed for the faith.

- Commendation (vv. 9-10)

Revelation 2:9, 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

They would experience tremendous spiritual and physical trouble because they would not conform to the public around them.

Since the majority of the city worshipped the emperor they persecuted the Christians who refused because they feared what the emperor might do if/when he found out that there was a group of people who refused to worship him.

I know your tribulation = Sometimes it can feel like God is unaware of our troubles.

The thought is something along the lines of, "If God knew how I am struggling, if He understood how much pain I am in – He would do something about it, He would change my circumstances, He would stop the pain."

And poverty = This is almost certainly financial poverty. It is probable that the persecution they endured stretched to their ability to make a living as the public joined together against them.

Like Christians in the Shin state of Myanmar, who were run out of town and fired from job and had their homes burned down.

(but you are rich) = they were spiritually wealthy because they had Christ. They were storing up treasure in heaven.

and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not = There were Jews in the city, but they had apparently abandoned their faith and aligned with paganism and idol worship.

These Jews were Jews physically, but they were not the spiritual children of Abraham (Rom. 2:28-29).

They probably leveled accusations against the Christians.

but are a synagogue of Satan = Those Jews made up a church, a body of people who have the same beliefs, but they do not belong to God. Jesus identifies who they really worship, who they really belong to – Satan.

- No Condemnation
- Exhortation (vv. 10-11)

Revelation 2:10, 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'

Jesus knows exactly what His church will face. As He walks among His churches, He knew people would be killed for the faith.

Yes, He could have stopped it, but it is part of His sovereign plan.

Jesus is not the source of the suffering – that is the *devil*.

About to cast some of you into prison = This means that it was official persecution, not merely an angry mob of people.

They would *be tested* (like Job and Jesus).

They would have *tribulation for ten days* = probably indicates severe tribulation, but for a limited time.

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. = Some will die in the persecution.

The word used for “crown” is *stefanoj* = a laurel wreath, a crown of victory; as opposed to a diadem, a crown of royalty.

The *crown of life* is given to all true believers.

2 Timothy 4:8, in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

James 1:12, Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

1 Peter 5:4, And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

See **Rev. 3:11; 4:4, 10**

This promise, in a practical sense, is equivalent to eating of [the tree of life](#) in [2:7](#).

Revelation 2:11, [He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.](#)

[Second death](#) = the Lake of Fire. See **Rev 20:14; 21:8**.

Notice that overcoming is the sign that one is a true believer (See notes on [2:7](#)).

3. Message to Pergamum (2:12-17)

Pergamum was about 65-70 miles north of Smyrna. It is the northern most of the seven churches.

It is located 15 miles inland.

It served as a capital city in Asia. The Roman author, Pliny (A.D. 23 – 79) called Pergamum “by far the most distinguished city in Asia.”

It contained the second largest library in the ancient world (the largest was in Alexandria, Egypt). It contained over 200,000 handwritten works.

Pergamum is credited with the development of parchment (animal skin).

There were multiple pagan temples. Emperor worship was also prominent, and they were the first to build and dedicate a temple specifically to worship the Roman Emperor.

Christians were persecuted for not participating in emperor worship.

Today, it is the Turkish city of Bergama.

- Introduction (2:12)

Revelation 2:12, [And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:](#)

See [1:16](#).

As mentioned before the sword is the Word of God and is used as an instrument of

- defense for the Christian – **Ephesians 6:17b**, [the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.](#)
- discipline for the Christian – **Hebrews 4:12**, [For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.](#)

- and judgment against God's enemies – Matthew 4, Jesus used the Word of God to battle Satan.
- In this context it is an instrument of punishment. **See 2:16**

- Commendation (2:13)

Revelation 2:13, 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

you dwell, where Satan's throne is = Christ affirms that He is fully aware of what the church is going through.

With the number of pagan temples, including a massive altar to Zeus, and emperor worship all combine to refer to Pergamum as *Satan's throne*.

Satanic power was entrenched in Pergamum.

you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith = There were many in the church who remained loyal to Christ in the face of enormous pressure and persecution from the world.

even in the days of Antipas My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. = This is not Herod Antipas, but a member of the church who was killed for the faith. Perhaps he was the first to be killed. Perhaps he was killed in a pagan temple.

- Condemnation (2:14-15)

Revelation 2:14, 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit *acts of immorality*.

In Numbers 22-24, Balaam was a prophet for hire.

Balak, king of Moab hired Balaam to curse the nation of Israel, because he feared they would take over his land. (Num. 22:2-7)

Three times Balaam tried to curse Israel, but God would not let him and caused him to bless Israel instead.

So, Balaam devised a different way to defeat Israel. (Num. 31:16) He told Balak to send the women of Moab to seduce the men of Israel and weaken the nation from the inside.

They did, but God sent a plague to begin killing the Israelites. It only stopped when Phineas, Aaron's grandson, took a spear and pierced an Israelite woman and Moabite woman in the act of adultery. Twenty-four thousand died in the plague (Num. 25:1-9)

Apparently, there was some in the church who were teaching others to ignore God's commands and eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols and to commit immorality, perhaps in acts of worship, otherwise as an act of Christian liberty.

These things [put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel](#).

There was no concern for the spiritual wellbeing of others.

Revelation 2:15, ['So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans](#).

See notes on **2:6**.

The implication is that they knew these things were happening in the church and they were tolerating it or turning a blind eye to it or perhaps engaging in the very same things.

- Exhortation (2:16-17)

Revelation 2:16, [Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth](#).

The exhortation is to repent, to turn away from the sin. Stop allowing that sin to go undealt with in the church.

Change your mind in such a way that it changes your behavior.

The church was ripe for God's judgment.

God expects His church to be pure.

The church was overlooking immoral behavior in the church - **1 Corinthians 5:6-7**, [Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?⁷ Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.](#)

Galatians 6:7, [Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.](#)

Hebrews 12:5-6, MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; ⁶ FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.

If the church does not repent, Jesus will make war with them.

Revelation 2:17, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

All truly born-again people are **overcomers**. The lifestyle and choices of a genuine Christian lead them to overcome the world. Those who become like the world and never repent give evidence that they were never truly Christians.

to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna = Manna is the wafer that God used to feed the Children of Israel as the wandered through the wilderness. Jesus uses it metaphorically to refer to His provision and sustaining of His people.

and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it. There are all kinds of speculations as to what the **white stone** is.

- Some say it is a diamond – the most precious of stones, symbolizing the precious gift of salvation.
- Some say it is a victory stone, similar to the laurel wreath.
- White often symbolizes purity combined with the new name, it may symbolize becoming a completely pure new creature when we are in the presence of God.
- The new name is likely related to our personal relationship with Christ. It will have special meaning between us and Christ alone.

4. Message to Thyatira (2:18-29)

Thyatira is about 35-40 miles SE of Pergamum. It was the smallest of the seven cities. It was actually built to slow the advance of an invading army to allow the residents of Pergamum to escape. It was essentially a speed bump and was destroyed and rebuilt multiple times. Each

invading army would destroy it in order to reach Pergamum and then rebuilt it as a way to slow the next invading army.

There is no biblical record of the founding of the church.

Lydia, the first convert in Philippi, was from Thyatira (Acts 16:14).

It is possible that she had something to do with the founding of the church, though it is merely speculation.

Lydia was a seller of purple fabric (Acts 16:14) and Thyatira was known for its textile trade.

The textile trades and others in Thyatira formed guilds (precursors of modern-day unions). There were more known guilds in Thyatira than any other city.

There were guilds for woodworkers, linen workers, tanners, potters, bakers, and bronzesmiths. The dyeing and manufacturing of woolen goods seems to have been the largest business.

Membership in one of the guilds was required if you were to do any work that had a guild.

Each guild had their own guardian god and would have regular feasts honoring their god and giving thanks to it.

After the meal, these celebrations became very immoral.

Christians, who had to be part of the guilds in order to work faced a significant dilemma. To refuse to attend the meal would be tantamount to rejecting the guilds god and would probably been met with severe persecution. To refuse to participate in the debauchery after the meal would have been met with ridicule.

- Introduction (2:18)

Revelation 2:18, *And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:*

The Son of God – this title is not from John’s earlier vision.

Though this is the only place in the book where Jesus is referred to as the Son of God, the concept is alluded to in **1:6; 2:27; 3:5, 21 (“My Father”)** & **14:1 (“His Father”)**

By using this title, Jesus is declaring that He has the divine right to judge the churches.

who has eyes like a flame of fire = **(1:14)**, also used at the second coming of Christ in **19:12**

The revealing eyes of Jesus. There is nothing hidden from His sight and therefore He judges righteously.

His feet are like burnished bronze = (1:15) It seems best to see this as pointing to the pure judgement of Jesus.

- Commendation (2:19)

Revelation 2:19, I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

Deeds = General conduct.

Specifics:

- Your love = (agaph) The cardinal virtue of the Christian love.
- Faith = Faithfulness, firm commitment to Christ.
- Service = (a form of the word used for deacon) Helping others
- Perseverance = Endurance
- Deeds of late are greater than at first = unlike the church in Ephesus, who needed to go back and do their first works, this church was working harder than it ever had. They were progressing.

This church is proof that you can be a loving and busy church and still miss the mark.

- Condemnation (2:20-23)

Revelation 2:20, But I have *this* against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit *acts of immorality* and eat things sacrificed to idols.

There was a woman in the church, Jezebel is probably not her real name, who was leading people astray and leading them into sin.

She has the same wicked heart as the Jezebel who was married to the wicked king of Israel, Ahab. (1 Kings 16:30-33).

- She was a gentile from Sidon and worshipped Baal.
- Ahab built a Temple to Baal in Samaria
- Jezebel declared open season on the prophets of God and started having them all killed (1 Kings 18:4,13).
- After Elijah killed the 450 prophets of Baal, Jezebel put a contract out on his life (1 Kings 19:1-2).

- Jezebel orchestrated the murder of Naboth because he would not sell his vineyard to Ahab.
- Eventually (2 Kings 9), Jezebel was thrown out of a window, splatted on the ground and the dogs eat her body, leaving only her feet, the palms of her hands, and her skull.

The church of Thyatira came to **tolerate** the Jezebel-like woman.

They were allowing her to have influence in the church.

who calls herself a prophetess = Not everyone who claims to speak for God, actually speaks for God.

She claimed to be a **prophetess** of God, but actually worked for Satan.

she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols = It appears that the woman was teaching others that Christians did not really need to abstain from the pagan festivals and immoralities associated with them.

Because she claimed to speak for Yahweh, it confused and drew many Christians into sinful behavior.

She was not necessarily trying to get people to abandon the Christian faith, but rather to compromise the commands.

She may have tried to promote syncretism – a combination of Christianity and the pagan rituals.

Revelation 2:21, **I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.**

This may indicate that she was a genuine believer; otherwise it is a repentance to salvation (but there are some theological issues with that view).

Christ graciously allowed her time to repent but she did not want to give up her immoral behavior.

The consequences of her unwillingness to repent:

Revelation 2:22, **Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.**

Physical sickness is not always punishment for sin.

However, sometimes it is.

- **Romans 1:26-27**, For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.
- **1 Corinthians 5:5**, *I have decided* to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
- **1 Corinthians 11:29-30**, For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.³⁰ For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

Perhaps the Lord gave her an STD.

There was also punishment for those who participate in her wickedness – *and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.*

Jesus shows His grace by giving those who sin an opportunity to repent before He punishes them.

The punishment is severe, more than an inconvenient illness.

Revelation 2:23, *'And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.*

Christ will make them sick, if they still refuse to repent, He will kill them with a disease!

The reason is to warn all the churches, so that they will know that Christ *searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.*

Jesus intends to purify His church through either the repentance of His people or through their deaths.

- Exhortation (2:24-29)

Revelation 2:24, *But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them-- I place no other burden on you.*

This Jezebel attempted to persuade others to join her but some resisted.

She claimed to understand [the deep things of Satan](#), but there were some who were not interested.

Dealing with the sinners in the church and the daily challenge of living in such a pagan place was the only burden that Jesus placed on those who had not engaged in the sinful practices of Jezebel.

Revelation 2:25, [Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.](#)

There is still a need for diligence, to hold firm to the faith they have.

They are to keep being faithful in their obedience, their service, their love, and their witness.

Jesus expects His followers to hold fast to their faith until He returns, or they go to be with Him.

Revelation 2:26-27, [He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; ²⁷ AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received *authority* from My Father;](#)

The ones who overcome are genuine Christians, they are marked by obedience.

The Christian will rule and reign with Christ. He is our King, and we reign over all the earth with Him.

Psalm 2:7-9, ["I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ⁸ 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession. ⁹ 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware."](#)

This will be fulfilled during the Millennium.

See [Daniel 7:1-28](#) – Daniel's vision of the rise of Antichrist and the victory of Christ and the reigning of the saints. See [vv. 9-14, 18, 22](#).

See Christ reigning in **Rev. 12:5; 19:15**

See saints reigning with Christ **Rev. 5:10; 20:4, 6**

Revelation 2:28, [and I will give him the morning star.](#)

This is most likely a reference to Christ, Himself.

2 Peter 1:19, *So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.*

See Rev. 22:16

Revelation 2:29, *'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'*

Listen up, churches!

5. Message to Sardis (3:1-6)

Sardis was about 30 miles southeast of Thyatira. It once served as the capital of Lydia.

The original city was positioned on top of a high plateau. There were nearly perpendicular cliffs 1500 feet high on three sides.

The only access to the city was across an isthmus that connected it to Mt. Tmolus to the south.

It was thought to be impregnable and easily defended with only one access point to the city.

Persian ruler Cyrus conquered the city by staging his army at the isthmus while other soldiers climbed the 1500-foot rock face that was not being guarded.

The city is believed to be the first to mint coins in gold.

Its most famous resident was Aesop (Callimachus called him, “Aesop of Sardis.”)

- Introduction (3:1a-b)

Revelation 3:1a, *To the angel of the church in Sardis write:*

Nothing is known about the founding of the church. It has been suggested that people from Ephesus (about 50 miles to the east) came and started the church. There is no way to prove nor disprove the claim.

This is one of the worst of the seven churches (this one or Laodicea is the worst).

The church had grown calloused and indifferent to spiritual things.

There did not appear to be any significant persecution, no significant pressure from pagans, Jews, Nicolaitans, or even false apostles or teachers.

It seems that they just became worldly.

Revelation 3:1b, He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars,

The **seven Spirits of God** = ministries of the Holy Spirit. See Rev. 1:4; Isa. 11:2

The **seven stars** = the leaders of the seven churches. See Rev. 1:16, 20

These speak of Christ's knowledge of the true nature of the church and the authority He has to command and condemn the church.

We must never forget that the church is the Lord's!

- Condemnation (3:1c)

At this point, we would normally be seeing the commendation. But Jesus jumps right into condemnation and the commendation comes as almost an afterthought in verse 4.

Revelation 3:1, 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.'

I know your deeds = There is nothing hidden from Jesus Christ. He is fully aware of what happens in His church and in the lives of His people.

that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead = They were a church of zombies. They appeared to be alive, but that turned out to be a deception; they were actually dead.

Their Christianity was merely superficial.

At some point their faith stopped affecting their heart.

The heart of the church was no longer beating, it was still, and silent, and cold, and lifeless.

They were spiritually dead.

- Commendation (3:4)

Because the exhortation is divided in two sections, vv. 2-3 & vv. 5-6, we will look at the commendation first.

Revelation 3:4, 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.'

Thankfully, there was at least a remnant of believers (Literally, "a few names") who actually lived up to the churches reputation of being alive.

who have not soiled their garments = smear, befoul, pollute

God's moral and ethical standard is viewed in terms of a garment.

Examples:

- **Isaiah 61:10**, I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- **Romans 13:12**, The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.
- **Romans 13:14**, But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.
- **Galatians 3:27**, For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
- **Ephesians 6:11**, Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

In **Rev. 3:4**, It refers to those who have not soiled the purity of their Christian lives with the sin of the world.

See **Rev. 7:14; 22:14**.

This appears to be a minority group who stayed faithful while the majority compromised with sin.

[It is important to remember that the faithful Christians did not have another church option available to them]

Jesus promises a reward to the faithful Christians, **they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.**

God's ethical standard is seen as a **white** garment, often a symbol of purity.

White garments are associated with:

- Jesus
 - **Matthew 17:2**, And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.
- Angels
 - **Matthew 28:2-3**, And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the

stone and sat upon it. ³ And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

- **Mark 16:5**, Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed.
- **Acts 1:10-11**, And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. ¹¹ They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."
- **Revelation 15:6**, and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.
- Saints/ saved people
 - **Revelation 7:9**, After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands;
 - **Revelation 7:13-14**, Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
 - **Revelation 19:7-8**, Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." ⁸ It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.
 - **Revelation 19:13-14**, *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.

and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. = The reward is personal fellowship with Christ.

- Exhortation (3:2-3, 5-6)

Revelation 3:2a, Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die;

It was time to be roused from their spiritual coma and start doing CPR on what little spiritual life they had left.

They needed to use a defibrillator on their devotion to God.

1 Corinthians 16:13, Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

1 Peter 5:8, Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Revelation 3:2b, for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

Their present spiritual condition does not measure up to God's standard.

Their works do not reflect genuine faith.

James 2:14, What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

1 John 3:18, Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Revelation 3:3, So remember what you have received and heard; and keep *it*, and repent.

Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

Three commands: Remember, retain (*keep*), and repent.

They are to be prepared for the imminent return of Christ.

The image of a thief is one who comes and is unwelcome and causes us trouble.

When one is prepared for and looking for the Lord, His coming will be joyous not hostile.

See Matthew 24:42-51; 25:13

Luke 12:37-40, "Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself *to serve*, and have them recline *at the table*, and will come up and wait on them. ³⁸ "Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds *them* so, blessed are those *slaves*. ³⁹ "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰ "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

1 Thessalonians 5:2-4, For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;

2 Peter 3:10-12, But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Revelation 3:5, He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

White garments = v. 4

and I will not erase his name from the book of life =

This should not be taken as a veiled threat that someone could lose their salvation.

The negative is emphatic in the Greek (ou mh), the strongest negative available. "I will *never* erase his name from the book of life."

The strong negative is used to affirm the assurance of their position with God.

The overcomer will *always* be included among those who walk with God.

See Rev. 13:8.

Notice that the name was written from the foundation of the earth and is therefore an act of God's grace and mercy and could not possibly be the result of one's merit.

If God is all-knowing (omniscient), and He is, why would He elect someone from before the foundation of the earth only to later take their salvation away for some subsequent sin?

[Eternal security is related to the nature of Christ's atonement.]

Does the Bible teach that a person's name can be removed from the book of life?

Exodus 32:31-33, Then Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. ³² "But now, if You

will, forgive their sin-- and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!"
³³ The LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

Psalm 69:28, May they be blotted out of the book of life And may they not be recorded with the righteous.

These appear to refer to a book that is basically a human registry.

Cities and towns had registries with the names of all of their citizens. If a person moved or died, their name was blotted out.

The Book of life that Jesus refers to is a registry of those who are saved, those who have been chosen for salvation from before the foundation of the earth.

Daniel 12:1, Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Philippians 4:3, Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of* the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Luke 10:20, Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.

See Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27

and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. = Living for Christ openly is what genuine Christians do.

Matthew 10:32-33, Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Luke 12:8-9 And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; ⁹ but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Christ, Himself, vouches for us. He confesses to His Father that we are His. He claims us, He is loyal to us.

Revelation 3:6, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The usual ending to say, listen to this message. It is from God's Spirit and is vital for you to hear.

6. Message to Philadelphia (3:7-13)

The city of Philadelphia was located approximately 30 miles southeast of Sardis. [or 5200 miles west]

While the name means “Brotherly love” (literally. “love brother” filew adelfoj), the city did not get its name because the people were so loving.

Eumenes II was the king of Pergamum 197 – 160 B.C. and is responsible for building that city. He defeated the Seleucid king Antiochus III and enlarged his rule. He took over the city and named it as a memorial to the loyalty of his brother Attalus II.

There was a major trade and communication route through the city. That made the city strategically important.

The city was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 A.D. and then again in 60 A.D.

- Introduction: (3:7)

Revelation 3:7, *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:*

The description of Christ, in the last two letters no longer looks back at John’s description of Christ from chapter one.

Here, Jesus gives titles that reflect His attributes.

He who is holy = At its core, to be holy is to be sinless but it also has the idea of being set apart.

“The holy one” is used as a title for Christ.

- **Psalm 16:10**, *For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.*
- **Mark 1:23-24**, *Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, ²⁴ saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are-- the Holy One of God!"*

- **John 6:68-69**, Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

It is not merely a title for Jesus is a description of His character.

He is holy and He is set apart for God's exclusive work.

- **John 5:30**, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
- **John 6:38**, For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
- **John 8:28**, So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.
 - Cf. **John 12:49-50; 14:10**

Who is true = what is true as opposed to what is false.

This speaks of Christ's genuineness. He is the true God, not a false god.

The word "true" is often paired with "faithful" (or "trustworthy")

- See **Rev. 3:14; 19:11; 21:5; 22:6**

It is also paired with "righteous" (or "just").

- See **Rev. 15:3; 16:7; 19:2**

Who has the key of David = This identifies Christ as the true Messiah, the rightful heir of the Davidic throne.

Jesus has the authority to open the kingdom to whom He wishes or close I to whom He wishes.

Isaiah 22:22, Then I will set the key of the house of David on his shoulder, When he opens no one will shut, When he shuts no one will open.

In the context of Isaiah 22, this speaks of Eliakim, who was the prime minister of Judah under Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:18).

Prophetically, the phrase is used of Jesus to speak of His absolute sovereign control and rule over the kingdom.

He has the sovereign authority to open and close according to His will and no one and nothing can prevent His will from being accomplished.

who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens = Salvation is available only to those to whom He opens the door.

- Commendation (3:8-10)

Revelation 3:8, I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

I know your deeds = Jesus is fully aware.

I have put before you an open door which no one can shut =

(1) an opportunity for service

1 Corinthians 16:8-9, But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; ⁹ for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

2 Corinthians 2:12, Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord,

Colossians 4:2-3, Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

(2) an opportunity for close fellowship with God

Fits the context of **vv. 7, 9, 11**.

because you have a little power = Not condemnation. Not a criticism of a lack of faith, not a commentary on their wisdom, it was that they were a small church, they were few in number with little power to influence or impact the culture in which they live. God is going to exercise His power on their behalf.

and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. = despite their seeming limited power and influence, the few were faithful. Despite the odds being against them and any persecution

they experienced – they stood firm in their faith, they would not hide or deny their relationship to Christ.

For that reason, Christ opened the door of ministry for them, which no one could shut.

He not only gave them ministry, He promises them protection and exaltation.

Revelation 3:9, Behold, I will cause *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie-- I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and *make them* know that I have loved you.

The same type of people that the church in Smyrna was dealing with (cf. 2:9).

Those who were ethnically Jews but because of their rejection of Christ and their opposition to the Gospel, they were actually aligned with Satan and were no better off than the pagans who worshipped idols.

They did not share the faith of Abraham (cf. Rom. 2:28-29).

This group of Jews were apparently causing trouble for the Christians in Philadelphia.

I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you. = This promise to the church is a reversal of how they were seen at the time and how they will be seen in the future.

God promised Israel that Gentiles would one day bow before them:

Isaiah 45:14, Thus says the LORD, "The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush And the Sabeans, men of stature, Will come over to you and will be yours; They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains And will bow down to you; They will make supplication to you: 'Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.'"

Isaiah 49:22-23, Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations [goy] And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in *their* bosom, And your daughters will be carried on *their* shoulders. ²³ "Kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth And lick the dust of your feet; And *you* will know that I am the LORD; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.

In an ironic reversal, at some point the Jews who rejected Jesus will come and fall at the feet of the Christian and will be compelled to acknowledge God's love and faithfulness to the church.

Those whom they considered to be unworthy, will be shown to be the ones on whom God's favor rests.

But we must remember that Jesus does not count these ethnic Jews to be His children, to be true Israel.

They do not have the faith of Abraham (Rom 2:28-29).

They were not interested in truly knowing and worshipping Yahweh but were still uninformed. They did not savor the things of God.

They were like many Jews today who are ethnically Jews but do not really believe anything they may practice. It not out of a heart of worship, even a mis-guided or deceived heart.

It is like many Catholics today or Christmas and Easter "Christians."

Revelation 3:10, 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance = They have kept the faith. They endured. They persevered. Their perseverance would be rewarded.

I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. = clearly the *hour of testing* is not a localized persecution. It is global.

This is a key verse in the discussion about the order of end time events.

[Excursus on Order of End Times]

The order and nature of end time events has been a topic of discussion since the disciples asked Jesus when He would return in Matthew 24:3.

Things that most Christian theologians agree on:

There will be a time of Tribulation, a Millennium, Jesus will return, there will be an eternal state.

That is where the agreement ends. There are multiple views on the nature of each of those things as well as their order.

For instance:

- There is disagreement on the length, nature, and purpose of the Tribulation.
 - Some groups spiritualize the death and destruction to signify the troubles in this world. Like the rebellion against God, wars, famines, diseases, etc.
- There is disagreement over the length and nature of the Millennium.
 - Is it only one thousand years or does it simply signify a long but indefinite period of time?

Two main eschatological discussions ensue.

The Millennium

The first main eschatological debate is in regard to the Millennium.

The debate centers around the meaning of the “thousand years” mentioned in Revelation 20:1-7.

During the thousand years (millennium):

- Satan is bound in the abyss and no longer able to deceive the nations (vv. 1-3).
- Resurrected martyrs and loyal followers of Christ reign with Him (v. 4)
- After the thousand years Satan is released and deceives the nations to rebel against God and is quickly defeated and cast in the lake of fire (vv. 7-10)

The debate continues over how to understand what the Scripture means by “a thousand years.”

The three main views of millennialism are:

- Amillennialism
- Postmillennialism
- Premillennialism

Amillennialism:

Amillennialism is the belief that the time on earth between the first and second coming of Christ is the millennium.

The word is not taken to mean specifically one thousand years but speaks of a long but indefinite period of time.

This view requires that many passages are taken symbolically. The events of Revelation 19-20 are taken as spiritually symbolic of Christ’s defeat of Satan through His death and resurrection and the victory the Christian has over death and sin.

There is no literal kingdom with Christ as King reigning on the earth during the millennium. Christ is reigning now through His church.

When He returns, He will immediately defeat Satan and the church will enter the eternal state.

The Tribulation are times calamity and persecution that have occurred throughout church history.

Supposed Scriptural support:

- “Thousand” is used figuratively (as opposed to literally) several times (Ps. 50:10; 90:4; 105:8; 2 Pet. 3:8)
- It requires seeing the first resurrection in Rev. 20 as a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2:1-4)
- It requires the resurrection of the saved and the unsaved as the same time (Dan. 12:2-3; John 5:28-29)
- There are saved people during the Tribulation (Rev. 13:7). Since they believe that the tribulation is happening as the same time of the millennium – this is of no consequence.

This view assumes that the church has replaced Israel and that the promises to Israel will be fulfilled figuratively or spiritually in the church.

This view requires the interpreter to be selective when they use a literal interpretation. Many things must be interpreted symbolically, spiritually, or metaphorically.

Postmillennialism

Postmillennialism is the belief that the second coming of Christ will occur after the millennium

This view believes that Rev. 20:1-6 is a long period of time (not one thousand years) when the gospel grows around the world and eventually most people will submit to Christ, which binds Satan and keeps his power at bay.

This view assumes that the church has replaced Israel.

There may or may not be a time of great tribulation before the reign of Christ begins, but for the most part, the ministry of the church will usher in the “Golden Age” and then Christ will return.

When Christ returns to the earth, all judgments and resurrections will take place at that time.

In this view Christ will NOT reign physically on the earth. His reign will be through the Holy Spirit and the church.

Supposed Scriptural support:

- Every ethnic group will receive the gospel. (Mat. 24:14; Mar. 13:10)

- It requires seeing the first resurrection in Rev. 20 as a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2:1-4)
- It requires the resurrection of the saved and the unsaved as the same time (Dan. 12:2-3; John 5:28-29)

This view requires the interpreter to be selective in their use of a literal interpretation. In fact, the view requires that many passages that would otherwise be taken literally to be taken symbolically, spiritually, or metaphorically.

Premillennialism

Premillennialism is the belief that the second coming of Christ will occur prior to the millennium, a literal thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.

This view holds that God's promises to Israel, concerning the kingdom size, quality, and Ruler will all be literally fulfilled during the millennium.

This view believes that the covenants that God made with Abraham and with David are irrevocable and unilateral covenants.

All mentions of Israel in Revelation refer to national Israel.

The purpose of the seven-year Tribulation is to punish God's enemies and purify the nation of Israel so that they will submit to Jesus as their Messiah/King and enter the millennial kingdom.

Many Jews will come to saving faith during the Tribulation (as well as many Gentiles).

Scriptural support:

- The covenant promises to Abraham and David must be fulfilled (Gen. 12:3; 15:7-21; 17:7-8; 2 Sam. 7:13-16) [\[Save covenant discussion for below\]](#)
- The church will be spared from God's wrath (1 Thess. 5:9; Rev. 3:10)
- The church is not mentioned between Revelation 4-19.

This view takes Scripture at face value. This view uses a literal grammatical hermeneutic.

This view sees Revelation 19-20 as a sequence of actual events.

This view sees the binding of Satan in Rev. 20 as a future literal event rather than a present spiritual event.

This view takes promises of a millennial kingdom as literal rather than figurative. (Isa. 11:1-10; 65:17-25)

{**Historic/Covenantal Premillennialism:** Posttribulation rapture, no distinction between church and Israel, spiritualizes Old Testament prophecies (interprets NT prophecies without consideration for OT)}

Preterism

Preterism essentially means “past.” Preterists believe that most or all of biblical prophecy has already taken place.

They claim that the events of the tribulation described in Revelation and Daniel had taken place during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

For that reason, they must date the book of Revelation to about 65 A.D.

They must use a combination of literal and allegorical interpretation, often within the same passage. For instance, the return of Christ spoken of in Revelation 19-20 took place in 70 A.D. but was not a physical coming. Rather, it was a coming of judgment.

This view does not adequately explain things like the Abrahamic covenant, the blessings of the millennial kingdom, or how it is that we now have a new heaven and new earth.

The Rapture

The second main eschatological debate is about the rapture.

The rapture is only debated among those who hold to Premillennialism.

Neither Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, nor Preterist consider the rapture to be a separate event from the second coming. While they may admit that we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:17), they would consider it to be an up then immediately down. It is going up one side of the escalator and turning around and immediately coming down the other side.

Among Premillennialists there are three main rapture views: Pretribulation, Midtribulation, and Posttribulation. There are a few different forms of Midtribulation views such as partial rapture and pre-wrath.

Important note: the word “rapture” is not found in Scripture. It comes from the Latin word *rapturo* which means caught up. It is the theological term applied to the statement in **1 Thessalonians 4:17**, *Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*

The term *caught up* (α[ρ]παζω in Greek) means to be taken away suddenly often by force.

Pretribulation Rapture

The Pretribulation rapture view teaches that the church will be raptured (caught-up, taken out of the earth) prior to the seven-year Tribulation.

This view holds to the imminent nature of the rapture, that is, there are no known precursors to the rapture of the church. It could, prophetically speaking, happen at any time.

All other rapture views must deny an imminent rapture. All other rapture views would have obvious precursors.

Scripture that points to a rapture.

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

- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-17**, *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.* ¹⁴ *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.* ¹⁵ *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.* ¹⁶ *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.* ¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*
 - While these next verses do not point to rapture (per se), they show that we are to be anticipating the appearing of Christ and not living in anticipation of tribulation.

- **1 Corinthians 1:7**, *so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

- **Philippians 3:20-21**, For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.
- **Titus 2:13**, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

A Pretribulation rapture view is the most consistent with a literal, grammatical, historical, hermeneutic.

Seven supporting principles for a Pretribulation rapture:

1. It maintains a consistent distinction between Israel and the Church.

Both Amillennialism and Postmillennialism hold to a blending of Israel and the church or simply claim that the church has replaced Israel.

Though there are clearly some similarities among all God's children in all ages, there remains a distinction between the church and Israel.

The church age began (in God's sovereign plan) as judgment against Israel for their rejection of Jesus. {The church was a mystery until it began}

Israel and the church are two distinct programs of God and have two distinct trajectories.

Israel (as a people) are spiritually blind, but for God's divine purpose.

Romans 11:25-29, For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; ²⁶ and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." ²⁷ "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." ²⁸ From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God's* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; ²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

the fullness of the Gentiles = the opportunity for the Gentiles to receive the Gospel and be saved. It is the divine result of Israel's rejection of Jesus.

While many Jews have received Christ and are part of the church, the nation as a whole has not recognized Jesus as her Messiah, yet.

The Tribulation is a time to purify Israel and prepare them to see and recognize their Messiah, after which God will completely fulfill the promises He made to Abraham, David, and the nation.

for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. = The Noahic, Abrahamic, Davidic, and New covenants are irrevocable covenants. They are unilateral covenants. [explain covenant types]

The Mosaic covenant is bilateral.

As the distinction between Israel and the church becomes clearer, so does the need for a Pretribulation rapture.

2. The purpose of the Tribulation is to prepare Israel for Her Messiah.

While preparing Israel for her Messiah, God also executes judgment on the wicked and thus prepares a redeemed people to enter into His kingdom at the end of the Tribulation.

- Purifying purpose
 - **Deuteronomy 4:25-31**, "When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God *so as* to provoke Him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ "The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD drives you. ²⁸ "There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹ "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. ³⁰ "When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. ³¹ "For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.
 - **Jeremiah 30:4-7**, Now these are the words which the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah: ⁵ "For thus says the LORD, 'I have heard a sound of terror, Of dread, and there is no peace. ⁶ 'Ask now, and see If a male can give birth. Why do I see every man *With* his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth? And *why* have all faces turned pale?' ⁷ 'Alas! for that day is great,

There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it.

- **Ezekiel 20:33-44**, "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. ³⁴ "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; ³⁵ and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. ³⁶ "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. ³⁷ "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸ and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. ³⁹ "As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD, "Go, serve everyone his idols; but later you will surely listen to Me, and My holy name you will profane no longer with your gifts and with your idols. ⁴⁰ "For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I will accept them and there I will seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things. ⁴¹ "As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations. ⁴² "And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers. ⁴³ "There you will remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done. ⁴⁴ "Then you will know that I am the LORD when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD."
- **Zechariah 13:8-9**, "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off *and* perish; But the third will be left in it. ⁹ "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"
- **Matthew 24:15-20**, "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. ¹⁸ "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. ¹⁹ "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies

in those days! ²⁰ "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.

- **Daniel 9:24-27**, Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*. ²⁵ "So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶ "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. ²⁷ "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

- 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27

- Context: Daniel is aware from Jeremiah 25:12 that Israel's Babylonian captivity will end after 70 years.
- **vv. 3-19**, Daniel prays for forgiveness for the sins of his people and for God to turn away His wrath and cause His face to shine on them.
- **vv. 20-27**, God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel with the answer to his prayer.
 - **vv. 22-23**, Gabriel came to give him insight and understanding.
- Daniel prayed for the people of Israel and had Jerusalem in mind. Gabriel answers accordingly.

- **v. 24** – **Seventy weeks** = The Hebrew is "seventy periods of seven." That is 490, but 490 what?
 - Years are the only thing that makes sense.
 - 490 days, weeks, or months would not be enough time to accomplish what this verse says is to be accomplished.
 - The math works when we think in terms of years. (Years at the time only counted 360 days).

- The things that will be accomplished in the 490 years:
- **To finish transgression** – accomplished on the cross

- To make an end of sin – accomplished on the cross
 - To make atonement for iniquity – accomplished on the cross
 - To bring everlasting righteousness – will be accomplished in the Kingdom
 - To seal up vision and prophecy – will be accomplished in the Kingdom
 - To anoint the most holy place – will be accomplished in the Kingdom.
- All this to prepare Israel for the Kingdom.
- **v. 25** – the first seven weeks, the first 49 years
 - Begins with the issuing of the decree to leave Babylon and return and rebuild the temple and Jerusalem.
 - In 445 B.C. King Artaxerxes decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple and return to their worship (Neh. 2:1-8)
 - Ezra will have completed his rebuilding.
 - It sets the stage for Malachi’s prophetic rebuke of Israel
 - That is the first 49 years.
- **v. 26** – After another 62 weeks (with the first seven weeks it is really 69 weeks), the **Messiah will be cut off and have nothing**. Clearly a reference to the crucifixion of Christ.
 - The last three statements in **v. 24** are unfulfilled.
- Gabriel then describes what happens after the first 69 weeks
 - The city and the sanctuary will be destroyed.
 - Its end will come with a flood
 - There will be war and desolations.
 - The Romans invaded Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and destroyed the city and the temple.
- **v. 27**, Gabriel foretells about the Antichrist, the one who **will make a firm covenant with the many for one week**.
- The **one-week** covenant is the 70th week.
 - Halfway through the week (3 ½ years) Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and commit abominations.
 - There is an obvious gap between the 69th and the 70th week.

- That gap is the church age, which was a mystery until God revealed it.
- It is the time of the “fullness of the Gentiles” that Paul spoke of in Romans 11:25.

All the main tribulation passages point to the purpose of purifying Israel to receive her Messiah.

3. The church is excluded from the wrath of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:9, For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

This is not a promise of no difficulty or persecution – it is a promise that we will not experience God’s wrath.

John 15:18-20, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

1 Thessalonians 3:3, so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.

2 Timothy 3:12, Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

1 Peter 4:12-13, Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

These verses all point to man’s persecution of Christians/the church, but it is not God’s wrath.

The Tribulation is a time of God’s wrath and it will be unique.

Jeremiah 30:7, Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it.

Daniel 12:1, Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Joel 2:2, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, *So* there is a great and mighty people; There has never been *anything* like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.

Matthew 24:21, For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

Premise:

- God promised to save His church from His wrath.
- God's wrath covers the entire seven-year Tribulation
- God must remove His church prior to the Tribulation, or He must protect them "through" the Tribulation.

The scroll that is opened in Rev. 6 – 16 describes God's wrath.

The Bible speaks of the church being saved *from* God's wrath.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

rescues (ruomai = deliver, rescue. A deliverance and avoidance of great danger.)

us from (ek= out of)

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11, For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁰ who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

Romans 5:9, Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from (apo = away from) the wrath *of* God through Him.

Revelation 3:10, 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

I also will keep you from the hour of testing = "from" Preposition ek in Greek. It means "out of" or "from." As opposed to dia, which means "through."

The normal reading of Scripture indicates that those who believe in Christ will not experience God wrath but will be delivered from it.

4. The concept of the imminent coming of Christ is key.

This is a crucial element. Only a Pretribulation rapture view can look forward to the imminent return of Christ for His church. All other views would have multiple and obvious precursors to His return.

1 Corinthians 1:7, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Corinthians 15:51-53, Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

The last trumpet = is equated with the seventh trumpet of Rev. 11:15 by Posttribulation and Pre-wrath views.

Trumpets are used many times in Scripture. There were multiple types of trumpet sounds. One call was to assemble, a different sound was to attack, a different sound to retreat.

Today, a bugle is used to sound reveille and taps.

Philippians 3:20-21, For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Titus 2:13, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

5. There is a distinction between rapture passages and second coming passages.

While there is some continuity between the passages, there is enough discontinuity to prove a distinction between the two.

Rapture

Meet the Lord will be in the air

1 Thess. 4:17

It is a time of blessing

1 Thess. 4:17-18

No mention of the kingdom

Saints are given glorified bodies

1 Cor. 15:51-53

Reward

1 Thess. 4:17

It is imminent

See no. 4 above

Returns to the Father's house

John 14:1-5

Believers are taken, only unbelievers remain

1 Thess. 4:13-17

Believers given glorified bodies

1 Cor. 15:51-57

Second Coming

The Lord descends to the Mt. of Olives

Zech. 14:4; Matt. 25:31

It is a time of judgment

Joel 3:12-14

Mention of the kingdom

Matt. 25:31-34

No mention of saints

Judgment

Matt. 25:31-46

He has multiple signs

Matt. 24-25

Stays on the earth

Unbelievers are killed, only believers remain

Matt. 24:37-42; 25:34;

Rev. 19:19-21

No mention of glorified bodies

6. An interval of time is needed between the rapture and the second coming.

Several things happen between the rapture and the second coming that would, seemingly, require some interval of time.

- The judgment seat of Christ
 - **Romans 14:10**, But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:10**, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- The marriage of the Lamb
 - **Revelation 19:7-9**, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." ⁸ It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."
 - **Eph. 5:23-32**

- Salvation of those on the earth after the rapture who populate the earth during the Millennial kingdom.
 - We will reign with Christ (Rev. 20:6), if there are no believers, who will we reign over?

7. The church is not mentioned in Revelation 4-19

If the church was to go through the Tribulation, it seems odd that it is not mentioned during the tribulation period.

It is believed by many that when John is taken to heaven in Revelation 4, that represents the rapture of the church.

Posttribulation Rapture

The Posttribulation view states that Jesus will return for His church after the Great Tribulation.

The church will be on earth and experience the events of the Tribulation.

They believe that the rapture and the second coming are two facets of the same event.

Those who hold this view are selective in which passages they interpret literally, and which passages they interpret figuratively or spiritually.

They hold no clear distinction between Israel and the church.

[There are some dispensational postmillennialists.]

They must redefine certain eschatological terminology, such as the doctrine of imminency. They do not take it to mean something that can happen without warning; only something that will happen soon.

They view the majority of the tribulation wrath as man's or Satan's and not God's.

- They contend that the church was promised it would suffer persecution, therefore it is not likely that it would be exempt from the persecution of the tribulation.
- They contend that all believers of all time **MUST** be counted as part of the church. That would include OT saints and tribulation saints.
- They deny any distinction between rapture and second coming passages.
- They believe that **Matthew 24:31**, **And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. Is to be equated with, 1 Corinthians 15:52**, **in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.**
- **And 1 Thessalonians 4:16**, **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.**
- Because all three are speaking of end times and all three use a trumpet.

Midtribulation Rapture

This view holds that the rapture takes place during the tribulation.

There are a few variations.

Partial rapture view = as a reward, faithful Christians can be raptured at any time during the tribulation. Unfaithful Christians must endure the entire tribulation.

Midtrib rapture view = the rapture of the entire church will take place at the midpoint of the tribulation. They only see the last 3.5 years as God's wrath and actual Tribulation (for that reason, some midtrib people claim to be pretrib.)

They consider the seal judgments and the first six trumpet judgments as man and Satan's wrath, not God's.

Revelation 6:15-17, Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

This takes place before any of the trumpet judgments.

Like some others, they see the trumpet of Rev. 11:15 as being the same as 1 Cor. 15:52 & 1 Thess. 4:16.

Pre-Wrath Rapture

This view believes that the rapture will happen two-thirds through the tribulation. They divide the Tribulation into three periods: "The beginning of sorrows," "The Great Tribulation," and "The Day of the Lord."

They believe that God's wrath only appears in "The Day of the Lord" and the rapture will take place before that.

Those views who do not see the wrath of God throughout the Tribulation ignore that Jesus is the One who broke the seals on the scroll, the angels of heaven performed the judgments written on the scroll, they blow the trumpets, and they pour out the bowls of wrath.

- Rev 6:4 – The second seal, the rider of the red horse was granted the ability to take peace from the earth.
 - Who granted him that ability?
- Rev 6:8 – The fourth seal, the rider of the pale horse was given authority to kill one-fourth of the population.
 - Who gave him authority over death?
- Rev. 6:9-11 – The fifth seal takes place completely in heaven.

- Rev. 6:12-17 – The sixth seal involves cosmic events.
 - Who controls the cosmos?
 - **Revelation 6:16-17**, and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

(a word about different types of covenants: Noahic – Unilateral, Abrahamic – Unilateral, Davidic – Unilateral, New – unilateral, Mosaic – bilateral/ two-party / Suzerain-vassal)

Timeline of End Time Events

- Church Age (ends with the rapture)
- Rapture.
 - The first resurrection (two stages)
 - First stage – church age saints (dead & living)
 - 1 Thess. 4:16-17
 - 1 Cor. 15:51-53
 - Second stage – at the Second Coming
- Seven-Year Tribulation
 - In Heaven
 - Judgment Seat of Christ
 - Rom. 14:10
 - 1 Cor. 3:11-4:5
 - 2 Cor. 5:10
 - Marriage Supper of the Lamb
 - Mt. 22:2-14
 - Luke 14:15-24
 - Rev. 19:9
 - On Earth
 - Antichrist signs treaty with Israel and breaks it 3.5 years later.
 - Dan. 9:27
 - Mt. 24:15
 - God's wrath
 - Mt. 24:4-28
 - Rev. 6-18
 - Salvation of Israel and many Gentiles
 - Rev. 6:9; 7:9-17
 - Satanic activity
 - Mt. 24:21-24
 - 2 Thess. 2:1-12
 - Rev. 13:18

- Second coming of Christ
 - Sheep & Goat judgment
 - Mt. 25:31-46
 - Judgement of Israel
 - Mt. 25:1-13
 - Resurrection of Old Testament saints & Tribulation saints
 - O.T. Saints
 - Psalm 16:11; 23:6; Job19:25-27; Mat. 22:23-32
 - Ezek. 37:12-14
 - Dan. 12:1-13
 - Rev. 6:9
 - Rev. 20:4-6
 - Antichrist & false prophet cast into the lake of fire
 - Rev. 19:19-20
 - Binding Satan for 1,000 years
 - Rev. 20:1-3
 - Messianic/Millennial Kingdom
 - Dan. 12
 - The Covenants fulfilled
 - The Curse reversed
- Satan is released and deceives the nations
 - Rev. 20:7-8
 - Final battle
 - Rev. 20:9
 - Judgments
 - Satan and fallen angels thrown into the lake of fire
 - Rev. 20:10
 - Great White Throne Judgment
 - Rev 20:12-15
- New Heavens and New Earth
 - 2 Pet. 3:7-20
- New Jerusalem/Eternal State
 - Rev. 21:1-22:5

[End of Excursus]

- Exhortation (3:11-12)

Revelation 3:11, *I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*

The statement, *I am coming quickly*, fits the idea of imminence. Jesus is promising to return soon to begin the “*hour of testing.*”

This is both an encouragement to look for the Lord as well as encouragement to remain faithful.
It will come suddenly.

It cannot refer to His second coming to earth – there will be no sense of imminence when He comes to earth, for there will be many signs pointing to that return.

Therefore, it makes the most sense to see this as an encouragement to His church that His coming to rescue them from the hour of testing is imminent.

hold fast what you have = we were told in **v. 8**, that they have little. They are to hold tight to their faith and ministry.

so that no one will take your crown. = Crown is stefanoj, a laurel wreath, the victor's crown.

This, in no way, infers that one can lose their salvation.

Many commentators assume this is the same crown mentioned in **2:10**, the crown of life.

More likely, this is speaking of rewards being taken.

They can be taken in the sense that we can allow other things to distract us from our faithfulness to Christ, and in doing so, we forfeit rewards.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

2 John 1:8, Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

Revelation 3:12, He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

The one **who overcomes** = all believers/ Christians

I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God = Christ metaphorically tells how even the Christians with little strength, are the “pillars” of His house, His temple.

The picture is that of massive marble columns holding up a temple. In this case, Christ's Temple.
and he will not go out from it anymore = he is secure! He is an eternal citizen.

and I will write on him = this is the main verb of the verse. Denotes eternal identity and citizenship.

- the name of My God = ownership
- and the name of the city of My God = citizenship
 - the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God =
- and My new name = The new name will reveal something about Jesus that will make sense when we are with Him and know Him fully.

Revelation 3:13, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

7. Message to Laodicea (3:14-22)

Revelation 3:14, To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

The church of Laodicea is the worst of all the churches. It is the lukewarm church.

The message to this church is the most solemn and the condemnation is the harshest.

There is no commendation (like the church of Sardis).

The only encouragement of any kind is the possibility it extends for repentance and overcoming.

Laodicea – compound Greek words laoj = “people” and dicaw = “I rule.” Combine to mean “The rule of the people.”

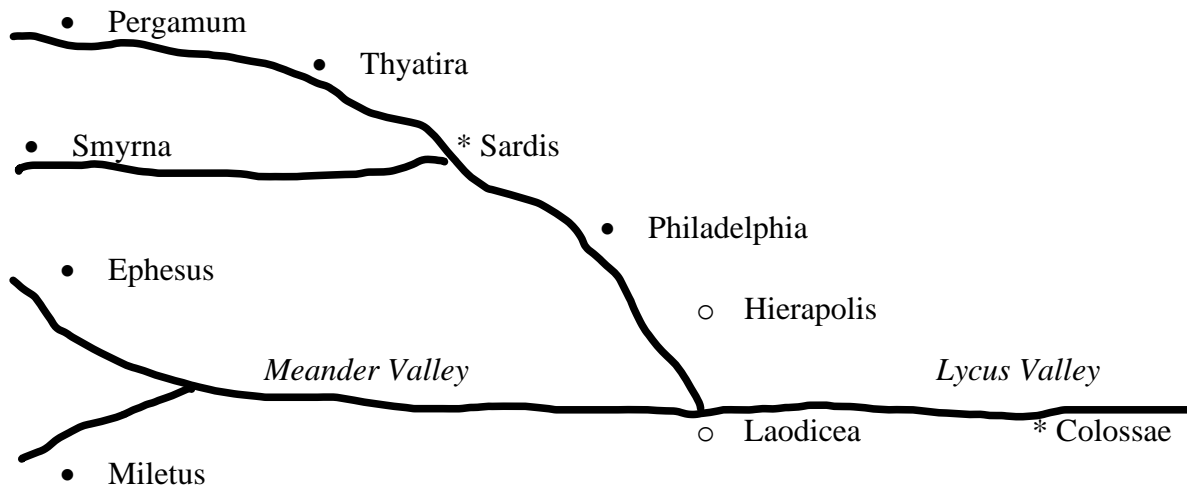
It was most likely built by Antiochus II in the 60's B.C. and named for his wife Laodice.

Laodicea was 40-50 miles southeast of Philadelphia.

It was located in the lower Lycus Valley. The city of Colossae was located about ten miles east in the upper Lycus Valley. The city of Hierapolis was about six miles north of Laodicea.

Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae form the Tri-cities.

The geography of Laodicea is helpful in better understanding the letter Jesus has John write to them.



The location of Laodicea, at the crossroads of two valleys made it a popular spot.

Roads were most often built in the valleys.

Trade coming from the west and going east into Asia, Phrygia, and Galatia would almost certainly pass-through Laodicea.

It was a wealthy city.

In A.D. 60 several cities, including Laodicea were heavily damaged by an Earthquake. The Roman government supplied significant financial aid to rebuild the cities. But apparently, Laodicea did not receive any funds. Either because they were too wealthy, or wealthy enough to manage things themselves. Either way, historians agree that it had to do with their wealth.

While the Apostle Paul had never been to Laodicea (**Col. 2:1**), he intended them to read the letter of Colossians and the church of Colossae was to read the letter that came through Laodicea (most likely Ephesians).

Colossians 4:16, When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.

The church was probably started by a companion of Paul, most likely someone from Colossae.

3:14b, *The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:*

The Amen = only used here as a personal name for Christ.

It is used to signify truth. As a title it points to credibility.

It is the transliteration of the Hebrew word “*amon*” (!wOoma | in Hebrew) from Proverbs 8:30, where it is translated “*master workman*” and is used in the personification of the *wisdom* of God when He created everything.

Proverbs 8:30, Then I was beside Him, *as a master workman*; And I was daily *His* delight, Rejoicing always before Him,

In Isaiah 65:16, the word is used in the title “*God of truth*”

Isaiah 65:16, Because he who is blessed in the earth Will be blessed by the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Will swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My sight!

the faithful and true Witness = Jesus is the reliable witness in contrast to the Laodicean church.

Cf. Rev. 1:5.

the Beginning of the creation of God = Literally, the “beginner” or “originator” It points to the source of creation.

It is the same idea in **Revelation 22:13**, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

John 1:1-3, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:10, He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

1 Corinthians 8:6, yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.

Colossians 1:15-18, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Hebrews 1:1-2, God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- **Condemnation (3:15-17)**

Revelation 3:15, 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.'

In all seven letter Jesus said, "I know..." "I know your deeds" (Ephesus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea), "I know your tribulation" (Smyrna), "I know where you dwell" (Pergamum).

Jesus uses their situation, economy, industry, and geography to make his point.

Laodicea lacked sufficient water to supply the size of the city.

Colossae had an abundance of cool drinking water and Hierapolis had hot mineral springs.

Laodicea used underground pipes to transport water from a hot spring five miles away. By the time the water arrived in the city it was lukewarm.

There are two main interpretations that both fit well within the context and say similar and even complimentary things.

The most common interpretation is:

When Jesus said, "I wish that you were cold or hot" that He was saying, "I wish that you were all in or all out."

"I wish that you were hot" = deeply committed, fervently devoted, sold out in service to Christ.

"I wish you were cold" = completely devoid of any interest and involvement in the church. You do not claim to be a Christian, you do not talk about the things of God, you are completely disinterested in the things of God.

3:16, So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

That is, "Because you claim to be a Christian but do not live like it – you make me want to vomit."

"This half-hearted relationship you are trying to have does not work."

They are essentially Pharisees.

Religious hypocrisy has no place in Christ's church.

These religious hypocrites are described in **Matthew 7:21-23**, Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. ²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And

then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

No one is more difficult to reach with the Gospel than the unsaved person who thinks he/she is already a Christian.

This has been the prevailing interpretation for many years and is still the prevailing interpretation.

The other interpretation is:

When Jesus said, “I wish that you were cold or hot,” He was referring to the two water sources. One used to refresh and the other used to heal.

The criticism: **3:16**, So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

“Is saying that you are not benefitting anyone! You neither refresh nor help anyone!”

“You are like the lukewarm mineral water that tastes disgusting.

The reasons for this view are strong.

- The two water sources – one was hot, and one was cold.
- **vv. 17-18**, reference things the city is known for. So, the water reference fits.
- The question is asked, “Does God really prefer that people totally reject Him to those who do not?”
- It appears that Jesus is addressing unbelievers so could not be addressing them as being spiritually hot or cold.

In the end both interpretations are valid.

Lukewarm is certainly an apt description of the church-at-large.

(This letter may be the greatest support for the argument that each letter represents a church age.)

John Stott, “Perhaps none of the seven letters is more appropriate to the twentieth century church than this. It describes vividly the respectable, sentimental, nominal, skin-deep, religiosity which is so widespread among us today. Our Christianity is flabby and anemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion.” (from “What Christ Thinks About the Church” 1980, p. 116; as quoted by John MacArthur in TMNTC, *Revelation 1-11*, p. 137)

I will spit you out of my mouth =

I will = mellw – “I am about to” implies imminent peril

Spit you out = emew – to vomit, to reject with disgust.

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

They had an utter misunderstanding of their actual condition.

They thought because they had money, they were rich.

Those in the church looked at their material wealth and assumed that they needed nothing.

They thought that their material possessions and their bank balance was proof of God's blessing on them.

The city of Laodicea was wealthy and, like many Christians, today, they thought that material wealth was a sign of God's approval.

The Sadducees thought this way.

They did not realize the true extent of their miserable condition.

you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, =

This strikes at the three of the main things happening in Laodicea.

It was a wealthy city – but those in the church were actually **poor**.

There was a medical school there and they had developed an eye salve to help those with eye problems – but those in the church were **blind**.

The main industry in Laodicea was the production of soft black wool – but those in the church were **naked**.

They were spiritually bankrupt, handicapped, and naked.

- **Exhortation (vv. 18-22)**

There is only one remedy for their dire situation – listen to and obey Jesus!

3:18, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Rather than simply destroying the church, Jesus offers them mercy and the opportunity to come to genuine repentance.

The remedy for their problems is beyond their extensive resources.

They can only obtain what they need through Jesus Christ.

Buy from Me = The emphasis is on the source “**Me**”, not on the cost.

To **buy** from Christ does not imply that there is an economic price. It is something that the wealthy can relate to. As far as they are concerned, they can purchase whatever they need.

But salvation cannot be purchased, it can only be granted and received.

Isaiah 55:1, *Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.*

See also, Rev. 21:6; 22:17.

Three exhortations, each with a purpose statement (“**so that**” in a with the subjunctive)

- **buy from Me gold refined by fire** = pure gold, true value, true wealth. All that the world can give is temporary and corruptible. It can be taken or destroyed.
- That which Jesus gives is incorruptible and cannot be taken away.
- Wealth on earth is not a sin. It is the love of money that is a sin. It is the desire for earthly possessions that can easily morph into idolatry.
- Jesus issued a warning to the wealthy in this world in the parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21)
 - **so that you may become rich** = true wealth is to know Christ and surrender all to Him. It is to serve Him and in so doing, you store up treasure in heaven.
- **and white garments = purity, cleansed from sin.**
 - **Psalm 51:7**, *Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

- **Isaiah 1:18**, Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.
- so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed = unforgiven sin ultimately results in shame and humility, certainly, at the judgment seat of Christ.
- and eye salve to anoint your eyes =
 - They thought they could see well and that they had perfect spiritual vision.
 - In truth they were blind and did not even realize it.
 - They have been stumbling around in their blindness and their eyes had adjusted to the darkness and thought it was normal.
 - so that you may see = to have the ointment of Christ's mercy applied to their eyes, so that they can see their sin, His righteousness, and the offer of His saving grace.

3:19, Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

The sharp rebuke of Jesus is actually an act of love.

Proverbs 3:11-12, My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof, ¹² For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.

Are these people Christians or not? Does the fact that Jesus loves and disciplines them enough to say they are Christians?

God loves unbelievers:

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

God disciplines unbelievers:

2 Timothy 2:24-26, The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

therefore be zealous and repent = This is an earnest call to salvation.

3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

This continues the invitation to salvation.

This verse has been used as a part of many evangelistic tracts. Many of you have seen one of the many popular paintings depicting this verse.

There are some beautiful paintings, one by Warner Sallman called *Christ at Hearts Door*. It shows Jesus gently knocking on the door, His head cocked slightly toward the door as if listening for someone inside to say, "Come in!"

While this is an invitation to come to saving faith, do not forget who the verse is written to – the church!

Jesus is standing outside of His church. The door is closed, the people are gathered inside claiming to be worshipping Him.

Jesus is outside of the church, knocking on the door, waiting for someone to open the door for Him.

The church is apostate. It is filled with unbelievers, yet Christ graciously offers them the opportunity to repent and come into a genuine relationship with Him.

3:21, He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

These verses show the amazing contrast that is possible when the grace of God is applied.

From being separated from God and in love with the things of this world to being invited to sit with Jesus on His throne in the presence of God the Father!

as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne = Jesus overcame sin, death, and Satan.

3:22, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

These seven letters to the seven churches are the things that are.

From chapters 4-22, John will write about the thing which will take place after.

III. The Second Vision: The Tribulation (4:1-16:21)

A. The Seven Seals (4:1-8:1)

1. The Heavenly Prelude: The Throne Room of Heaven (4:1-5:14)

4:1, After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

After these things = after writing the seven letters to the seven churches. (John uses the phrase to shift focus here and in **7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1**.)

There is now a shift in John's focus from matters of the church to the throne room of heaven.

A shift from the things which are to the things which will take place after these things. **See 1:19** and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, =

Behold = implies astonishment. John is amazed by what he sees!

He is looking through a door into heaven – it is something like he has ever seen, and he must describe it!

Like Stephen, as he was being stoned to death for preaching Christ.

Acts 7:56, and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

What an amazing sight that must have been!

He had seen a preview of Christ's glory some 60 years earlier, on the mount of transfiguration.

Now he gets to walk into the throne room of heaven.

and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me = The voice he heard was that of Christ. **See 1:10-11.**

"Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." = John is called to come into heaven in a vision of what is to come.

Some theologians consider this to be a picture of the rapture of the church.

They would say: John is the last living apostle and is a representative of the church and his call, by a voice like a trumpet is a picture of the rapture of the church.

1 Corinthians 15:52, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

While it is possible that John's call into heaven is a picture of the rapture, it is impossible to know that for sure and therefore we do not use it as proof of a pretribulation rapture.

What we do know is that John was taken, in the spirit, into heaven in order to be a witness and record the events of the Tribulation.

4:2, Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

Immediately I was in the Spirit = This is a spiritually ecstatic condition. Think of it in terms of being in a trance. Most translators choose a capital "S" to indicate the involvement of the Holy Spirit.

John had experienced this spiritual condition earlier in **1:10**.

It appears that between 3:22 & 4:1, John returned to a normal state.

He is once again in a Spirit induced state.

He did not leave the earth.

He was transported in the spiritual realm to heaven.

Though John's body was still on the island of Patmos, he was spiritually in heaven. The vision was, no doubt, very real to John.

John was not the first to take a trip in the Spirit to heaven.

- 1 Kings 22:19-23, the prophet Micaiah describes seeing a conversation in heaven between God and the angels regarding who would cause the wicked king Ahab to go fight against Ramoth-Gilead and be killed.
- Isaiah 6:1-4, Isaiah sees God on His throne and hears the same thing John hears in Rev. 4.
- Ezekiel 1:1-28, Ezekiel is in captivity in Babylon (Iraq) and is by the river Chebar. He is given a vision and has a conversation with God in the throne room of heaven and gives a description very similar to the one John gives in Rev. 4.
- Ezekiel 8:1-11:25, Ezekiel is taken in the Spirit to Jerusalem and shown the Temple. He sees the throne of God above and the glory of God depart. (See 10:1-22)
- Daniel 7:9-10, Daniel is given a vision of world leaders, including the Antichrist.
- 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. Paul speaks of a man (himself) who was taken to see heaven and hear amazing things. It was so real that Paul, himself, was unsure if it was in the body or the spirit.

Like the others, John is able to see and hear what is happening in heaven.

He is able to have conversations, move, feel, think, and write.

He is able to describe the infinite in way that accommodate our finite human perspective.

and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

The description that John will give requires the throne room to be massive.

John describes what he sees in terms of beauty, color, light, and singing.

The throne is the central figure John sees. He mentions it eleven times in this chapter (vv. 2(2x), 3, 4, 5(2x), 6(2x), 9, 10(x2))

The throne is the place from which God is often seen ruling.

1 Kings 22:19, Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left.

Psalm 47:8, God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne.

Isaiah 6:1, In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

Isaiah 66:1a, Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool.

Ezekiel 1:26, Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, *was* a figure with the appearance of a man.

Daniel 7:9, "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took *His* seat; His vesture *was* like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, Its wheels *were* a burning fire.

The throne is in the heavenly Temple. **Rev. 7:15; 8:3; 16:17** (cf. Ps. 18:6, Mic. 1:2; Hab. 2:20).

and One sitting on the throne = this is God the Father (vv. 8-11)

- He is distinguished from God the Son in vv. **5:5, 7; 6:16; 7:10**

4:3, And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

We should not try to read too much into the description John gives.

John is not trying to dictate details to a sketch artist. He is trying to describe the magnificent glory he is witnessing.

He is describing someone and something utterly indescribable, using language that the reader can comprehend.

His only option is to use similes.

He uses the words **as** (wj vv. 1, 6, 7) and **like** (omoioj vv. 3 2x, 6, 7 3x)— used 9 times in vv. 1-7.

Jasper = most likely not today's jasper (which is rust, pink, green, or blue).

At the time John used the word it also included a ranger of colors, but most scholars believe that it was a clear stone. Quite possibly a diamond.

Revelation 21:11, *having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.*

Sardis (ESV, NIV Carnelian) = fiery red.

Some say that the colors represent God's covenant relationship with Israel.

- Exodus 28:15-21 – the priestly breastplate with the 12 stones
 - The first stone (Rueben) ruby (red)
 - The last stone (Benjamin) jasper

John did not say that there were actual stones, which would be a much more compelling argument.

If the colors mean anything, perhaps they point to God's holiness and His justice.

Ezekiel sees God coming to judge Israel.

Ezekiel 1:4, As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire.

Ezekiel is taken in a vision to the Temple in Jerusalem to witness judgment.

Ezekiel 8:2, Then I looked, and behold, a likeness as the appearance of a man; from His loins and downward *there was* the appearance of fire, and from His loins and upward the appearance of brightness, like the appearance of glowing metal.

Daniel sees a vision of the final world empire and God's judgment

Daniel 7:9-10, "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took *His* seat; His vesture *was* like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, Its wheels *were* a burning fire. ¹⁰ "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

See Rev. 1:14-15; 10:1

and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. = this is not your normal rainbow. It is not multi-colored; it is emerald in appearance.

Rainbows typically remind us of God's promise not to destroy the world with a flood.

It is a reminder, of God faithfulness to keep His promises.

The significance of the color is unknown. Some suggestions: it is a soothing color, green implies life, it is merely the color and no meaning is intended to be attributed to the color.

After describing the throne, John's eye moves around the room and he tells us what he sees.

4:4, *Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.*

Around the throne were twenty-four thrones =

Who are the 24 elders?

This appears to be 24 smaller thrones encircling God's throne.

John tells us what they do, but he does not explicitly tell us who they are.

We will see what we can learn about them.

They are either angels or humans?

The 24 elders are seen...

- On *thrones*

If they are angels, this is the only place they are ever seen sitting on thrones,

The word used for "elder," presbuteroj, is never used to speak of angels.

John identifies other angels, as such, throughout the book.

It does not appear that they are angels.

John identifies angels as angels in almost every chapter of the book (only chps. 4, 6, 13 do not use the word "angel").

Most compelling is that John specifically distinguishes the 24 elders and angels in **7:11**, *And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,*

It is best to see them as human, rather than angels.

Are they Old Testament saints or New Testament saints?

Some believe that they are representative of the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles.

The tribes of Israel are mentioned in Rev. 7:3-8 and the 12 apostles are mentioned in 21:12, 14.

Some think they represent the priesthood (24-divisions) and use 1 Chron. 24:4; 25:1-31 as a reference.

A more likely identification is that they are representatives of the church age saints.

- They are wearing **white garments**
- They have **golden crowns**
- The near context identifies them as church age saints (**See Rev. 2:10; 3:5, 11, 18, 21**)
- They sing of redemption in 5:9-10.

4:5, Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. = This is reminiscent of Israel's early experience with God.

Exodus 19:16-19, So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai *was* all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. ¹⁹ When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.

The thunder and lightning are emanating from the throne of God.

A similar description is given at the conclusion of each phase of judgment.

- At the end of the seal judgments:

Revelation 8:5, Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

- At the end of the trumpet judgments:

Revelation 11:19, And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

- At the end of the bowl judgments:

Revelation 16:18, And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake *was it, and* so mighty.

And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

As we saw in 1:4; 3:1 – this refers to the seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit, as described in Isaiah 11:2 – the Spirit of the Lord, wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, and fear.

Every other time the word, *kaiomenai*, *kaiw*, is only used in this book, it speaks of judgment.

John is not trying to describe a cozy campfire but a blazing fire of judgment.

Robert Thomas described it this way, “[It is] a picture of a heavenly court poised to launch its massive program to purify God’s creation...” (Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, p. 351)

John also sees...

4:6a, and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal;

John is seeing something he has never seen before and is searching for the right words to describe it.

It is *like* a sea of glass. It is *like* crystal. It is not a sea, it is not crystal – it is similar to those things – that is the best way to describe what he sees.

There is a glass-like pavement in front of the throne of God.

Exodus 24:10, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.

Ezekiel 1:22, Now over the heads of the living beings *there was something* like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out over their heads.

Ezekiel 1:26, Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, *was a figure with the appearance of a man.*

(Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4:4-8 are very similar)

The four creatures –

4:6b, and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

These are amazing creatures!

They appear to form an inner circle around the throne. That is, they are inside the circle of the 24 elders.

They are the closest to the throne, one of each side.

full of eyes in front and behind. = speaks of alertness and knowledge.

Though they are not all-knowing, they are completely observant.

Who are these four living creatures?

Opinions have been varied.

4:7, The first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle.

For a several centuries, it was thought that the four living creatures represent the four gospels.

| <i>Irenaeus (A.D. 130-202)</i> | <i>Athanasius (316-373)</i> | <i>Augustine (354-430)</i> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mt = Man | Man | Lion |
| Mk = Eagle | Ox/Calf | Man |
| Lk = Ox/Calf | Lion | Ox/Calf |
| Jn = Lion | Eagle | Eagle |

Traditionally:

Matthew – presents Jesus as the King – Lion (of Judah)

Mark – presents Jesus as a servant – Ox/Calf

Luke – presents Jesus as the Son of Man – Man

John – presents Jesus as God in the flesh – Eagle

Others think the four living creatures represent four attributes of God.

| <i>Others</i> | <i>MacArthur</i> |
|--|------------------|
| Lion = courage/ boldness/ victoriousness | Strength |
| Ox/Calf = Patience | Service |
| Eagle = Aspiration/contemplation | Speed |
| Man = Sympathy | Reason |

Others think they represent the highest form of each part of living creation.

Lion = wild animals

Ox/Calf = domestic animals

Eagle = flying animals

Man = the pinnacle of creation

In the end it is impossible to say that any of these views are correct, because there is not enough information to make a determination.

We will just have to be content to get their description and their activity.

If it were important to know what they symbolize, if they symbolize anything, God would have made it clear for us.

While who they are is a matter of debate, what they do is described in **4:8b-9; 5:8-14; 6:1-8; 15:7; 19:4.**

The same beings are also seen in **Ezekiel 1:4-14; 10:1-22; Isaiah 6:2-3.**

While there are some slight differences in the accounts –

- Ezekiel says each being has each of the four faces
 - Rev. 4 – four beings each with one of the four faces
- Ezekiel says they have four wings
 - Rev. 4:8; Isa. 6:2, says six wings
- Ezekiel 10:19-22 calls them cherubim
 - Isaiah 6:2 calls the Seraphim

Based on the differences, some commentators believe they are different living creatures.

Based on the significant similarities, most commentators believe they are the same living creatures.

No real satisfactory answers are given to explain the differences.

Robert L. Thomas explains the difference by stating that they are different living creatures.

4:8, And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

This description has a strong connection with **Isaiah 6:2-3**.

The emphasis on the eyes, emphasizes the depths of their alertness.

and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

Since there is no actual day or night in heaven – John uses the earthly image to indicate that the four living creatures are constantly praising God.

They sing the hymn:

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD,
THE ALMIGHTY,
WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

The triple repetition of the word “HOLY”

May be one for each member of the Trinity – but more likely is to emphasize the holiness of God.

The repeating of a word or phrase in Scripture is most often done for emphasis. See **Rev. 8:13**.

THE ALMIGHTY =

Isaiah 6:3, And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

LORD of hosts is the translation of the Hebrew **twabc> hwhy>** = Yahweh of warfare or armies.

That is translated in the LXX as Lord Sabaoth (Which is merely a transliteration of the Hebrew word).

Both **Lord Sabaoth** and **THE ALMIGHTY** speak of God's absolute dominion and sovereign rule over all things.

WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME = Mentioned in **1:4**, and points to the eternity of God and His self-existence.

4:9, And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,

God rightfully deserves to be shown **glory and honor**.

The four living creatures are not bestowing **glory and honor** on God – they are showing Him the **glory and honor** that He deserves because there is none like Him.

He possesses the highest attributes. He is perfect in wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, and love. He is greater than all things and therefore worthy of all praise.

to Him who lives forever and ever, = God is eternal.

The 24 elders echo the praise of the four living creatures.

4:10-11, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ¹¹ "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

As an act of worship, the 24 elders gave the crowns they received back to God as the only One worthy to receive **glory and honor and power**.

John's focus shifts from a description of the throne room and its occupants to what is about to happen.

Something unique is about to take place. Something that had never happened in heaven before. John has a front row seat.

5:1, I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

God the Father holds a scroll in His right hand (a place of power and authority).

Psalm 110:1, The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.

a book written inside and on the back = the fact that this scroll has writing on both sides of the scroll point to the completeness of God's plan. There was too much to say to use only one side of the paper.

Scrolls were typically made up of papyrus or animal skins and rolled up (usually from side to side rather than top to bottom).

Typically, a scroll was written only on the inside, it was rolled and sealed and perhaps a description of the contents was written on the outside.

The scroll God holds is His divine plan to punish His enemies, purify His chosen people, and prepare the world for His kingdom to come to earth.

The fact that God holds the scroll indicates that He wrote it.

This is His divine will.

sealed up with seven seals = completely sealed.

Seals provide security.

Legal documents and private correspondence were sealed with a wax seal. Breaking the seal by an unauthorized person was a crime punishable by death.

It also keeps information hidden until the one authorized to break the seals chooses to do so.

In describing the future siege of Jerusalem, God told Isaiah that people would not understand what was happening.

Isaiah 29:11, The entire vision will be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, "Please read this," he will say, "I cannot, for it is sealed."

In Daniel 12, he is given a vision of certain end times events but when he asked for more detail, he is told that it is sealed up.

Daniel 12:4, "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

Daniel 12:9, He said, "Go *your way*, Daniel, for *these* words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.

That the scroll is sealed seven times points to ultimate security.

While typically a scroll would be sealed on the edge where the end of the paper touches the roll.

However, that would require all the seals to be broken at the same time in order to open the scroll at all.

In this case of the scroll John sees, the scroll must have been sealed seven times on the long end of the scroll, at spaced intervals.

That allows for the breaking of one seal and reading the information while the rest remaining sealed up, until Christ is ready to break the next seal.

5:2, And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"

Only the One with the right credentials is worthy to open the scroll.

The angel is strong (indicates that not all angels are created the same).

5:3, And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

No other created being in heaven, on earth, past or present is worthy to break the seals.

Abraham is not worthy, nor is Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Elisha, David, Solomon, or Paul.

This is not a "sword in the stone" type issue. It is not a matter of mysticism; it is a matter of authority.

The absolute failure to find anyone worthy to open the seals points to the thoroughly unique status of Jesus Christ. There is no one like Him!

5:4, Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

John is in great sorrow because there is no one *worthy to open the book*.

If John is aware that this scroll is God's divine plan for redemption and the restoration of all things, it is no wonder that he *weeps greatly*.

As long as the scroll remains sealed these things cannot take place.

He thinks, for the moment, that he will not be able to see Christ and His followers vindicated.

Perhaps he weeps because he fears that Satan's reign of as the god of this world will continue.

5:5, and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

Stop weeping = this is not a time for sadness, this is a time for great victory!

The title: **Lion that is from the tribe of Judah** comes from Jacob's blessing of his sons in Genesis 49:8-10.

Genesis 49:8-10, Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. ⁹ "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? ¹⁰ "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples.

Jesus was not considered lion-like at His first coming but most certainly will be at His second coming.

The Root of David =

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

Isaiah 11:10, Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

Prophecy that Messiah would come through the line of Jesse, David's father.

Jesus is physically related to David through Mary (Luke 3:31) and legally related to David through Joseph (Matt. 1:6).

See Rev. 22:16.

Jesus is the one who **has overcome**.

The victory is already certain.

The victory is in an "already/not yet" tension.

It has been decisively won in the past but remains to be effectuated completely in the future.

It is Christ's victory over sin and death that qualifies Him to be the only One who is worthy **to open the book and its seven seals**.

5:6, And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

Jesus comes from the throne of God and appears *as a Lamb* that had been *slain*. He bears the marks of the crucifixion in His body.

Notice the contrast between How Jesus is described in **v. 5** and **v. 6**.

In **v. 5**, He is the *Lion that is from the tribe of Judah*.

He is seen as fierce and powerful.

In **v. 6**, He is seen as a *Lamb standing, as if slain*.

The word that John uses for “Lamb” is unique in the New Testament.

The normal Greek words for “Lamb” are:

- pasca = Passover lamb (Mk 14:12; Lk. 22:7)
- amnoj – lamb (Jn 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:19)

John uses the word arnion =

- Of the 30 times this word is used in the N.T., it is used in Revelation 29 times (the exception is John 21:15) and all but one of those times (the exception is Rev. 13:11) it refers to Christ.

John refers to Jesus as the Lamb in chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22.

The constant reminder of Christ as the *Lamb* is a constant reminder of His sacrificial death.

elders a Lamb standing, as if slain = That is, He bears the marks of the wounds that He endured to bring about our salvation.

The scars in His hands, feet, brow, back, and side remain for all eternity.

Slain = sfazw = slaughtered violently (Perfect tense means it is an event completed in the past that results in the present time. It is the present state of affairs based on a past action).

But after this chapter Jesus will no longer be seen as the meek sacrificial animal that was silent before His accusers.

In a very interesting juxtaposition, John described the Lamb in some exalted terms.

- 6:16 – People will hide from the wrath of the Lamb

- 7:9 – Multitudes will stand before the Lamb
- 7:10 – salvation belongs to the Lamb
- 7:14 – the robes of the saved are washed in the blood of the Lamb
- 7:17 – The Lamb will be the shepherd
- 12:11 – Satan and his demons are defeated by the blood of the Lamb
- 14:10 – those who receive the mark of the Beast will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the Lamb.
- 17:14 – The Lamb defeats those who make war against Him.
- 21:22 – The Temple in the new Jerusalem is the Lamb.
- 21:23 – The Light in the new Jerusalem is the Lamb.
- 22:1, 3 – The throne of God and the Lamb

Seven horns = horns symbolize power and authority

1 Samuel 2:1, Then Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

1 Samuel 2:10, Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; Against them He will thunder in the heavens, The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed."

2 Samuel 22:3, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence.

Psalms 18:2, The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psalms 75:10, And all the horns of the wicked He will cut off, *But* the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.

Psalms 89:17, For You are the glory of their strength, And by Your favor our horn is exalted.

Psalms 89:24, My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him, And in My name his horn will be exalted.

Jeremiah 48:25, The horn of Moab has been cut off and his arm broken," declares the LORD.

Micah 4:13, Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion, For your horn I will make iron And your hoofs I will make bronze, That you may pulverize many peoples, That you may devote to the LORD their unjust gain And their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

Seven often signifies the number of completion. Therefore, **seven horns** points to complete or perfect power and authority.

seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, = See notes on 1:4. (cf. **Isaiah 11:2**, The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.)

The seven eyes/Spirits of God = the fullness of divine power and authority rests on Jesus Christ as He carries out the Father's redemptive plan for the world.

sent out into all the earth. = The Holy Spirit draws sinners from all over the world.

(5:7), And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

(cf. **5:1**)

This momentous event is what all of history has been building to. Since the Fall of man – we have waited for the moment when God would reverse the curse and destroy His enemies and establish His perfect reign over all things.

The book/scroll is the plan of God that brings everything to fruition.

When Jesus breaks the first seal and opens the book, God's wrath will begin to be poured out and His plan will be irreversibly set in motion.

The world will experience God's wrath in ways it never could imagine. The events that are about to take place will be on a scale unlike any natural disaster ever!

Worse than Chernobyl, worse than Hiroshima.

vv. 8-14, show the heavenly response to the fact that the Lamb has taken the scroll, setting in motion the ultimate vindication and glorification of God.

Their songs become the dramatic soundtrack as the Savior enters the scene.

What takes place is the same pattern of worship that was shown to God the Father in **4:4-11**.

The heavenly choirs declare the worthiness of the Lamb to be worshipped and glorified.

Obviously, this has significant Christological implications, pointing to the deity of Christ.

The Father and the Lamb are worshipped the same.

Jesus is clearly more than a man or an angel.

Angels do not receive worship. See **Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9**.

(5:8), When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

This is the second time we have seen the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fall down (probably kneeling, since they are holding things) in worship.

The first time the 24 prostrated themselves in worship (4:10), it was in response to the four living creatures' song of praise (4:8) and they worshipped God the Father.

This time they are worshipping God the Son.

Each of the elders is holding a harp = kiqara = lyre

Harp are frequently associated with worship (in the O.T.) (2 Sam 6, 1 Chron 13, 15, 16; 2 Chron. 5, 20, 29, Ps. 33, 43, 57, 71, 92, 98, 144, 147, 149, 150.)

They were also used in prophesy (1 Sam 10; 1 Chron. 25); to calm (1 Sam 16, 18, 19).

The twenty-four elders worship the Father and the Son.

Golden bowl = a flat bowl used for drinking. Think of certain saucers.

full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. =Incense were used in worship.

Exodus 30:7-9a, Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. ⁸ "When Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. *There shall be perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.* ⁹ "You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar,

Leviticus 16:12-13, "He shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring *it* inside the veil. ¹³ "He shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on *the ark of the testimony*, otherwise he will die.

The prayers of the saints are described metaphorically as the smoke of the incense rising up to God and being a pleasant aroma to Him.

Psalms 141:2, May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

See **Rev. 8:1-4**.

How precious and significant our prayers must be to God that He keeps them!

The implication is that (at least some of) our prayers are stored up in heaven.

It is the prayers that are asking for God's kingdom to come that are about to be answered.

(5:9), And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

A new song = a freshly inspired song.

It is a song about redemption.

Jesus is worthy because of the sacrifice He made. He was **slain** (slaughtered).

And purchased for God with Your blood = Jesus ransomed us from slavery to sin to make us citizens of God's kingdom.

The cost of our redemption was the blood of Jesus Christ. The shedding of blood was of the utmost importance.

Jesus is the ultimate Passover Lamb.

With His blood, He purchased people **from every tribe and tongue and people and nation**.

The redemptive work of Jesus was for more than Israel.

cf. **7:9; 10:11; 13:7; 14:6**.

The decree of Darius after Daniel survived the lion's den:

Daniel 6:25-26, Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and *men of every language who were living in all the land*: "May your peace abound! ²⁶ "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion *will be* forever.

Daniel has a vision of what John is seeing in Rev. 5.

Daniel 7:13-14, "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. ¹⁴ "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples,

nations and *men of every language* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

The *Son of Man* in Daniel is the *Lamb* in Revelation.

Christ's sacrifice had a global effect. It reached every era and every people group.

The sacrifice of Christ is not limited by language, culture, nationality, or even time.

He has the authority, to break the seals and enact the judgments.

- He perfectly fulfilled the Law.
- He appeased the wrath of God and paid the penalty for the sins of all who would be saved!
- He *purchased for God*, with His *blood* people from every nationality.

(5:10), *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.*"

God's plan does not end with our redemption.

He makes us the citizens of His kingdom.

And He makes us *priests* – who serve God in His Temple. **Cf. Rev. 1:6.**

And to *reign upon the earth* =

Daniel 7:22-27, ...the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom. ²³ "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the *other* kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. ²⁴ 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. ²⁵ 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. ²⁶ 'But the court will sit *for judgment*, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. ²⁷ 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom *will be* an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

See Rev. 20:4, 6; 22:5

The victory of Christ is both spiritual and earthly.

(5:11), Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

The circle of those who praise God and the Lamb continue to increase.

We started with four living beings, expanded to the 24 elders.

Now, John sees an innumerable number of angels.

The heavenly audience gathers to witness the events that will change everything and begin the ascension of Jesus to the throne of David.

Now, to be clear, John's intent is not to give a specific number of angels – but to declare that their number was so large that it was innumerable.

But to give you an idea - A myriad is the number 10,000. Ten thousand was considered to be the largest number used in the ancient world.

In the interest of curiosity:

$10,000 \times 10,000 = 100,000,000$ (100 million)

The least thousands of thousands could be is 4,000,000 (four million)

$100,000,000 \times 4,000,000 = 400,000,000,000,000$ (400 trillion)

Daniel 7:10, A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

The massive angel choir sing their song.

(5:12), saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

If you do not like praise music – you are going to hate heaven.

Jesus, known to the angels (in the role of Redeemer) as the **Lamb that was slain**. (sfazw)

Again, it was His having been slain that makes Him worthy of this praise.

Note: He is worthy of praise for other reasons – just by virtue of being God the Son and the Creator and sustainer of everything.

But in the context of what is happening in heaven – the praises are directed at the sacrifice He made for the redemption of those who were saved.

Notice the similarities to the song of the 24-elders in **4:11**.

The angels list seven attributes: **power** (dunamij), **riches** (ploutoj), **wisdom** (sofia), **might** (iscuj), **honor** (timh), **glory** (doxa) **blessing** (eulogia)

(5:13), *And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."*

The circle of praise gets even larger.

There are still plenty of people on earth who do not believe and are still the enemy of Christ.

This is best seen as a preview of what will happen.

It is anticipatory of that day Paul mentioned in **Philippians 2:9-11**, *For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

This is true of **5:10**, which is also anticipatory of the Christian's reign with Christ over the earth.

"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." = the praise conjoins the glory of the One on the throne with the glory of the Lamb.

They are united in the doxology.

(5:14), *And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.*

The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders continue to worship the Father and the Son.

2. The Six Seal Judgements (6:1-17)

This is the beginning of what we call the Tribulation.

As each seal is broken judgment is poured out on the earth and its inhabitants. The judgements increase in intensity and in frequency.

It may be best to see the first four seals as taking place over the first three-and-a-half years and the rest of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls taking place during the second three-and-a-half years.

When the fifth seal is broken, we see those who were martyred for the faith during the first half of the Tribulation. It is at the mid-point of the Tribulation that Antichrist is at the height of his power.

The seventh seal contains seven trumpet judgments. The seventh trumpet contains seven bowls of wrath. For a total of 19 judgments.

The first four seals have some similarities. They are unique from any of the other seals.

- The first four seals contain horses and is often referred to as “The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse.”
- Each has one of the living beings saying “Come.”
- Some sort of calamity follows each of the horse and riders.

The First Seal (6:1-2)

(6:1), Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come."

An almost identical statement introduces the first four seals.

“Come!” vs. “Come and see.” (KJV)

It is a present active imperative; that is, it is a command to [come](#).

The question is - who are the four living creatures telling to [Come](#)?

The only real possibilities are Christ, John or the horsemen.

- It is not Christ.
 - The living beings would not be commanding Christ to come.
 - Though it is possible they might make a plea for Him to come.

- Jesus is opening the seals. He is the only One who can. It would not make sense for Him to open a seal and have the four living beasts plead with Him to come to the earth only for the first four seals.
- It is not John
 - Where would John be being summoned to?
 - He is already in heaven.
 - Would it be to see what was written in the scroll?
 - But the things are visual representations and clearly seen – even after no one says “come.”
- It is the horsemen
 - The response to the command to **Come** is the immediate appearance of the white horse. The same is true of the next three seals.
 - This is the natural way to understand what is taking place.
 - The living beings command the horse and rider to **Come** and do his job.

The judgments are not simply read so as to inform, they are performed, they are visual representations of judgments that are poured out on the earth.

(6:2), I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

A **white horse** = often used as a symbol for victory.

A victorious general would lead the victory parade riding on a white horse.

In the book of Revelation – white is most often used to refer to righteousness.

See 1:14; 2:17; 3:4-5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 14:14; **19:11**, 14; 20:11

Who then is riding the **white horse** in **6:2**?

- 1) Roman emperors – those who see Revelation as past history and deny the prophetic nature of the book.
- 2) The Word of God – the Word is used to judge men.
 - **John 12:48**, he who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

- This is too general to be meaningful and does not fit the context.
- 3) Personification of judgment – too vague to be meaningful.
 - 4) The victorious course of the Gospel – the idea of **conquering** does not fit. The Gospel has not conquered the world.
 - 5) Warfare in general – too general to be a useful interpretation.
 - 6) The Messiah – In light of similarities with **Rev. 19:11-16**.
 - Does not fit the context.
 - The four horsemen are seen as a unit because of the similarities and progression of their activities.
 - If the first rider was Messiah, it would not make sense for Him to be merely one of four.
 - There are significant differences between the rider in **6:2** and the rider in **19:11-16**.
 - The rider in **19:11-16** is clearly Christ.
 - In **6:2** the rider wears a stefanoj and carries a bow
 - In **19:11-16** the rider wears a diadem and carries a sword.
 - It makes no sense for Christ to be the One who opens the seal that reveals Himself riding a horse.
 - 7) It is one who resembles Christ. It is a counterfeit of Christ and counterfeit righteousness.
 - **Matthew 24:5**, For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.
 - **Matthew 24:24**, For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.
 - **Mark 13:6**, Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many.
 - **Luke 21:8**, And He said, "See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not go after them.
 - This is the rise of Antichrist.

Everything that God does, Satan tries to counterfeit to prove that he is as powerful as God.

This seal reveals a counterfeit white horse.

It is a counterfeit of Christ's triumphal return. **See 19:11.**

The counterfeit horse is ridden by a counterfeit Christ.

He who sat on it had a bow = implies being a warrior, he carries a weapon of war.

Some have said, he has a bow but no arrows

- One can presuppose that arrows are implied.
- Or the absence of arrows could indicate that he will take over without war or violence.
 - He will threaten war but will not need to actually go to war.
 - He will come to power through deceit, cunning, and negotiation.
 - **Daniel 9:27**, And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:8-11**, Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

He will rise to power when there is a worldwide panic and will draw the people together and bring about apparent peace.

The peace starved world will welcome the Antichrist as he brings peace to a world that has never known a generation of peace.

At the beginning he will make a deal with Israel, but he will break it three-and-a-half years later.

There is no death mentioned in this seal.

When this seal ends there is peace on the earth.

But it is short lived.

A crown = it is a counterfeit crown. A stefanoj rather than a diadem.

Was given to him. = In Rev. this speaks of divine permission for evil powers to carry out their wicked missions.

See 9:1, 3, 5; 13:5, 7, 14-15

he went out conquering and to conquer = his intent is to conquer the world – which he will do.

This counterfeit Messiah will achieve worldwide domination, but it is only a temporary domination and only because God allowed it to happen so that He may judge the world.

The Second Seal (6:3-4)

(6:3), When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come."

Same as v. 1.

(6:4), And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that *men* would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

Another alloj = another of the same kind.

eteroj = another of a different kind.

Galatians 1:6-7, I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different (eteroj) gospel; ⁷ which is *really* not another (alloj); only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

Red = fiery red = war, fierce, bloody

The rider is best identified with war, bloodshed and all the horrors associated with it.

And to him who sat on it, it was granted = appointed by God for this purpose.

to take peace from the earth, = whatever restraints have been in place to retain some peace is removed.

This takes place in the first half of the Tribulation.

See Matthew 24:3-8

These first four seals are “the beginning of the birth pangs.”

It is only going to get worse!

This horseman removes the outward peace of the whole world.

In the Greek there is a definite article before the word [peace](#). “the peace”

Probably a reference to the previously existing peace brought about by Antichrist at the end of the first seal.

[From the earth](#) = all-inclusive, not merely some geographical location like the Middle East.

[that men would slay one another](#) = people slaughtering one another.

Slay = sfazw = slaughter

[and a great sword was given to him](#) = the sword represents the bloodshed that will take place.

It does not mean that everyone is killed by an actual sword.

Most likely, it represents weapons in general.

The Third Seal (6:5-6)

Revelation 6:5, [When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.](#)

[A black horse](#) = typically black represents mourning or lament.

This horseman brings famine.

This fits with the order of events in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24).

The [pair of scales in his hand](#) illustrate the severity of the conditions.

The scales indicate that food is so scarce that it is being sold by weight and rationed.

Ezekiel 4:16-17, [Moreover, He said to me, "Son of man, behold, I am going to break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they will eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and drink water by measure and in horror, ¹⁷ because bread and water will be scarce; and they will be appalled with one another and waste away in their iniquity.](#)

Lamentations 4:8-9, [Their appearance is blacker than soot, They are not recognized in the streets; Their skin is shriveled on their bones, It is withered, it has become like wood. ⁹ Better are](#)

those slain with the sword Than those slain with hunger; For they pine away, being stricken For lack of the fruits of the field.

(6:6), And I heard *something* like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."

And I heard *something* like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, = this is probably the voice of God.

"A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; = A denarius is the amount the average worker earned in a day.

One quart of wheat is considered the amount one person needs to eat each day.

So, one days wages to feed one person for the day.

Or to eat a lesser grain, like barley for a family.

Normally a denarius would purchase 8-12 quarts of wheat.

Using today's wages – it would be like paying about \$150 for a loaf of bread.

Ground beef would be approximately \$250 per pound.

It would cost you about \$100 to make a hamburger with just meat and bread.

and do not damage the oil and the wine." = Some think this means that the wealthy will be fine because there will be no shortage of luxury items.

But oil (specifically in the Greek olive oil) and wine were not considered luxury items. They were staples.

We have imposed today's values on those items.

The phrase, do not damage can mean "keep safe."

The implication is don't waste the oil and the wine because the shortage of the most basic things will be great.

The Fourth Seal (6:7-8)

(6:7), When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come."

The same as v. 1, 3, 5a

(6:8), I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Ashen = clwroj (chlorophyl) = green

Death; and Hades = they are personified.

Hosea 13:14, Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion will be hidden from My sight.

Romans 5:12-14, Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- ¹³ for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

1 Corinthians 15:26, The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

1 Corinthians 15:55, "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"

Hades is the condition that all people enter at the time of death.

Hades follows death and engulfs those who death kills.

Death and Hades are given authority by God to kill one-fourth of the world's population.

Using today's population of 7.9 billion people – we will assume for a moment that there are 7 billion people left after the rapture.

That would mean that at this point in the Tribulation 1,750,000,000 people will die!

To give you a sense of how many people that is – it would include the entire populations of:

Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Russia, Mexico, Japan, Ethiopia, Philippines, & Egypt.

That is 11 of the 14 most populous countries in the world! Only China, India, & US have higher populations. (It would be the complete annihilation of India and the US.)

The devastation is impossible for us to fully fathom.

There will be dead bodies piling up in the streets.

People will be dying faster than the dead bodies can be dealt with.

The means of death will be: [to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.](#)

Sword = instruments of man, violent means.

Famine = worse than it was in the previous seal.

Pestilence = disease

Beasts of the earth – as the famine gets worse – the animals will become more desperate and will attack humans.

BTW – all of this will make the millennial kingdom infinitely superior.

People will have plenty of food, disease and war will be abolished and wild animals will not harm man.

Isaiah 65:17-25 cf. **Isa. 11:1-9**

It will be a devastating time on earth, and it is going to get worse. This is just the beginning of the birth pangs.

The Fifth Seal (6:9-11)

John had been describing the four horsemen, who were doling out God's wrath on the earth; first the rise of Antichrist, second, open war, third, global famine, and fourth one-third of the population being killed.

As the Lamb opens the fifth seal, for the moment, the focus is the throne room of heaven, and we see the souls of those who were killed for the gospel under the altar.

Some commentators have mislabeled this seal as “Martyrdom.”

While the martyrdom of the Tribulation saints is certainly the focus, their deaths can hardly be considered God’s wrath on the earth.

We should not look at the death of these Believers at the hands of God-hating people as the judgment of God.

The nature of the judgment in this seal should be seen in the response to the prayers of the martyrs. They pray for God to avenge their deaths and to punish the ungodly. God implies that He will answer their prayer after the rest of those who will be martyred were killed. God will avenge the murder of His children in a little while.

While this seal does not have an immediate effect on the inhabitants of earth, it is judgment, nonetheless.

(6:9), And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

Satan hates God and he hates all who belong to Him.

At some point in the first half of the Tribulation Satan puts it in the hearts and minds of the world leaders to root out and completely eradicate Christians from the world.

Turn to Matthew 24:1-22.

Notice the chronology of events.

Notice **Matthew 24:9,** Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name.

The implication is that the nations are behind the murder of the Christians.

This persecution will be government sanctioned.

See Rev. 11:1-10, When God allows the beast to kill the two witnesses, the world will celebrate their deaths to the point of sending gifts to each other. Merry Murdered Martyrs Day

I saw underneath the altar = The question is, which altar?

There are six mentions, in Revelation, of the altar in heaven.

- **6:9,** our passage
- **8:3,** An angel is given much incense to add to the prayers of the saints and offer them upon the altar.

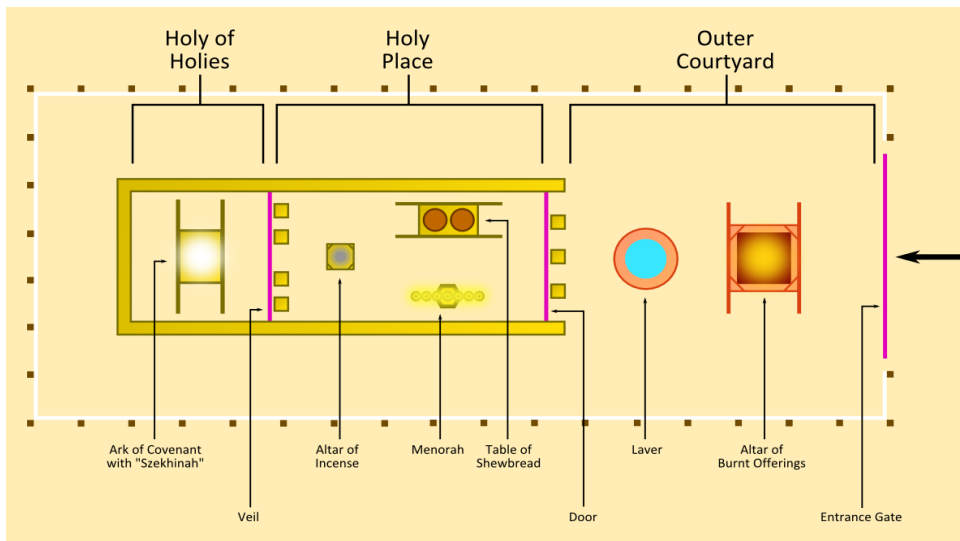
- **8:5**, The golden censor is filled with fire from the altar and thrown at the earth.
- **9:13**, speaks of the four horn of the altar.
- **14:18**, An angel with power over fire came from the altar to call for further judgment of the earth.
- **16:7**, The altar speaks, saying, the Lord, the Almighty – true and righteous are your judgments.

[**11:1**, the mention of the altar is referring to the new temple on earth, not in heaven]

If the altar in heaven is represented by an altar in the Tabernacle or Jerusalem Temple – it is most likely the Altar of Incense, because of the close association to incense, the prayers of the saints, and proximity to the throne of God.

The Altar of Incense in the temple was one cubit (1.5 feet) long x One cubit (1.5 feet) wide x Two cubits (3 feet) tall. (Exod. 30:1-10)

It sat in front of the veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies.



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I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained.

These are those who came to saving faith after the rapture.

They were killed during the first half of the Tribulation.

The fact that their souls are under the altar seems to imply that their deaths were an act of worship and sacrifice to the Lord. They were faithful to the point of death.

This “tolerant” world will be so intolerant of God that they will brutally slaughter those who bear witness of Him.

Daniel 7:21, "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them.

Matthew 24:9, Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name.

Mark 13:9-13, But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to *the* courts, and you will be flogged in *the* synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. ¹⁰ "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹ "And when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit. ¹² "And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. ¹³ "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

See Rev. 12:17; 13:7, 15.

This persecution of Christians will not stop until Christ returns.

The persecution will not prevent people from choosing Christ.

(6:10), and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

This is not at all like the prayer of Jesus, while hanging on the cross, **Luke 23:34a** "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

Nor was it like the prayer of Stephen while he was being stoned to death. **Acts 7:60**, And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep.

To our modern, western ear, the plea of the martyred saints may sound like they are rebuking God or at least questioning His wisdom. As if they are saying, “God, what are you waiting for? We have been murdered and you are not doing anything!”

It is best to see their pleas, not so much as a thirst for revenge, but rather a protest against the iniquity of the people on earth. These martyrs were innocent and those who murdered them were guilty.

It is along the lines of **Genesis 4:9-10**, Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰ And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.

It is not so much a cry for God to wake up and see what is happening as it is a statement of the reality of what is happening on earth and the assurance that God is the One who will punish them.

O Lord, holy and true, = These two attributes of God assure that He will have an appropriate response to their prayer.

(6:11), And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also.

And there was given to each of them a white robe = this is the clothing of the overcomers (cf. 3:4, 5, 18).

God treats those who come into His kingdom las the same as He does those who came in first. Cf. Matthew 20:1-16, the parable of the generous landowner.

and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, = They should rest.

- They should enjoy the peace of heaven.
- Their time on earth is done.
- Their time of conflict is over!
- They are in the presence of God!

until *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also.

God has a sovereign plan that includes the death of others who belong to Him. (cf. 7:9, 14)

When the last martyr is killed God will answer the prayers of all who have pleaded with Him to defeat His enemies and redeem His people.

The fifth seal appears to take place at or near the mid-point of the Tribulation.

See Matthew 24:1-15

The Abomination of Desolation

The meaning of the phrase: “Abomination” (to. bde,lugma) = abomination, a detestable thing, that which is repulsive. It was used of cultic and sacrilegious objects or rites that were used in the desecration of sacred places or things.

Like using the altar of burnt offerings to sacrifice a child.

“Desolation” (th/j evrhmw,sewj) = desolation, destruction, to lay waste to.

It is a phrase that speaks of the Antichrist’s defilement of the Temple and turning against the Jews.

Let us take a look at the passages that refer to the abomination of desolation.

Turn to Daniel 9:1

- Begins with Daniel reading the book of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10), which speaks of the Babylonian captivity lasting 70 years.
- Afterward, God will punish Babylon and return Jews to Israel.

- **vv. 3-19** – Daniel prays
 - **Vv. 3-14** - Confesses national sins
 - **Vv. 15-19** – asks God to turn His wrath away from Jerusalem and exalt Himself in Israel.

- **vv. 20-27** – Gabriel brings the answer
 - **Daniel 9:24**, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy *place*.
 - In other words, 70 (periods of time) are planned to accomplish everything, to bring everything to an end.
 - **V. 25**, from the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, there will be 7 weeks and 62 weeks.

- Artaxerxes issued the decree in 445 B.C. (Daniel wrote this almost 100 years nearly 90 years earlier).
- **V. 26**, sometime after the 62 weeks (plus the 7 weeks for 69 weeks) Messiah will be cut off and Jerusalem destroyed. Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.
- **V. 27**, Antichrist will make a covenant for one week (the 70th week) and will commit the abomination of desolation in the middle of that week.

Turn to Daniel 11:1

- **vv. 1-4**, prophecy about coming kings
 - Greece was led by Alexander the Great.
 - When he died the kingdom was divided up among his four generals
 - Daniel's prophecy looks at the Northern and Southern territories.
 - The Ptolemies to the South – Egypt
 - The Seleucids to the north – Syria
- **vv. 5-20**, battles back and forth between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids.
- **vv. 21-35**, Antiochus Epiphanes, a Seleucid.
 - He took the name "Theos Epiphanes." – "Manifest god."
 - His enemies called him "Epimanes" = "Mandman."
 - He tried to conquer Egypt multiple times and was repelled.
 - After one defeat he turned his wrath toward the Jews in Jerusalem.
 - He made a covenant with them and later broke it.
 - He set up a statue of Zeus in the Temple.
 - He outlawed Mosaic sacrifice and sacrificed a pig on the altar
 - This is called (**11:31**) The "abomination of desolation."
- **vv. 36-45** – Antichrist
 - The wickedness of Antiochus Epiphanes is merely a preview of the wickedness of Antichrist.

Turn to Daniel 12

- **vv. 5-6**, Daniel wants to know when these things will take place.

- v. 7, He is told it will be time, times, and half a time.
- v. 11, After the abomination of desolation there will be 1,290 days
 - 1,260 days is 3.5 years (at 360 days per year).

Turn to Matthew 24:15-28

Turn to 2 Thess. 2:3-9

Revelation 12:6, And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The Sixth Seal (6:12-17)

[Read vv. 12-17]

Up to this point we have seen:

- Antichrist comes to power
- War all over the world
- Global famine
- One-fourth of the world's population dies of famine, disease, violence, or wild animals
- Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and kills many who profess faith in Christ.
- Antichrist sets himself to be worshipped

As bad as things are, they are about to get a whole lot worse.

Matthew 24:21-22, for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. ²² "And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.

There is about to be global and universal upheaval.

It seems that the first five seals, while devastating and deadly, had little impact on the overall thinking of the masses.

The people on earth will likely blame the death and disease, violence, and animal attacks on environmental issues like pollution, use of fossil fuel, habitat encroachment, manmade troubles.

But when the effects of the sixth seal are seen and felt – there will be no denying the cause.

While they will understand that the global and cosmic phenomena are the hand of God, they still will not repent.

Before we take a closer look at the specifics, it is important that we answer the question as to whether we take the things in this seal literally or symbolic.

Those who take them as symbolic do so for a couple of reasons. First is the belief that all apocalyptic literature is symbolic by nature. That is, the proper way to interpret the book of Revelation is symbolically.

The second reason is because a symbolic interpretation makes it easier for man to comprehend things that we cannot relate to otherwise.

A third reason is because they have already interpreted similar prophetic passages symbolically.

The reasons to take it literally (while allowing for figures of speech, simile, hyperbole, etc.) are as follows:

- The passage describes literal events and uses figurative language to illustrate them. It makes no sense to use figurative language to illustrate something that is already figurative.
- Many of those who take the astronomical events figuratively, think they are figurative of human issues. But John describes the human suffering. Again, it makes no sense to use figurative language about human upheaval if you are just going to state it plainly in the next sentence.
- If it is symbolic language, who decides what it is symbolic for?
 - In other words, if the sky rolling up like a scroll is symbolic, who is to say whether it is symbolic of the dissolution of world political powers or if it is symbolic of any normal day?
- The response of the people on earth gives us good reason to take these events as literal.
 - They are intended to show mankind that God is judging the world. That is the message mankind gets.
 - God is doing things that cannot be explained any other way.
- The sheer number of passages, in both the Old and New Testaments that use the same language makes the use of symbolic highly unlikely.
 - In other words, it would be extremely unlikely for all the other prophets and authors to use the exact same symbolic language.
 - .
 - **Isaiah 2:12-22**, For the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning Against everyone who is proud and lofty, And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased. ¹³ And it will be against all the cedars of Lebanon that are lofty

and lifted up, Against all the oaks of Bashan, ¹⁴ Against all the lofty mountains, Against all the hills that are lifted up, ¹⁵ Against every high tower, Against every fortified wall, ¹⁶ Against all the ships of Tarshish, And against all the beautiful craft. ¹⁷ And the pride of man will be humbled, And the loftiness of men will be abased, And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. ¹⁸ But the idols will completely vanish. ¹⁹ And *men* will go into caves of the rocks, And into holes of the ground Before the terror of the LORD, And before the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble. ²⁰ In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats Their idols of silver and their idols of gold, Which they made for themselves to worship, ²¹ In order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, Before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble. ²² Stop regarding man, whose breath *of life* is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?

- **Isaiah 13:10**, For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises, And the moon will not shed its light.
- **Isaiah 24:19 -23**, The earth is broken asunder, The earth is split through, The earth is shaken violently. ²⁰ The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard, And it totters like a shack, For its transgression is heavy upon it, And it will fall, never to rise again. ²¹ So it will happen in that day, That the LORD will punish the host of heaven, on high, And the kings of the earth, on earth. ²² And they will be gathered together *Like* prisoners in the dungeon, And will be confined in prison; And after many days they will be punished. ²³ Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And *His* glory will be before His elders.
- **Isaiah 34:1-4**, Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. ² For the LORD's indignation is against all the nations, And *His* wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter. ³ So their slain will be thrown out, And their corpses will give off their stench, And the mountains will be drenched with their blood. ⁴ And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as *one* withers from the fig tree.
- **Jeremiah 30:4-9**, Now these are the words which the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah, ⁵ "For thus says the LORD, 'I have heard a sound of terror, Of dread, and there is no peace. ⁶ 'Ask now, and see, If a male can give birth. Why do I see every man *With* his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth? And *why* have all faces turned pale?' ⁷ 'Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved

from it. ⁸ 'And it shall come about on that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their neck, and will tear off their bonds; and strangers shall no longer make them their slaves. ⁹ 'But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

- **Haggai 2:6**, For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land.
- **Joel 2:10**, Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark, And the stars lose their brightness.
- **Joel 2:31**, The sun will be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.
- **Amos 8:2-3**, And He said, "What do you see, Amos?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me, "The end has come for My people Israel. I will spare them no longer. ³ "The songs of the palace will turn to wailing in that day," declares the Lord God. "Many *will be* the corpses; in every place they will cast them forth in silence."
- **Amos 8:9**, And it will come about in that day," declares the Lord God, "That I shall make the sun go down at noon And make the earth dark in broad daylight.
- **Matthew 24:7**, For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.
- **Mark 13:8**, "For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will *also* be famines. These things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.
- **Luke 21:11**, and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.
- **Luke 23:28-31**, But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' ³⁰ "Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ³¹ "For if they do these things in the green tree, what will happen in the dry?"

6:12, And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth *made* of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;

A series of 6 or 7 (depending on how you count them) global and celestial events will devastate the planet.

there was a great earthquake = seismoj megaj

There have been earthquakes since there has been recorded history.

There have been devastating earthquakes. (2010 an earthquake in Haiti killed 300,000.

This earthquake is different from all others in its effected area and intensity.

It will not be limited to any particular tectonic plate or fault line. It will be global.

It is expected that:

- most homes will be uninhabitable
- the death toll in the hundreds of thousands or more
- infrastructure of virtually every country will be devastated
 - power grids, water supply, sanitation, roads, and already scarce food becomes even more difficult to come by.

and the sun became black as sackcloth *made of hair* = Sackcloth was a coarse material (think burlap) made of goat or camel hair that people wore during times of mourning.

These seems like it is much more than merely a prolonged eclipse (though that is possible).

An eclipse is only experienced by portions of the planet at any one time, but this appears to be global.

It could mean that God turned down the intensity of the sun, or it could mean that the suns rays are blocked by other things such as smoke from fires all over the globe, volcanic eruptions, triggered by the earthquake. The sky could be filled with dust, ash and smoke.

Or it could be a cause that we have never seen.

(6:13), and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

The word that is used for stars (asthr) is broad enough to include the sun and stars that recognize as well as asteroids and meteors.

Since the closest star to us, Proxima Centuri is 10% larger than the earth – it seems best to understand this to be the earth being pelted by multiple meteors.

(6:14), And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

The sky was split apart = This does not fit with any cosmic event that we can identify.

The other disturbances may (or may not) be explained by things our world has experienced. But not this one!

All of these global and cosmic events will be unique in either their type or their intensity.

There is no way for us to know exactly what happens at this point.

It is almost as if the universe is a giant snow globe and God shakes it up.

These cosmic disturbances will bring one terrifying event after another.

Things happening on the earth.

and every mountain and island were moved out of their places = John uses hyperbole to some degree here.

There will still be mountains after this.

Some mountains will likely grumble, some will collapse, others will shift. The point is that there will be a massive fluctuation of earth's surface.

Some islands may break loose and float with the tide. Other islands may be swamped or sink and covered with water. Others may be destroyed by volcanos.

Imagine what the cumulative effect of all these things will have on people.

Luke 21:11, and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

- Many people will die in these disasters.
- The already overwhelmed and disseminated global health care system will be of little help.
- It will have a tremendous psychological effect on people.

The millions who reject Christ and curse God will live in abject fear and dread.

Every little jolt, every time the floor bounces will cause panic.

We have used catch phrases or idioms to encourage people that will not be able to be used then.

- “Cheer up! Tomorrow is a new day.”
- “The sun will come out tomorrow.”

(6:15), And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;

All these disasters have a sort of equalizing effect – everyone is equally scared.

The political, economic, military, other leaders, the common folks, and the poor all find themselves hiding in caves trying to escape the wrath of the Lamb.

Suddenly there are no more atheists.

(6:16), and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

They are so afraid of what might happen next that they would rather be buried alive than experience any more of God's wrath.

Most of the world, even while hiding from the Lamb, will refuse to repent.

But many will turn to Christ during these terrible days.

(6:17), for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?"

The answer to the question is, "No one!"

Matthew 24:22, And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.

If God continued this type of judgment for an extended period of time, everyone would eventually die.

Things will be very bad!

But they are about to get worse.

3. The Earthly Parenthesis: The Two Multitudes (7:1-17)

Chapter seven is a parenthetical section between the sixth and seventh seals (there will be another one between the 6th & 7th trumpet and a less obvious one between the 6th & 7th bowls of wrath).

This is a temporary pause in the otherwise unrelenting judgment of God being poured out on the earth.

It will be a temporary (we don't know how long) respite for the people on earth and gives the reader a chance to catch his/her breath before more severe devastation and destruction are poured out.

In this chapter John describes two large groups.

- The first group is made up of Jewish men who have received Christ and will spread the gospel during the second half of the Tribulation.
- The second group is an innumerable group of people worshipping God before the throne.

These two large groups are a response to the question posed in 6:17, “[who is able to stand?](#)”

[\(7:1\)](#), [After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.](#)

[After this](#) = after the events of the 6th seal.

[I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth](#) = It is best to think of [the four corners of the earth](#) as the four points of the compass.

It is an idiom, a way of saying that the work of the angels was covering the entire earth.

This idiomatic language is used in [Isaiah 11:12](#), [And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.](#)

[See Revelation 20:7-8](#), [When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.](#)

The accommodative phrase is not trying to be scientifically accurate. It is an idiomatic way of communicating with man the completeness of the angelic control over the “[wind](#).”

[holding back](#) = the term used here (krateo) implies that the [winds](#) are struggling to get loose, and the angels are restraining them, holding them back.

[the four winds of the earth](#) = winds from the north, south, east, and west. From everywhere.

[Matthew 24:31](#), [And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.](#)

The question that we must answer is, Is John speaking of actual air currents or something else?
[holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree](#) =

If we stop here – the restraining the wind would be further judgment on the earth.

The absence of any wind would have massive repercussions for the earth.

- The smoke from the fires would never dissipate.
- Pollution would build up rapidly.
- Colder climates would never get warmer and warmer climates would never get cooler.
- The hydrologic system would stop functioning.
 - Water would no longer be evaporated from the ocean and then move over land and fall in snow or rain.
 - Evaporation may continue to take place, but without wind it would rain in the very same spot.

 - Most of the earth would quickly become a desert.
 - Lakes and rivers would dry up
 - Aquifers and reservoirs would dry up
 - It may impact the oceans as well.

However, the context seems to be using the angels restraining of the wind metaphorically.

Reasons to understand the [four winds](#) metaphorically.

- Wind is often (in fact most often) used in terms of judgment.
 - It is seen as scorching things (Gen. 41)
 - It is seen splitting mountains and rocks (1 Kings 19)
 - It describes foolish talk (Job 1, 6, 8, 15)
 - It drives away the wicked like chaff (Ps. 1)
 - Breaking the ships of Tarshish (Ps. 48)
 - **Psalm 11:6**, Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.

 - **Jeremiah 4:11-12**, In that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A scorching wind from the bare heights in the wilderness in the direction of the daughter of My people-- not to winnow and not to cleanse,¹² a wind too strong for this-- will come at My command; now I will also pronounce judgments against them.

- **Jeremiah 49:36-37**, I will bring upon Elam the four winds From the four ends of heaven, And will scatter them to all these winds; And there will be no nation To which the outcasts of Elam will not go. ³⁷ 'So I will shatter Elam before their enemies And before those who seek their lives; And I will bring calamity upon them, Even My fierce anger,' declares the LORD, 'And I will send out the sword after them Until I have consumed them.
- **Hosea 13:15**, Though he flourishes among the reeds, An east wind will come, The wind of the LORD coming up from the wilderness; And his fountain will become dry And his spring will be dried up; It will plunder *his* treasury of every precious article.

Of the, approximately 170, times “wind” is used, it is most often used metaphorically in connection with judgment, death, destruction, or danger.

- The context leads to a metaphorical interpretation.

Revelation 7:2-3, And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

The angels hold back the winds so that they do no harm to the earth *until after* the 144 thousand are sealed by God. After that point, they will let the winds of judgment loose.

See 8:7-9 – The first two trumpet judgments are directed at the very things that the angels were told not to harm until the 144 thousand were sealed.

The four angels appear to be holding back the calamity that will come upon the earth until the last of the 144 thousand have been sealed.

Sealed = this is the mark of ownership or authority or to attest to the validity of a document.

Seals were often a signet ring that was impressed in wax or clay. There are many examples of more complex seals in the form of small tubes that could be worn on a chain around the neck.

The seal of God shows ownership.

God’s seal on them shows that they belong to Him and also is used to protect them from the devastating effects of the trumpet judgments (at least on some level).

See Rev. 9:1-4.

Ezekiel had a vision of God punishing Jerusalem for her wickedness.

Ezekiel 9:1-6, Then He cried out in my hearing with a loud voice saying, "Draw near, O executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand." ² Behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his shattering weapon in his hand; and among them was a certain man clothed in linen with a writing case at his loins. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar. ³ Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case. ⁴ The LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, *even* through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst." ⁵ But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. ⁶ "Utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary." So they started with the elders who *were* before the temple.

The mark on the 144 thousand witnesses seems to make them exempt from the tragedies that befall the others on earth.

Specifically, it appears to prevent their death through the Tribulation.

There are some who do not believe they are spared death. They give three reasons for this.

1. Martyrdom is the highest form of love and worship.
 - While it is true that the greatest act of love is to lay down your life for your friend, not being martyred does not imply a lack of commitment to God.
 - John, the author of Revelation, was not martyred.
2. The two witnesses in Rev. 11:7 are able to be killed
 - The two witnesses have a very specific ministry. When their ministry on earth is through – God uses their deaths to make a point.
 - Their resurrections will be an even greater testimony than their lives will be.
3. In Rev. 13:15, the False Prophet has the power and authority to kill anyone who does not worship the image of the Beast.
 - The False Prophet does not kill everyone who does not worship the image of the Beast. Many thousands of men and women, who do not receive the mark will survive to enter into the Millennium.

4. **Revelation 14:1**, Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.
- At the second coming of Christ to the earth, the 144 thousand are seen standing with Jesus in Jerusalem. (Zion = Jerusalem - Isa. 2:3)

If the sealing by God does not protect the 144 thousand from death, like those in Ezekiel 9, what does it do?

Bond servants = NAS – “bond servants” does not exist in Greek. All the other versions translate this “servants.”

(*touj doulouj*) the slaves.

The seal on their foreheads is not a physically visible mark.

According to Rev. 14:1, it is the name of the Father and the Lamb.

(7:4), And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

7:5-8 lists the tribes and the numbers.

The birth of Jacob’s (Israel’s) 12 sons are as follows:

Leah:

1. Reuben
2. Simeon
3. Levi
4. Judah

Bilhah (Rachel’s maid)

5. Dan
6. Naphtali

Zilpah (Leah’s maid)

7. Gad
8. Asher

Leah (again):

9. Issachar
10. Zebulun

Rachel:

11. Joseph
12. Benjamin

The 12 tribes who entered the Promised Land are:

Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Benjamin, Judah, Simeon, Reuben, Gad, Ephraim, and Manasseh.

Neither Joseph nor Levi is named.

- Levi is not named because they were given cities throughout the land and were the priests.
- Joseph was given a double portion and is represented by his two sons – Ephraim and Manasseh.

The Tribe of Dan is not named in the list in Rev. 7.

Joseph instead of Ephraim (Joseph's son) and Levi (or Manasseh) instead of Dan.

The reason why Dan is not named is difficult to tell. Many theories have been floated – the best seems to be the idolatry that pervaded Dan may have spelled the end of them as a tribe.

Before we make too big of a deal about the make up of the list, it is important to know that there are 19 different arrangements of the names that differ in one way or another.

The arrangement in Rev. 7 does not match any other arrangement.

Judah being mentioned first could be because Jesus, the Messiah, the Lamb was from the tribe of Judah.

The inclusion of Levi could be because there will no longer be a need for the Levitical priesthood.

There does not appear to be any revealed significance to the number 144 thousand.

Some have suggested that this represents the number of people who will be saved during the Tribulation – but that cannot be.

In 7:9 there is an innumerable number of people who have been martyred during the Tribulation and that number does not include those who survive the Tribulation.

There must be multiple believing men and women who survive the Tribulation so that there are people to populate the millennial kingdom.

Any attempt to make the numbers mean something specific is manufactured and not really supported by the Scripture.

We learn more about these men in **Rev. 14:1-5**.

Just for reference as to how many 144 thousand is, Bellevue has a population of about 144 thousand. (Kent is about 127 thousand).

The second large group.

This extremely large group is seen in heaven, worshipping God before the throne.

(7:9), After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands;

These are (as **v. 14** makes clear) Tribulation saints who died in the judgments or who were put to death for following Christ and rejecting Antichrist.

It is not necessary to consider all of them to be martyred. It is reasonable that many who come to saving faith will still die as a result of the judgments on the earth.

The fact that there are people *from every nation* (eqnoj), *tribes and peoples and tongues*, implies true global evangelism. Multitudes of Gentiles from all over the world will come to saving faith.

Christianity will not be considered a “western religion.” It will be seen for what it truly is, the only hope available to man.

They are *standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes*.

These are the outfits of the overcomers (**3:4-5, 18; 4:4**) and the previous martyrs (**6:11**).

They had *palm branches in their hands*.

Palm branches were used during the Feast of Tabernacles (or Feast of Booths)

Leviticus 23:39-43, On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. ⁴⁰ Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹ You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It *shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall live in booths for seven

days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, ⁴³ so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

The crowds waved palm branches and chanted as Jesus rode into Jerusalem in the Triumphal entry.

John 12:12-13, On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³ took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and *began* to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel."

It almost appears that palm fronds were created for celebrations!

The palm branches were used in worship – to remind the people how God provided for His people in the wilderness and the waving of them as a way of celebration.

7:10, and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Salvation = (swthria) is used three times in this book (7:10; 12:10; 19:1). Each time the idea of “victory” fits the context.

Salvation, in the sense of saved from sin does not fit the shouts of praise in 7:10. Neither God nor the Lamb need to be saved from sin.

The idea of victory fits better in 12:10, where there is victory over the dragon and in 19:1 where Jesus establishes His rule on the earth.

(7:11-12), And all the angels were standing around the throne and *around* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen."

The angels, elders, and four living beings respond to the praise of the tribulation saints in agreement (“**Amen**”) and add their own praise acknowledging the glories of God.

- **Amen** (amhn) = affirming the praise of the martyrs.
- **Blessing** (eulogia) = good speaking, blessing, praise
- **Glory** (doxa) = glory, honor derived from earning a good reputation

- Wisdom (sofia) = divine knowledge of God (here, particularly in the plan of salvation)
- Thanksgiving (eucaristia) = to give freely, gratitude
- Honor (timh) = esteem
- Power (dunamij) = God's omnipotence
- Might (iscuj) = strength. (Here, God strength in saving those He chose)

Heaven continues to break out in shouts of praise to God.

Revelation 7:13-14, Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

In the midst of the praise one of the elders asked John who the multitude are and where they came from.

John confesses that he does not know, but the elder certainly does.

My lord = should be seen as a sign of respect, not as a divine title. Depending upon the context, the use of "lord" (kurioj) is either a confession or a term of respect, like "sir."

The elder asked the question, not to get information, but to give information.

The elder is about to tell John how so many different people came to be in heaven.

The angel identifies them as those who had **come out of the great tribulation**.

They entered the Tribulation period unsaved and, by God's grace, came to saving faith and they dies or were killed before the Tribulation was over.

The grammar is such that the number is not fixed as if to say, "These keep coming out of the great tribulation." That is, the number of saints before the throne keeps growing.

they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. = The language is obviously figurative.

Their garments had been defiled by sin and to be made clean and pure they had to be washed. What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

Washing/cleansing is seen in Exodus 19:10 as the people prepare for the Lord to come down to Mt. Sinai.

Psalm 51:7, Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.

Titus 3:5-6, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Hebrews 9:14, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1 John 1:7, but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

(7:15), "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.

and they serve Him day and night in His temple;

Their occupation in heaven is to serve God.

This is not a punishment it is a privilege.

They will serve the Lord out of love and gratitude and desire, not out of compulsion of reluctance.

There service must be along the lines of praise and worship.

It cannot mean the same Temple rituals that took place in the Jerusalem Temple. It cannot refer to offering sacrifices.

It cannot be the service of external rites but must be spiritual service.

Considering what these saints had seen and experienced, it seems fitting to see their response to God's deliverance like that of **Romans 12:1**, Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship*.

and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them = God will shelter over them!

This speaks of protection, as well as relationship.

Ezekiel 37:27, "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

Zechariah 2:10-11, "Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the LORD. ¹¹ "Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.

Revelation 21:3, And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

These saints will have seen and experienced things that most of us could not relate to.

They have experience world war, severe famine, 1/4 of the population dying of violence, starvation, disease, or wild animals, they were targeted by the world governments, and a global earthquake unlike anything the earth has ever experienced before.

To now have the blessing of dwelling in the presence of God and being covered by His care – will be amazing!

(7:16), They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat;

These verses seem to imply that these saints definitely felt the struggles in their time on the earth.

They are never to suffer again.

Some see these as promises pointing to spiritual blessings. Complete spiritual fulfillment.

But given the specific events on the earth, I think they are physical promises.

In heaven:

- No hunger (famine covered the earth)
- No thirst (in the trumpet judgments – 1/3 of the water supply is turned to blood. In the bowl judgments – the rest of the water will be turned to blood.)
- The sun will not scorch them (the fourth bowl, 16:8-9, the sun scorches men)

In heaven we will no longer have a physical need for food or water, no longer effected by heat or cold.

Yet, the next verse does speak of spiritual blessing and emotional blessings

(7:17), or the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Jesus, the Lamb, will be their shepherd. He will care for them, provide for them, comfort them, and guide them,

will guide them to springs of the water of life = like the woman at the well in **John 4:13-14**, Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

and God will wipe every tear from their eyes = the sadness, the fear, even the regrets will all be taken away.

The blessings of heaven will be amazing! It is enough to make us long to be there.

B. The Seven Trumpets (8:1-11:19)

1. The heavenly prelude (8:1-6)

The prelude of chapter seven continues for the first six verses of chapter 8. The seventh seal is broken (v. 1) and there is preparation in heaven for the trumpet judgments to commence.

This begins what is known as "The Great Tribulation."

As bad as things have been, they are about to move from bad to worse, to woe!

The trumpet judgments are divided into two sections: the first four trumpets (8:7-13) will be directed at the physical earth with direct effects on mankind.

The last three will be focused, specifically on man. The last trumpet judgment will introduce seven bowls of wrath. The bowls of wrath will be directed at man and nature that will have a direct impact on man.

(8:1), When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

The Lamb breaks the final seal (not the final judgment) There is plenty more to go.

This seal does not contain one judgment or even one type of judgment, like the previous seals, but it unleashes another series of judgments.

The first six judgments will take place over a three-and-a-half period of time. The last three-and-a-half years will have 13 (possibly more 10:4) judgments.

there was silence in heaven for about half an hour =

Up to this point we have seen a lot of activity in heaven. Sounds of thunder coming from the throne (4:5), four living beings repeating, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty...” (4:8), The twenty-four elders responding with a song of their own, saying “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power...” (4:11; 5:9) and shouting “Amen” (5:14). There was singing about the Lamb’s worthiness to open the scroll (5:9, 12, 13). And there were the multitudes standing before the throne and praising God (7:10-12).

When the seventh seal is opened – everything seemingly stops! The songs are put on hold, the praise pauses – not because the Lamb has done something wrong.

There have been several ideas as to why the silence in heaven.

- It is silence for the beginning of the Millennium rest
 - This cannot be the case:
 - The silence is in heaven not on earth
 - There is no rest yet – 13 more judgments are about to be poured out.
- It is not literal silence, but a cessation of judgments
 - Can only be true if you rip the next nine chapters out of the book.
- It is the temporary suspension of revelation to John
 - No way to prove that and it makes no sense for John to record that unless he also told us why.
- It is a pause in heavenly praise, while the prayers of the saints reach the altar.
 - The problem is that the prayers of the saints come to the throne after the silence, not during it.
- The silence is a time of awe and dread regarding the judgments about to take place. It would be sort of a stunned silence.
 - This view makes the most sense, given the things that are about to happen.

About half an hour = this is obviously an accommodation for the benefit of the reader. There would not be the same perspective of time in heaven.

[Two views on Revelation: Recapitulation and telescopic.]

- Recapitulation = sees the seven trumpets as a recapitulation or restatement of the seven seals. It would further see the seven bowls of wrath as recapitulation of the seals and trumpets.
 - In other words, there are only seven judgments in total.

There are a couple of main reasons why some hold to this view

(1) The similarities between 6:12-17 (the sixth seal) and Matthew 24:29.

Revelation 6:12-17, I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.¹⁴ The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Matthew 24:29-31, But immediately after the tribulation of those days **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**³⁰ "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the **SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY** with power and great glory.³¹ "And He will send forth His angels with **A GREAT TRUMPET** and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Response: They are similar, in fact very similar.

There is nothing to say that the effects of the sixth seal cannot be in operation until the end of the trumpet and bowl judgments. For instance, the duration of the effects of the sixth seal could easily last until the end of the all the other judgments.

(2) The similarities between the various judgments listed.

| Seven Seals | Seven Trumpets | Seven Bowls |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Antichrist is seen | 1. One-third of vegetation is destroyed by hail, fire, blood | 1. Sores afflict those with the Mark of the Beast |
| 2. World war | 2. One-third of sea becomes blood | 2. The rest of the sea turned to blood |
| 3. Global famine | 3. One-third of fresh water turned to blood | 3. The rest of the fresh water turned to blood |
| 4. One-fourth of the population die from violence, starvation, disease, and wild animals. | 4. Sun, moon, stars only shine for 1/3 of the day | 4. The sun scorches men |
| 5. Christians are martyred | 5. demonic locust torment men for five months | 5. Painful darkness cause men to gnaw on their own tongues |
| 6. Great earthquake, island and mountains move, sky splits | 6. One-third of mankind are killed by four angels from Euphrates | 6. The Euphrates is dried up |
| 7. Seven Trumpets | 7. Seven Bowls | 7. Great earthquake, mountains and islands move, severe hail kills people |

It stands to reason that there would be similarities as God pours out His wrath on the earth and on mankind. However, it is difficult to see the similarities as intensifications of previous judgments without using metaphor of some type.

While it is good and wise to examine similarities, it is also important to examine dissimilarities.

The normal reading lends itself to the telescopic view, that one set of judgments leads into the next set.

There is clearly an intensification of the judgments that affect the water and the planets. But the intensification could only be near the end of the Tribulation otherwise everyone would die.

In other words, you could not destroy all water in the first three-and-a-half years and expect people to survive for the next three-and-a-half years. God would not need to kill them with other means – they would all die of thirst, starvation, or from drinking things that would kill them.

On a similar note:

There are those who see the trumpet judgments as parallel to the judgments on the Egyptians in Exodus 7-11.

| Plagues in Egypt |
|---------------------------------|
| 1. Nile turned to blood |
| 2. Frogs |
| 3. Gnats |
| 4. Flies |
| 5. Cattle diseased |
| 6. Boils |
| 7. Hail destroys crops & cattle |
| 8. Locusts destroy crops |
| 9. Darkness |
| 10. Death |

| Trumpet Judgements |
|---|
| 1. One-third of vegetation destroyed by fire, hail, and blood. |
| 2. One-third of sea becomes blood |
| 3. One-third of fresh water made bitter, people die |
| 4. Sun, moon, and stars only shine for 1/3 of the day |
| 5. Demonic locust torment men for five months |
| 6. One-third of mankind are killed by angels from Euphrates River |
| 7. Seven bowls of wrath |

While there are some similarities, the dissimilarities are enough to say that there is not intended to be a correlation as much as a reminder.

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

This is a unique group of angels. They are unique in their particular function as the ones who are given the responsibility to sound the trumpets.

Trumpets most often used in the Scripture:

- to make announcements
- to assemble
- in celebrations, inaugurations
- in worship
- in battle – to gather, to attack, to stop attacking, to disperse
- in warning and judgment.

The trumpets here are used to announce judgment.

(8:3), Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.

The altar here is the heavenly counterpart to the altar of incense in the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

The Altar of Incense was to continually burn before the Lord (Ex. 30:7-8; 2 Chron. 13:11).

A special proprietary recipe was used (Ex. 30:35-37).

The smoke of the incense represented the prayers of the saints (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8)

In this context, the prayer of the saints are undoubtedly the prayers of the Tribulation saints and martyrs.

(8:4), And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

The smoke of the incense are representative of the prayers of the saints ascending to God and that the prayers of the saints are a pleasant aroma to the Lord.

(8:5), Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

The people on earth have had a brief respite from the severe judgments that have rocked the world and have already killed more than one-fourth of the population.

As of the sixth seal (6:12-17) the people were hiding in the caves and calling on the mountains to fall around them and hid them from the wrath of the Lamb and from God.

While they are most likely thinking that the worst is behind them and they can start cleaning up the mess and return life to normal – they are suddenly jolted back into the reality that there is more wrath coming at them.

The angel fills the golden censor (a firepan or a golden egg-shaped container with holes to allow the smoke out) with hot coals from the altar and throws it to the earth.

It is not necessary, or even likely, that the people on earth will notice the fire filled censor hurtling through space on a collision course with earth.

It is doubtful that NORAD will send out a warning about a UFO approaching earth at a high rate of speed.

This is more of a visual for those watching from heaven than those on the earth. Those on the earth will see other incredible things later.

This censor with the prayers of the saints being thrown to earth – points to the beginning of the answer to the prayers of the martyrs in 6:10.

When they asked in **6:10**, “[How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?](#)” they were told to wait a little while until their believing brothers and sister were also killed.

The time has come to answer their prayer (the others who were to be martyred were before the throne in 7:9-17).

The martyred saints watch in silence as the angels prepare to unleash the wrath of God on the earth and His enemies, yet again.

(8:5b), [and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.](#)

The reality of the dire situation on earth is about to hit hard!

If you have ever been in a strong earthquake, then you know that every strong aftershock can be terrifying.

After the 6.7 Northridge quake in 1994, the parks around the San Fernando Valley loomed like refugee camps – as terrified people camped out, afraid to go back into their apartments.

The [thunder](#), [lightning](#), and [earthquake](#) are merely a wakeup call – that things are not over yet.

In fact, the worst is yet to come.

In the first three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation there were six seal judgments, only four of which would be felt and be burdens to the people.

- First, Antichrist – not a burden
- Second, war – burdensome
- Third, famine – burdensome
- Fourth, death of one-fourth of people – burdensome
- Fifth, Christians killed – not a burden
- Sixth, earthquake and sky split – burden

IF the judgments were evenly spaced out over the 3.5 years – that would be one judgment every 7 months. (If only the ones that were burdensome were evenly spaced out – that would be one judgment every 10.5 months.)

During the second 3.5 years there will be at least 13 specific judgments poured out on the earth that will be felt by all unbelieving people.

IF they are evenly spaced out – that would mean a severe judgment every three months!

(8:6), [And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.](#)

The first four trumpet judgments are not directed specifically at man – they will certainly have a major impact on man.

The next three will take direct aim at man.

2. The Six Trumpet Judgments (8:7-9:21)

The First Trumpet

(8:7), [The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.](#)

Though some take this to be symbolic of failure of human government – there is no good reason to do so.

There is no good reason to any of these judgments as symbolic of any human institutions or failure.

There are two main reasons some commentators take the next few judgments as symbolic.

- (1) The things that are described have never been seen before and have no scientific explanation.
- (2) This is apocalyptic literature.

The critics of a literal interpretation have looked at other non-biblical apocalyptic literature and concluded that all apocalyptic literature is symbolic.

If it is symbolic, what is it symbolic of and how do we know?

It has been suggested that:

- Earth = nations
- Grass and trees = people

If that is true, what does “men” symbolize in 8:11 & 9:4, 18?

It makes no sense to use grass as symbolic for men in trumpet no. 1, and then grass mean grass in trumpet no. 5 where men and grass are used?

It is best to understand these as literal and actual divine acts.

The **hail**, **fire**, and **blood** are straight out of God’s playbook.

- Fire – at Sinai
 - **Exodus 19:18-25**, Now Mount Sinai *was* all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. ¹⁹ When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. ²⁰ The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. ²¹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. ²² "Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, or else the LORD will break out against them." ²³ Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it.'" ²⁴ Then the LORD said to him, "Go down and come up *again*, you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, or He will break forth upon them." ²⁵ So Moses went down to the people and told them.
- Hailstones – While Israel is conquering the land.

The kings of the Amorites and Jerusalem, and Hebron, and several others form an alliance to fight against Gibeon, who surrendered to Israel rather than fight. Joshua marched all night to bring his army to defend Gibeon and they defeated the alliance. God aided in the defeat by sending hailstones.

- **Joshua 10:8-11**, The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you." ⁹ So Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal. ¹⁰ And the LORD confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹ As they fled from before Israel, *while* they were at the descent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; *there were* more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.
- Hail – God’s response to Job’s complaint.
 - **Job 38:22-23**, Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, ²³ Which I have reserved for the time of distress, For the day of war and battle?
- Blood, fire, hail – Reiterating what God did in Egypt
 - **Psalms 78:43-50**, When He performed His signs in Egypt And His marvels in the field of Zoan, ⁴⁴ And turned their rivers to blood, And their streams, they could not drink. ⁴⁵ He sent among them swarms of flies which devoured them, And frogs which destroyed them. ⁴⁶ He gave also their crops to the grasshopper And the product of their labor to the locust. ⁴⁷ He destroyed their vines with hailstones And their sycamore trees with frost. ⁴⁸ He gave over their cattle also to the hailstones And their herds to bolts of lightning. ⁴⁹ He sent upon them His burning anger, Fury and indignation and trouble, A band of destroying angels. ⁵⁰ He leveled a path for His anger; He did not spare their soul from death, But gave over their life to the plague,
 - **Psalms 105:28-32**, He sent darkness and made *it* dark; And they did not rebel against His words. ²⁹ He turned their waters into blood And caused their fish to die. ³⁰ Their land swarmed with frogs *Even* in the chambers of their kings. ³¹ He spoke, and there came a swarm of flies *And* gnats in all their territory. ³² He gave them hail for rain, *And* flaming fire in their land.
- Hail – God’s promise of the destruction of the Assyrian army
 - **Isaiah 30:30**, And the LORD will cause His voice of authority to be heard, And the descending of His arm to be seen in fierce anger, And *in* the flame of a consuming fire In cloudburst, downpour and hailstones.
- Hail, fire in judgment of Gog

- **Ezekiel 38:22**, With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.
- Blood, fire – in the Day of the Lord
 - **Joel 2:30**, I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke.

and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. =

Some think this is a contradiction with **9:4**, where demonic locusts are told not to harm the grass.

The criticism is that if all the grass has been burned up, why the command not to hurt the grass?

- (1) Burning the grass does not mean that it cannot grow back.
- (2) In Trumpet no. 1, only the green grass was burned up. Not all grass around the world is green at the same time.

A third = it is impossible to know whether the one-third applies to a specific portion of the planet or it applies to a percentage of the grass and trees globally.

While not directly aimed at man, this trumpet judgment will certainly directly impact man.

Consider the loss of badly needed lumber, the amount of fruit that would be lost, the impact on the oxygen levels around the world, and the smoke from all that is burning.

The Second Trumpet

(8:8), The second angel sounded, and *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood,

This is most likely a meteoric mass, burning as it falls through the sky and impacts the earth.

This specially designed meteor will turn one-third of the ocean into blood.

Commentators differ on whether this is actual blood or merely looks like blood.

John has no problem, in this letter, using the words “like” or “as” when he is using non-specific language. In fact, he uses the words for a simile 62 times.

So, it seems that if John meant that one-third of the sea turned red like blood, he would have said so.

Additionally, turning water into blood is nothing new for God.

Exodus 7:20, So Moses and Aaron did even as the LORD had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that *was* in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that *was* in the Nile was turned to blood.

Jesus turned water into wine (John 2), it was not simply red like wine – it was wine.

Those who want to claim that the sea was turned blood red rather than into blood – do so because they are trying to explain the phenomena with what we can currently understand.

The miraculous should not be counted out because man is unable to comprehend how it could be done.

On the contrary, that may be precisely why it will be done.

It will be an event that is so unlike anything man has ever seen that it can only be explained as an act of God!

The impact will be enormous.

Not only will one-third of the ocean be turned to blood...

(8:9), and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Seventy percent of the earth's surface is covered by ocean.

It has been estimated that 50-80% of all living creatures on earth are in the sea.

One-third of sea creatures will be significant!

It will cause quite a mess and a stench as the beaches of the world are covered by dead rotting fish.

One-third of the ships were destroyed.

When you consider the number of cargo ships, tankers, naval ships, research, cruise, transportation, and pleasure crafts – you are into the hundreds of thousands.

That would mean no less than one hundred thousand ships will be destroyed at that time.

There is no way for us to know how they will be destroyed. Perhaps capsized by the waves of the giant burning mountain dropped into the sea. Or perhaps by sucking blood into the engines and causing catastrophic engine failure.

The results will be devastating to mankind.

- A major source of food and global transportation will be destroyed.
- If one-third of oil tankers and oil drilling platforms are destroyed, you can assume there will be oil spills that will make the Exxon Valdez spill look like a drop of oil on your driveway.

The Third Trumpet

(8:10), The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters.

Perhaps another meteoric mass.

This burning mass impacts the fresh water sources of the world.

(8:11), The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

This one has a name, **Wormwood** = a bitter plant, shrub.

Wormwood is mentioned ten times in Scripture and each time it is associated with judgment.

One-third of the world's drinkable water is made bitter and apparently can have a deadly effect.

This is the first trumpet judgement that talks about people dying as a result (though we can safely assume that many people will die during the previous two.

It is not hard to imagine what the lack of food and not the lack of potable water will have on the population.

It seems likely, given the conditions and human nature combined with the absence of the salt and light – that people will literally kill for drinkable water.

In a blink of an eye all the luxuries of the world, all the modern conveniences are meaningless compared to a gallon of water.

Water will be more valuable than Bitcoin.

All the modern countries of this world will be living like the poorest third world country.

Men in \$1,000 suits and expensive shoes will be walking for miles just to get a couple of gallons of water.

The Fourth Trumpet

(8:12), The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

As the world's surviving population try to control the damage and clean up the mess, the next trumpet judgment hits them in a way that they are completely helpless.

Commentators have again struggled to come up with a "logical" explanation for the partial darkening of the sun, moon, and stars.

- Is the light obstructed by smoke and other debris in the sky?
 - That would not account for the fact that the lights only shine for a third of the day and a third of the night.
- Is it an eclipse?
 - Daily?

It is easy to understand when you consider it to be a divine event rather than a natural event.

It seems that there will be eight hours of light, eight hours of night, and eight hours of darkness.

This is spoken of by the prophets.

- **Isaiah 13:9-10**, Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. ¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light.

- **Ezekiel 32:7-8**, "And when *I* extinguish you, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud And the moon will not give its light. ⁸ "All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you And will set darkness on your land," Declares the Lord GOD.
- **Joel 2:2**, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, *So* there is a great and mighty people; There has never been *anything* like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.
- **Joel 2:10**, Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.
- **Joel 2:31**, The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.
- **Joel 3:15**, The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.
- **Amos 8:9**, It will come about in that day," declares the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon And make the earth dark in broad daylight.

This will apparently be temporary. In Rev. 16:8-9, the thermostat of the sun is turned up and scorches men. It is possible that such a thing could happen while the darkness for a third of the day.

The result of the partial light will be...

- A decrease in global temperature
- Detrimental impact on agriculture
- Greatly hinder clean-up efforts
- Unknown psychological impact on people

It also sets the stage for an announcement from heaven.

(8:13), Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

KJV says “angel” instead of **eagle**. There is better MS support for **eagle**, though the word aetoj can also be translated as vulture.

Both the eagle and the vulture are fitting for the context.

Some have said this must be symbolic because eagles (or vultures) cannot talk.

Neither do snakes or donkeys, normally! However, Gen. 3:1-5; Num. 22:28-30.

I heard an eagle flying in midheaven = the word for midheaven (mesouranhma) means “at the zenith” or “high in the sky”

It refers to when the sun is at its highest point in the sky (noon).

It is used to refer more to a time than a location.

The bird is flying through the sky at a time when everyone could see it and it speaks **with a loud voice** (fwnh megalh) so that everyone can hear as it announces three “woes.”

Woe (ouai) was a word of impending devastation.

It was a way of saying, “If you think things have been bad up to this point, get ready, because you haven’t seen anything yet! It is about to get a whole lot worse!”

These three woes will be directed at **those who dwell on the earth**.

If there has been suffering, death, and destruction when the judgments were not directed at mankind, imagine how bad things will be when the judgments are directed at man!

The first four trumpet judgments leave a world in chaos.

- Many people have died, and the planet is devastated.
- One-third of vegetation has been destroyed
- One-third of the sea has been turned to blood,
 - killing one-third of the creatures living in the sea.
- One-third of fresh water was turned bitter
 - Killing many who drank the water
- One-third of the solar system goes dark

There would be obvious physical impact on people and unimaginable psychological impact on people.

As bad as the first four trumpet judgments will be – the last three will be worse.

Chapter 8 ended with, **Revelation 8:13**, Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

The Fifth Trumpet / First “Woe” (cf. 8:13)

(9:1), Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.

Not surprisingly, there has been many interpretations of verses 1-11.

In order to arrive at the best understanding it requires that we answer some key questions.

Q. Who is the *star* that John saw?

The star cannot be like those stars mentioned in **6:13** or **8:10-11**, which were some type of astrological phenomena.

This *star* must be an intelligent being.

- The pronouns used.
 - Masculine pronouns used in **vv. 1-2**.
- The work done
 - He was given the keys to the pit, to open it.

That the *star* is an intelligent being appears obvious – but *who* is the *star*?

- Some say Jesus Christ.
 - **Revelation 1:17b-18**, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."
 - It would be very odd at this point in the book for Jesus to be referred to as a *star*.
 - The fact that *the key was given* to the star implies that someone with authority over the keys gave it to the *star*.
 - It is best to see that Jesus, who has the keys to death and hades, gave the key to the bottomless pit to the *star*.
- Some say Antichrist.
 - That view does not fit with the context of judgment against the earth.
 - It also ignores the fact that Antichrist started on the earth and his work is on the earth.

- He was not fallen from heaven.
 - Additionally, it makes no sense for Antichrist to torment all except those who have [the seal of God on their foreheads](#).
- Some say Mohammed (or some other person from history)
 - This view is held because Mohammed gathered armies to fight against Christians.
 - The only ones who are exempt from the torment are those who are sealed by God. Only the enemies of God are tormented.
 - Like Antichrist, Mohammed does not have a heavenly origin, but an earthly one.
- This must be an intelligent heavenly being. If it is not the Father or the Son, it must be an angel – but who?
 - Either a fallen angel or an unfallen angel.
 - Either an unfallen angel on a divine mission from God
 - Or Satan
 - Or some other demon

When we weigh all the facts, specifically the context of the book of Revelation, we must lean toward an unfallen angel on a divine mission from God.

As to Satan:

- If this is a reference to Satan's being cast out of heaven, it is vague and anticlimactic.
 - **See Rev. 12:7-12.**
 - [Fallen](#) does not need to mean in a spiritual sense. It can freely refer to the movement from one level to another as it does in **6:13, 16; 8:10**.
 - It makes no sense for Satan to be given the key to the abyss and to send out his demonic locust to torture everyone except the Christian.
 - **Turn to Rev. 20:1-3**, where Satan is bound in the abyss by another angel, who has the key.

As to a demon:

- There is no need to identify this being with the [angel of the abyss](#) in **v. 11**.
- The same reasons that keep this from being Satan also keep it from being a demon.

As to an unfallen angel sent by God:

- The divine mission of this angel fits with the overall context of God’s judgment on mankind.
- The sending of the angel with the key to the abyss sets the stage for the next phase of judgment.
- This view makes the most sense considering **20:1-3**.

the key of the bottomless pit = (NIV Abyss) Lit. “the shaft of the abyss”

Abyss = (abussoj) = “without depth” or bottomless

Seven of the nine times the word is used is in Revelation.

It is used:

- **Luke 8**, When Jesus was casting out the demon from the man of Gadarenes, the demons recognized Jesus and begged Him not to torment them because it was time.
 - **Luke 8:31**, They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.
- **Rom 10:7**, where it is used synonymously with the grave.
- The other uses are in Rev. 9:1-2, 11 – our text.
 - 11:7 = where it is the dwelling place of the Beast.
 - 17:8 = the dwelling place of the Beast
 - 20:1, 3 = Where Satan and the Beast are bound for 1,000 years.

With the exception of Romans 10:7 every time the abyss is referenced it is the place of incarcerated fallen angels.

It should not be confused with the Lake of Fire, which will be the ultimate destiny for Satan, the Beast, and everyone who dies without Christ. The Lake of Fire is synonymous with Hell.

The unfallen angel is given the key to unlock the lid to the bottomless pit to release the demonic locusts, who are given power to torment men, but are prevented from killing anyone or harming any agriculture.

(9:2), He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

The *bottomless pit* or abyss must be somewhere *on* the earth, or more to the point, *in* the earth.

When the door to the pit is opened the smoke rises and obscures the already limited sunlight.

Whether it is an obstruction of a limited geographical area or if the smoke is so much that it has global effect, is unknown to us.

(9:3), Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

These are not ordinary *locusts*.

What they do is different, the way they look is different, and who they listen to is different.

Views of the locusts:

- Human Armies
 - Arabis, oriental, Russian
 - The appeal of this view is Joel 1-2 where real locusts are described as an invading army that prefigure an actual invading human army.
 - God is punishing Judah with a drought and an invasion of four different types of locusts.
 - See Joel 1:2-7; 2:1-11
 - Like an army, these locusts march through the land leaving decimation behind.

While this view is somewhat compelling, there are major differences between the two accounts.

- Such as, the locusts in Joel eat all the vegetation and in Revelation 9, they are not allowed to eat anything.
- In Joel they leave the land desolate and in Revelation they torment men and leave the land untouched.
- These are not like the locusts used to plague Egypt.
- Given their description and their purpose it is best to see these as demon in locust-like form. (Rev. 16:13 – demons in frog form)

- The fact that they come out of the abyss, the way they look, and the fact that they have a king give strong indication that they are demonic.

(9:4), They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

The demonic locusts are limited in what they are allowed to do.

They cannot harm any vegetation.

They have one responsibility and that is to harm man, but not just any man. They can only harm those **who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.**

That is, they can only harm the unbeliever.

Whatever the divine sealing is, the locusts apparently can see it.

God will use the demonic realm, which is in rebellion to Him, to punish man, who is in rebellion to Him.

In the same way He used Assyria and Babylon to judge the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

The demonic horde just want to kill, steal, and destroy. They have no love for any man. While their hatred for God's people may be greater – they have no loyalty or camaraderie with the unsaved.

(9:5), And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

These demonic locusts are not allowed to kill anyone.

Regarding God's limiting Satanic and demonic power:

Job 1:12, Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

Job 2:6, So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.

They have a limited time to torment man.

There is no need to search for some hidden meaning behind the limited time of **five months**.

God uses evil to accomplish His purposes.

- God is not the author of sin
- God does not cause men to sin
- God sovereignly uses man's own sinful desires and put them in positions where those sinful desires will accomplish God's purposes.
 - i.e., Pharaoh
 - **Isaiah 45:7**, The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.
 - **Zechariah 13:7-9**, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones. ⁸ "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off *and* perish; But the third will be left in it. ⁹ "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"
 - **Acts 2:22-23**, Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.
 - **Acts 4:27-28**, For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.
 - **James 1:13-15**, Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

- **2 Samuel 24:1**, Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."
- **2 Samuel 24:10**, Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."
- **1 Chronicles 21:1**, Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.

(9:6), And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

The suffering will be so bad that men would rather die, but God will not allow them to escape that easily at that time.

Men will seek death = desire death

And will not find it = ou mh double negative, emphatic negation.

By no means, will men be able to find the death they desire.

Death flees from them = evades them, runs away from them.

This does not mean that men will not be able to harm themselves or inflict even greater suffering upon themselves. You can imagine shooting themselves but not dying, jumping off a building or a bridge and shattering bones but not dying, or ingesting poison and reaping the consequences without dying.

In **vv. 7-10** it is important to recognize that John repeatedly uses the word “like” as he describes something no human has ever seen before.

No human has seen the horrid creatures that John sees, and he tries to describe their features in terms that his readers can relate to.

(9:7-10), The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ⁸ They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like *the teeth* of lions. ⁹ They had breastplates like

breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. ¹⁰ They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

like horses prepared for battle =

on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold = stefanoj = laurel wreath, victors crown.

their faces were like the faces of men = perhaps they looked like intelligent beings, like thinking beings.

They had hair like the hair of women = possibly long antenna

and their teeth were like *the teeth* of lions = sharp, fierce looking

They had breastplates like breastplates of iron = hard exoskeleton, invincible

the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle = loud, noisy, obvious, intimidating

They have tails like scorpions = stingers

and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months =

Some want to think these are armies – but they are locusts not men. John has had no trouble up to this point call men “men.”

Hal Lindsey said these were helicopters spraying agent orange.

That does not fit. The helicopters would have to be manmade. It does not make sense for God to use conventional weapons in divine judgement.

(9:11), They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

The angel of the abyss is an evil ruling angel.

Abaddon = destroyer

Apollyon = I destroy

(9:12), The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

The Sixth Trumpet / Second “Woe” (cf. 8:13; 9:12)

(9:13), Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

Four horns = each corner of the square altar has a horn.

A voice = does not mean that the horns of the altar were speaking, but from the immediate vicinity of the altar.

The voice could be the voice of God, but it seems strange that John would not tell us that.

The focus is on what is said, more than on who spoke the words, which leads me to believe it was most likely an angel that stands before the throne.

This is the only one of the seven trumpet playing angels that is given a task beyond playing the sound that sets the next judgment in motion. The angel who plays the trumpet is given the task of rousing four other angels who will carry out God’s wrath on the people of earth.

(9:14), one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

There are some questions about this passage that have resulted in a number of disagreements.

Q1 – Who are the four angels?

Not surprising, there are multiple views.

The views that claim that they are world leaders do not have solid enough reasons to even take them seriously.

Of the reasonable answers are those who say, these are holy angels prepared by God for this judgment.

That these angels are bound means that they are bound by God’s commands. That is, they are not restrained from executing judgment until such a time as God permits.

They would cite Rev. 7:1, where the four angels hold back the four winds – in the same way, God is holding them back.

However, this view is not defining what it means to release or to be bound in the normal way.

Additionally, and more compelling, the four angels are said to be bound in a specific location, which would have nothing to do with the limiting of their being restrained from doling out God’s wrath.

It seems best to see these four angels as evil angels, demons, who have been bound by God for some reason, where they sit and marinate until a specific moment in God's timeline.

There is a definite article, (**The**) in the Greek that indicates that these four demons were familiar to John or to his original readers.

If there was any information about them, in oral tradition, it has been lost. We do not know why or how they were known.

The presence of that article has caused more than a few commentators to claim that the four angels were the leaders of the demonic horde who had sexual relations with human women in **Genesis 6:1-4**.

As a result of their actions, their punishment was to be **bound at the great river Euphrates** until this specific moment.

They make their case by citing

2 Peter 2:4, **For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;**

and

Jude 1:6, **And angels who did not keep their own dominion, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.**

There are several problems with this view.

First, the events of Genesis 6:1-4 are highly debated.

- It is not entirely clear that “**Sons of God**” in v. 2 refers to demons.
- Demons cannot procreate, if it were demons, they were inhabiting the bodies of men, any offspring would have been human anyway, not a hybrid of human and angelic (or demonic).

- As to 2 Peter 2:4, This applies to all evil angels, not only to four of them.
 - Vv. 1-3 = God will punish false teachers
The proof is in God's past actions.
 - V. 4 = God did not spare wicked angels
 - V. 5 = God flooded the world
 - V. 6 = God destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah
 - V. 9 = God will punish the unrighteous

- As to Jude 1:4-7, this is very similar to 2 Peter 2
 - V. 4 = the unrighteous are marked out for condemnation
 - V. 5 = God destroyed the unbelievers in Egypt
 - V. 6 = God punished angels who did not keep their proper abode

- V. 7 = God destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah.

Neither passage can directly be attributed to the four angels in Rev. 9:14.

One could just as easily make the case that these four demons somehow played key roles in the original rebellion of the third of the angels.

Whether these are wicked angels involved in the sin of Genesis 6, while possible, is far from certain.

It is best to simply understand that they are wicked angels who have been bound by God (for some unstated reason) at the Euphrates river.

In God's sovereign power and authority, He will unleash horrible punishment on mankind, using evil agents who will fulfill their own evil desires.

Q2 Why the river Euphrates?

- Because that is where God chose to imprison these four demons.
- The river is prominent in Israel's history.
 - The 1,800-mile-long river begins in the mountains of Ararat (in Modern-day Turkey) and empties into the Persian Gulf.
 - It is to be the eastern border of the nation of Israel.
 - **Genesis 15:18**, On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates."
 - **Joshua 1:4**, "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.
 - It also served as a natural barrier between Israel and her enemies to the East.

(9:15), And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind.

This points to a specific moment in time. The hour occurs on the appointed day of the appointed month of the appointed year.

God has fixed a time when this will happen.

It is not happenstance, it is not random chance, it is not just "ready at a moments notice."

The demonic quartet will be released from the imprisonment at a very specific moment in time, a time that is already a part of God's determined plan for the world.

The four angels will lead their demonic armies on a killing spree that will wipe out one-third of those who are left alive.

When the fourth seal was opened, one-fourth of the population was killed.

This time, another one-third will be killed.

One-third may not be numerically as large as one-fourth was, but it is a significantly larger percentage of the population.

Earlier men wanted to die and could not.

At that time, death will be everywhere as one in three people worldwide die.

This is in addition to those who died in famine, in earthquakes, by wild animals, by murder, by drinking the bitter water, and by natural causes.

Can you imagine what it will be like just trying to dispose of the dead bodies.

There will likely be mass graves, dump trucks picking up bodies like it is trash day.

This will affect all classes of people. It will affect doctors, engineers, leaders, teachers, scientists, truck drivers, pilots, moms.

With so many people dying, it is difficult to think of any area of life that will not be drastically impacted.

Verses 16 & 17 tells us who killed so many and verse 18 tells us how they were killed.

(9:16), [The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.](#)

This introduction to the armies seems somewhat abrupt.

Apparently, the four wicked angels will lead a massive cavalry to carry out the task of killing one-third of the population.

By the way, Christians were specifically protected from the fifth trumpet judgment and the demonic locusts. There is no such exemption mentioned for this trumpet. We would have to infer that Christians were exempt.

There is no explanation of the source of the armies, but the information we do have leads us to believe they are demonic armies.

Some commentators want to see them as human armies.

They look at the invasion of Israel in Rev. 16:12 and recognize them as human armies (and they are) and assume the same must be true here.

It has been pointed out by some that the Chinese army surpassed 200 million in the 1970's.

But it makes no sense for Rev. 9:16 to refer to a human army.

- There are too many differences between 9:16 & 16:12 to make any kind of logical comparison.
- If the armies in 16:12 were the same as those in 9:16, it would be virtually impossible for them to kill one-third of the world's population unless one-third of the world's population lived in the middle east and the army killed every single person they came in contact with.

But most compelling is the description of the armies and their horses – they do not fit any human army.

The fact that the horses rather than the riders do the killing is one of many unique features that lead us to understand these are demonic beings along the same line as the demonic locusts in 9:3-11.

The number John gives, 200 million, in the Greek it reads, "Twenty thousands of ten thousands."

Whether John is most likely trying to give a fairly accurate number since he said, "I heard the number of them."

(9:17), And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: *the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.*

Fiery red or made of fire = red

Hyacinth = dark blue, dusky blue as of sulfuric smoke

Brimstone = Sulfur = yellow

The breastplates are the same as what proceeds out of their mouths.

(9:18), A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeds out of their mouths.

The language indicated that each of the three elements are used to kill people.

Perhaps one-third of the demonic cavalry will kill people with fire, one-third kill people with smoke, and one-third kill people with brimstone. Or each horse utilizes all three.

(9:19), For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

The demonic horses appear to be more like fire-breathing dragons than horses.

Their tails will have devastating effect.

We are not told how long it will take for the massive army to kill one-third of the people or what happens to them after they are done with their killing mission.

One of the most shocking passages in Scripture follows this trumpet judgment.

After all that has happened, mankind, as a group continues to harden its collective heart.

(9:20-21), The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and idols of gold, and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

To worship anything other than God is ultimately to worship the devil.

At this point in the world, the Christians have been raptured. The salt of the earth and the light of the world has been removed.

While there will still be a Christian witness, the preserving influence of the church will be gone, and men will become savages.

Wickedness and idolatry will escalate.

Murder will be as common as any other sin.

Without a moral conscience to keep the world in check, the population at large will emulate the demonic armies that will be roaming the earth.

Sorceries = the word is farmakwn, it is where we get our word “pharmacy.” It is used to refer to drug use and to witchcraft, magic potions, etc.

Fornication = porneiaj, where we get our word “pornography.” It refers to any form of sexual sin.

Thefts =

The world without God, without the restraining work of the Holy Spirit, without the church, will descend into a life full of idolatry, murder, drugs, witchcraft, immorality, sexual perversion, and unparalleled crime.

3. The Earthly Parenthesis: A Little Book and Two Witnesses (10:1-11:14)

Chapter 10

Just as there was an earthly parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals, there is an earthly parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets, and there will be an earthly parenthesis between the sixth and seventh bowls.

The parenthesis will cover **10:1-11:14** in it, John will see an angel stand on the earth. The angel will announce to John that the end of the judgment is coming soon, and he has a little book that John is told to eat.

In chapter eleven, John is told to measure the temple and we are introduced to the two witnesses.

(10:1), I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire;

John is speaking from his perspective on the earth.

Because of some similarities between the description of this angel and the description of Jesus in **1:14-15**,

Revelation 1:7-15

- The Almighty (8)
- Coming with clouds (7)
- His eyes were like a flame of fire (14)
- His feet *were* like burnished bronze (15)
- His voice *was* like the sound of many waters (15)
- Like a lion cf. Hosea 11:10; Amos 1:2
- *there was* a rainbow around the throne (4:3)
- book in His hand (5:7)

Revelation 10:1-3

- * strong angel (1)
- * clothed with a cloud (1)
- * his face was like the sun (1)
- * his feet like pillars of fire (1)
- * he cried out with a loud voice (3)
- * as when a lion roars (3)
- * the rainbow was upon his head (1)
- * a little book in his hand (2)

However,

- Christ is never called an angel in Revelation.
- Other angels are described in glorious words.
 - See Rev. 5:2 – strong
 - See Rev. 7:2 – loud voice
 - See Rev. 18:1-3 – great authority
 - See 18:21 – strong

- The word “another” (10:1), is *alloj* and it means “another of the same kind. The closest antecedent is **9:13-14**.
 - Jesus is unique, unlike any other angel.
- If this is Jesus, it would require that His second coming take place in phases.
- The vow of **10:5-6** would not make any sense. Jesus would be raising His hand to heaven and swearing by himself.

It is best to recognize that this is another unique angel carrying out the announcement that there will be no more delay in judgment and the return of Jesus.

(10:2), and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;

A little book = this is not the same scroll as in 5:1.

It is a “small book” *biblaridion* = little book or scroll.

What is on the scroll?

John is told in verses 9-10 that eating the scroll will be sweet to his mouth but bitter in his stomach.

The contextual implication seems to be that the scroll is about the final judgment.

It will be sweet in the sense that God is vindicated, and evil is about to be defeated.

It will be bitter in the sense that destruction is coming upon so many people and they are to be cast into eternal hell.

Ezekiel 2:9 - 3:3, Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll *was* in it. ¹⁰ When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe. ^{NAU} **Ezekiel 3:1** Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." ² So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. ³ He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;

The imposing stance of the angel, straddling the land and sea is symbolic of authority over the whole earth.

The imposing sight is matched by the imposing voice.

(10:3), and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.

Some have said that the seven peals of thunder are the voice of God.

This is based on:

Psalm 29:3-9, The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; The God of glory thunders, The LORD is over many waters. ⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful, The voice of the LORD is majestic. ⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; Yes, the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. ⁶ He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, And Sirion like a young wild ox. ⁷ The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire. ⁸ The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; The LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. ⁹ The voice of the LORD makes the deer to calve And strips the forests bare; And in His temple everything says, "Glory!"

John 12:28-29, "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹ So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him."

It doesn't fit the context to claim that the thunders are the voice of God since the text speaks of their voices.

The voices seem to be statements or acts of judgment that John was about to write down until he was told not to.

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

There is no lack of curiosity as to what the seven peals of thunder spoke. But there is absolutely no way for us to know.

They are probably NOT in the same category as the seals, trumpets or bowls, since the trumpets are the seventh seal, and the bowls are the seventh trumpet. The thunders take place between the sixth and seventh trumpet.

Whatever they are is sealed up. Hidden from our understanding at this point. We will probably understand at the time.

It is interesting that God would let us know that the seven thunders sounded, that they were something that John was going to write down but was told not to.

Of all the devastation and judgment that John writes about, it makes one wonder, what is it about these seven thunders that God wants us to know happened but does not want us to know the details?

Why tantalize us with the knowledge that something significant happens but keep it a secret? Why not simply omit the fact that the seven thunders were something John felt he should write down – then we would have never known about them?

The answer may lay in the fact that it serves as a reminder that God's ways are not man's ways. That God will do and say things that are beyond man's capacity to understand (no matter how clever we like to believe we are).

2 Corinthians 12:3-4, And I know how such a man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- ⁴ was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

We are only given a partial glimpse into all that God will do and it is good for us to remember that we must leave some matters to our trustworthy God.

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

Verse six is a quoted from **Exodus 20:11**, "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

God is the creator of the three realms that man understands, heaven, earth, and sea.

Then strong angel lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever. This is an oath made in the name of God.

The oath is that there will be delay no longer. That is, the wrath of God is about to be completed.

This is most likely the answer to the question of the martyrs in **6:10**, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

The implication is that when the seventh trumpet sounds the seven bowls of wrath will be poured out in rapid fire succession and will culminate with the return of Christ to the earth.

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

The culmination of God's hidden purpose is about to be revealed to everyone.

The seventh trumpet will sound (11:15), it will include the seven bowls/vials of God's wrath being poured out (beginning 16:1).

Then the mystery of God is finished.

The mystery of God =

- The full nature of the Kingdom
- The new heaven and earth
- The great reversal of the curse
- The purpose for all of history
- The glory of Jesus Christ fully seen

Is finished =

- A "proleptic aorist" – to speak of a future event as if it has already happened. It is used to express utter certainty that the plan of God is going to happen.
- Example: **Romans 8:30**, and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
 - Each of the underlined words are aorist indicatives (proleptic aorist)
 - These future things are so certain that they can be spoken of in the past tense.

As He preached to His servants the prophets =

- **Jeremiah 7:25-26**, "Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them.²⁶ "Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers.

- **Jeremiah 25:4**, And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear,
- **Amos 3:7**, Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets.

John is affirming that the things the Old Testament prophets spoke are going to come to pass.

- Psalm 2, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Amos, and Zechariah have all spoken of the end times.
- This promise that all that God had spoken to the prophets was about to come to completion should be a comfort to us and will certainly be a comfort to Christians at the time, who are living in the most corrupt world since before the flood. Murder, immorality, massive death, and unparalleled disasters will be the norm for everyday life. It will be a great source of comfort to know that it is all about to be finished and the glorious reign of Christ is about to begin on earth.

(10:8), Then the voice which I heard from heaven, *I heard* again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land."

John, who is on the earth, is told to approach the strong angel to take the small book/scroll he is holding in his left hand.

John is no longer a spectator; he is no longer just a historian writing down the events he sees. He has become a participant in the unfolding drama.

John does what he is told and approaches the strong angel.

(10:9), So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

As John takes the book, he is told to eat it.

The intent is for John to fully assimilate what was about to happen, to fully chew on what he is about to see and hear.

John, no doubt, actually eats the scroll – and experiences the sweetness and the bitterness. As John digests what is about to happen, the vindication of God is sweet to his taste. But, as he contemplates the magnitude of death and the fate of God’s enemies it turns his stomach.

The vindication/return of Jesus Christ will certainly be a bitter-sweet time.

Sweet:

- God’s truth is fully realized.
- Christ is glorified as He deserves.
- The enemies of God and of righteousness are vanquished.
- Satan will be bound in the pit and temptation and sin will be greatly diminished.
- Righteousness and holiness will rule the day.
- Death and disease will be subdued.
- Hunger and suffering will be a thing of the past.

Bitter:

- It requires the death and eternal punishment of millions of people.
- No unbeliever will escape the wrath of God.
- It will be eternally too late for myriads of people.

(10:11), *And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."*

John is recommissioned to continue his work of proclaiming the truth to the world.

It appears that there is a lag in time between the end of chapter nine and the beginning of chapter ten. At least from John’s perspective.

He is back on the earth and is recommissioned.

Chapter 11

(11:1), *Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it."*

This apparently the temple that will be built on earth during the Tribulation.

A measuring rod = most likely a reed that grows in the Jordan valley. They were very straight, hollow, and grew between 15-20 tall.

Measuring was done for a few different reasons.

- Dimensions:

Ezekiel 40-42, Ezekiel is given a vision of the millennial temple and he gives detailed measurements of it.

The measurements that John takes, does not appear to be for the dimensions since the dimensions are never given.

- Judgment:

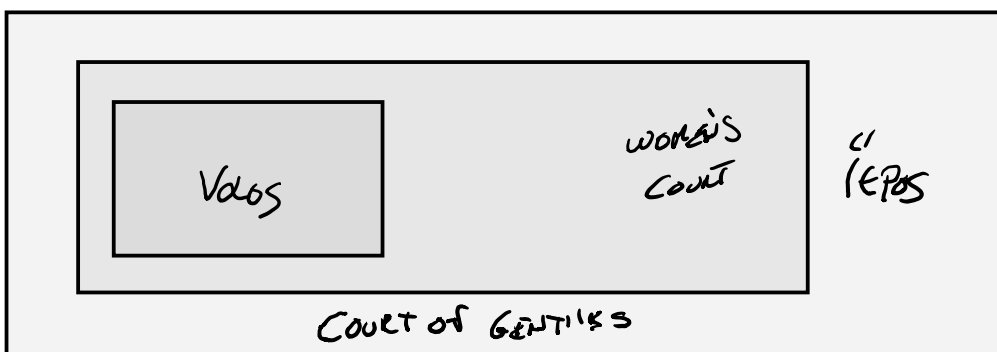
2 Samuel 8:1-2, Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them; and David took control of the chief city from the hand of the Philistines. ² He defeated Moab, and measured them with the line, making them lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.

- Ownership:

Revelation 21:15-17, The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.*

John is told to measure the inner temple (naoj as opposed to ieroj).

The i|eroj is the outer court, where gentiles are allowed to gather. The naoj is the inner court, where the holy place and the holy of holies is located.



The measuring of John appears to be for ownership or protection.

The fact that the outer court was intentionally excluded and those is in trample Jerusalem indicates that the inner temple, the altar, and the worshippers are those who are truly dedicated to God.

(11:2), "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

Probably after Antichrist commits the abomination of desolation, the nations (eqnoj / Gentiles) will occupy and control it. They will continue to desecrate it, through their worship of Antichrist and will dominate Jerusalem for the last three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation.

This will be a time of persecution of the Jews.

Luke 21:23-24, Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; ²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Zechariah 12:1-14 describes how God will defend and restore Jerusalem at His second coming.

The two witnesses

(11:3), "And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

These two witnesses will apparently be at the Temple and will prophesy for the last three-and-a-half-years.

They are just like Old Testament prophets – from their clothing to their power, and their message.

There is great interest in who these two witnesses are.

- Enoch & Elijah – neither man is said to have died.
 - **Genesis 5:24**, Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.
 - **2 Kings 2:11**, As they were going along and talking, behold, *there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.*
- Two previously unknown men.
 - This is difficult to argue against.

- Moses & Elijah
 - The nature of their deaths
 - Moses' body was hidden by God.
 - **Deuteronomy 34:5-6**, So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. ⁶ And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.
 - Elijah was taken in the chariot of fire, as noted above.
 - **2 Kings 2:11**, As they were going along and talking, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.
 - The things that Moses and Elijah did are matched by the two witnesses.
 - **See Rev. 11:5-6**
 - Elijah called fire down from heaven.
 - **2 Kings 1:10**, Elijah replied to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.
 - Elijah shut off the rain for three-and-a-half years (the same duration as the two witnesses).
 - **1 Kings 17:1**, Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."
 - Cf. Luke 4:25; James 5:17)
 - Moses is credited with turning water into blood and striking Egypt with plagues.
 - Exodus 7:14-11:10
 - These two men are seen on the Mt. of Transfiguration with Jesus when He previewed His glory.
 - **Matthew 17:2-3**, And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. ³ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.
 - The two main problems with this view are Moses died (Deut. 34:5) and John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecy of Elijah's return.

- **Malachi 4:5**, Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.
- **Matthew 17:12-13**, I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

At the end of the day, is it not crucial that we be able to identify these men. It may well be that that they are not historic men, brought back for this purpose, but merely men that God empowered with the ability to do miraculous things.

and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days = three-and-a-half-years.

The question: is this the first or second half of the Tribulation.

Some believe this is the first half of the Tribulation.

They cite **Daniel 9:27**, And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

They claim that Antichrist kills the witnesses at the end of the first half – then commits the Abomination of Desolation.

It seems best to see the two witnesses prophesying during the second half of the Tribulation.

- That would allow for the Jews to occupy Jerusalem and the Temple during the first half.
- It appears that John is listing things in a chronological order. **See 11:14.**

The fact there were two witnesses is not an accident.

Deuteronomy 19:15, A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

The two witnesses are dressed as Old Testament Prophets.

clothed in sackcloth = a coarse uncomfortable material worn as a sign of mourning.

- Death
 - **Genesis 37:33-34**, Then he examined it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!" ³⁴ So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

- Mourning over God's Judgment
 - **1 Kings 21:24-27**, The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat." ²⁵ Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife incited him. ²⁶ He acted very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the sons of Israel. ²⁷ It came about when Ahab heard these words, that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted, and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently.

- Grief over impending doom
 - **Esther 4:1-3**, When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly. ² He went as far as the king's gate, for no one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. ³ In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.

- Repentance of sin
 - **Jonah 3:4-8**, Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." ⁵ Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. ⁶ When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. ⁷ He issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. ⁸ "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands.

 - **Matthew 11:2**, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

(11:4), These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

This is a reference to **Zechariah 4:1-14**.

The two witnesses in the Zechariah passage are Joshua, the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor of Judah (Hag. 1:14). The imagery is that these two lampstands are empowered by the Holy Spirit to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

The power of the Holy Spirit is symbolized by the olive oil.

Zechariah interprets it in **4:6**, Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.

The two witnesses in Revelation 11 will provide continuous light to the world for the three-and-a-half years of their ministry.

They will be hated just like other most true prophets who prophesied about judgment and death because of man's wickedness.

Just as Jerusalem killed the prophets of old, they will attempt to kill these men also.

Matthew 23:34-38, Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ so that upon you may fall *the guilt of* all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. ³⁷ "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. ³⁸ "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!

But God will not allow their ministry to be cut shorter than He intends.

(11:5), And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

if anyone wants to harm them = this is a first-class conditional sentence (it is determined by verb and word choice). First-class conditional sentences expect the action to happen.

The implication is that people will try to harm them.

Whenever that happens, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies.

In a similar way, Elijah called fire down to consume his enemies.

2 Kings 1:9-12, Then *the king* sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him, and behold, he was sitting on the top of the hill. And he said to him, "O man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'" ¹⁰ Elijah replied to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. ¹¹ So he again sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he said to him, "O man of God, thus says the king, 'Come down quickly.'" ¹² Elijah replied to them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

God used fire to kill Nadab & Abihu in Leviticus 10.

Leviticus 10:1-2, Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. ² And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

It will be pretty dramatic when [fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies](#).

(11:6), [These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.](#)

Elijah asked God to stop it from raining for three-and-a-half years.

1 Kings 17:1, Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

James 5:17, Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

God used Moses as the catalyst to turn water to blood in Egypt and to pronounce various plagues on the earth.

Exodus 7:20-21, So Moses and Aaron did even as the LORD had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that *was* in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that *was* in the Nile was turned to blood. ²¹ The fish that *were* in the

Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt.

For the various plagues, see Exodus 8-11.

We are not told if the two witnesses strike the earth with other plagues, but the text indicates that they do (otherwise there would be no point in informing us that they had such power if it is never exercised).

Whatever plagues they unleash are on top of all the judgments that have been unleashed by the seals, trumpets, and bowls.

(11:7), When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

God has a limited time for the ministry of these two men. He has a plan for their deaths as well.

At the proper time, God will allow Antichrist to overcome them and kill them.

This is the first of 36 references to Antichrist as the beast.

He comes from the abyss (9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3).

(11:8), And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

NAS: *mystically* is better translated symbolically or spiritually.

Jerusalem is given the symbolic names of Sodom and Egypt, bringing to mind the wickedness of moral degradation and idolatry.

See Isaiah 1:9-23

Jerusalem, again, becomes so corrupt that it is compared to Sodom and Egypt.

(11:9), Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.

The bodies of the two murdered prophets will lie in the streets for three and a half days. The people want them to be dishonored. They will treat them as if they are garbage and do not deserve a proper burial.

It is not hard to imagine the scene that will take place.

Television cameras will likely broadcast their deaths and the probable abuse of their bodies.

(11:10), And those who dwell on the earth *will* rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Can you imagine such a thing?

People celebrating and sending gifts to each other because these two men were killed.

The population clearly believes that these two men are the cause of the world's problem and must also believe that the world will be significantly better with them dead.

(11:11), But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

With television cameras rolling, the unimaginable happens!

The two murdered men come back to life and bring the world's celebration to an abrupt halt!

(11:12), And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.

In the same way that the disciples of Jesus watched Him ascend into heaven, the enemies of the prophets and of God will watch in amazement as these two men come to life and ascend into heaven right before their eyes.

The celebration ends with a bang!

(11:13), And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Jerusalem is devastated by a massive earthquake that destroys a tenth of the city, kills 7,000 people, and terrifies the rest of the population.

See Rev. 6:12-17 – the first response to the earthquake and other physical destruction.

See Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9,11.

(11:14), The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

See 8:13.

- First woe - 9:1-12 = locusts from the pit torment men for five months.
- Second woe – 9:13-11:13 = great earthquake destroys Jerusalem and kills 7,000.

4. The Seventh Trumpet (11:15-19)

The scene shifts to heavens reaction to the seventh trumpet.

(11:15), Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

Heaven's population recognizes that the time for the Lord to take His rightful reign over earth is about to take place.

Multiple **voices** in heaven declare that the Lord is about to reign over the earth.

Whereas the earth rejoices over the death of the two prophets, believing that their deaths meant they could live their lives how they wanted to.

They were wrong!

The rejoicing in heaven means that those who have rejected God and rebelled against Him are about to be destroyed and Christ is about to take control of the earth from the devil and make it His kingdom.

This is the fulfillment of prophecy!

Daniel 2:44, In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

Isaiah 9:6-7, For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

While there are still some things that must be accomplished, the light at the end of the tunnel can clearly be seen as the glory of Christ!

(11:16), And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,

We were introduced to the [twenty-four elders](#) back in 4:4.

Their primary responsibility appears to be to praise God.

Other than a couple of individual interchanges with John – every time we see them, they are worshipping God or Christ (4:10-11; 5:8-10, 11-13; 7:11-12; 11:16-18; 19:4)

Each time they fall down, (prostrate themselves), before God and worship (4:10. 5:8; 7:11;11:16; 19:4).

(11:17-18), saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. ¹⁸ "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

saying, "We give You thanks, = This is the first time they proclaimed thanksgiving. They are thanking Him for taking over the kingdoms of the earth and making them His own to reign over.

O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, = A reference to His authority, power, and His eternity.

because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. = God has exercised His awesome power to start His reign on the earth.

"And the nations were enraged, = The hostility of the world against God. It is deep-seated anger and open aggression toward God.

The nations are not happy that their way things are going, and they are blaming God and want to rid the world of Him.

Q - Why would the nations rage?

What has God done for them other than provide for them with water and sun; make it possible for their sins to be forgiven?

They rage because God would dare hold them accountable for their sins.

They wanted a god who would serve them or a god that would keep his distance, not a God they were to honor, obey, and serve.

It is the rage of the nations that will cause them to gather their armies together and meet God in the valley of Megiddo (Armageddon) in their vain attempt to destroy God.

Psalm 2:1-12, Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, ⁶ "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." ⁷ "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ⁸ 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession. ⁹ 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'" ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. ¹¹ Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. ¹² Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

They are beyond the ability to repent. In their utter foolishness, they arm themselves with man-made weapons in a vain attempt to destroy the One who made the earth shake, who sent the plagues of the seals, trumpets, and bowls.

and Your wrath came, = (proleptic aorist) Whereas the people's wrath is selfish, God's wrath is righteous. He has a right to pour out His wrath. He IS the Creator of all things. He has the right to command and to condemn.

Those who think that because God is loving and gracious that He will never pour out the full measure of His wrath cling to a false and dangerous hope.

He created man and gave him a God consciousness. They suppressed that consciousness and did not want to retain God in their knowledge.

God gave man commands and man broke those commands and trampled on His righteousness.

They refused to honor and obey God and now it was payday!

Isaiah 24:17-23, Terror and pit and snare Confront you, O inhabitant of the earth. ¹⁸ Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit, And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare; For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth

shake. ¹⁹ The earth is broken asunder, The earth is split through, The earth is shaken violently. ²⁰ The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard And it totters like a shack, For its transgression is heavy upon it, And it will fall, never to rise again. ²¹ So it will happen in that day, That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high, And the kings of the earth on earth. ²² They will be gathered together *Like* prisoners in the dungeon, And will be confined in prison; And after many days they *will be* punished. ²³ Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And *His* glory will be before His elders.

and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, = This refers to all unbelievers.

The song of the elders may include the Great White Throne judgment but that is not the intent of the song. The next line refers to rewarding His slaves – the Great White Throne judgment is only for unbelievers.

So, it is best to just see this as a general statement of the judgments that are taking place.

Verses 18 & 19 are an encapsulation of the next 9 chapters

Two groups of the righteous mentioned:

and *the time* to reward Your bond-servants [slaves] the prophets = These are the prophets of the both the Old and the New Testaments.

and the saints and [even] those who fear Your name, the small and the great, =this would refer to all believers in every age.

The unbelievers

and to destroy those who destroy the earth."=

This is not a reference to loggers, hunters, factories, the steel, or coal industry, those who use aerosol cans, those who drive cars with combustible engines, or plastic bottle users.

This is speaking of those who destroy the earth with their sin.

Sin has a devastating effect on the earth.

When the song of the elders is finished,

(11:19), And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The original Temple is in heaven, the one on the earth was a copy (Heb. 9:23; cf. Ex. 25:40).

Hebrews 8:1-5, Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. ³ For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer. ⁴ Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; ⁵ who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

The Temple on earth will have been defiled by Antichrist when he commits the abomination of desolation.

The tabernacle / temple on earth was the dwelling place of God among His people.

and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple = The Ark of the Covenant, specifically, represented the presence of God.

It was carried in battle and was the place where the blood of atonement was sprinkled.

It is thought by many that the original Ark was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. when he burned the temple.

According to 2 Maccabees 2:4-8 (which is not inspired and may be more Jewish legend than anything else), Jeremiah is said to have hidden the ark of the covenant and the altar of incense in a cave somewhere on Mount Sinai and sealed it up and that they would remain hidden until the final restoration of Israel.

The ark of the covenant is also a symbol of God's faithfulness to His promises and His people as well as signifying access to God.

By showing us the ark in heaven, John is showing that Jesus secured access to God for all who believe in Him by faith.

Hebrews 9:23-24, Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

Hebrews 10:19-22, Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm. =

Exodus 19:16-19, So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai *was* all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. ¹⁹ When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.

C. The Great Personages of the Tribulation (12:1-14:20)

Chapter 12

The seventh and final trumpet sounded at the end of chapter eleven. The sounding of that trumpet signals the last series of judgments (bowls or vials or wrath). It will also include the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ. The effects of the last trumpet begin being described in chapter 15.

In chapters 12-13, John sees great signs that reveal the great forces behind the spiritual warfare that has been taking place between God and Satan since the heavenly rebellion.

In the next two chapters we will be introduced to five main characters: the woman, the child, and the dragon, the beast, and another beast.

Chapter 12 contains three scenes: the woman giving birth to the child, the expulsion of the dragon from heaven, and the dragon's anger toward the woman and her children.

There are three wars: War on earth, part 1, war in heaven, war on earth, part 2. While chapter 13 introduces Antichrist, the false prophet, the image the false prophet creates, and the mark of the beast.

Chapter 14 speaks about the 144,000 again as well as the beginning of the end.

The signs of chapter 121 are a sort of synopsis of the spiritual warfare between God and Satan in regard to Israel.

In summary: the woman gives birth, the dragon tries to kill the child, the child ascends to heaven, the woman flees to the wilderness, the dragon, having been expelled from heaven, directs all his wrath at the woman's other children.

Some of the features of the signs would have been familiar to John's original readers.

There are some similarities between the sign John is given and ancient Greek mythology.

I mention it, only because others may try to claim that John adapted his book from Greek Mythology.

The birth of Apollo:

When Leto the mother of Apollo was about to give birth, she was pursued by the dragon Python, who was trying to kill her and her unborn baby.

She fled to the tiny island of Delos, where she gave birth. Four days later, Apollo found Python and killed him.

A similar story is told in Egypt. A red dragon pursues Isis to kill her before she gives birth to Horus. When Horus grows up, he kills the dragon.

In one of the Dead Sea scrolls (1 QH E-3:9-10) dated from before the time of Christ, says,

“She who is big with the Man of distress is in her pains. For she shall give birth to a man-child in the billows of death, and in the bonds of Sheol there shall spring from the crucible of the pregnant one a Marvelous Counselor with his might; and he shall deliver every man from the billows because of her who is big with him.”

While it is true that these mythological stories and the Dead Sea scroll statement existed at the time John wrote Revelation, John is not borrowing from mythology or popular legends, he is

recording signs that point to reality. He has not appealed to mythology up to this point and it seems silly to think that he would be doing so in this one incident.

Mythological stories are not true stories and they do not point to real beings and real events.

In Revelation the signs John are given point to real beings and actual events.

We understand that in a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of the text – there is room for figurative or symbolic language knowing that it points to a reality.

1. The Woman, the Dragon and the Child (12:1-17)

(12:1), A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

A great sign appeared in heaven =

John makes it clear that he is not recording an actual event but a magnificent sign that points to or illustrates an actual event.

He is seeing something spectacular!

There is no way of knowing what he sees. Perhaps it was a depiction on a giant spiritual IMAX screen.

Whatever it is, John is fully aware that it is a sign.

The signs combine to give a very abridged description of the battle between God and Satan, specifically in relation to Israel.

a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; =

crown = stephanos laurel wreath

The obvious question is “Who is the woman intended to point to?”

The fact that it is a sign implies that it is someone/something other than a woman ready to have a baby.

That hasn't stopped the Catholic Church from claiming that the woman is Mary.

However, the context makes it quite evident that the woman is the depiction of Israel.

The description of the sun, moon, and stars help.

This is certainly an exalted position.

A similar imagery is reflected in **Genesis 37:9-10**, Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." ¹⁰ He related *it* to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?"

In Joseph's dream

- The sun was his father Jacob, who's name had been changed to Israel.
- The moon was a reference to his mother, Rachel.
- The eleven stars were his brothers.

In the sign John see the woman the crown she wore had 12 stars (this includes Joseph, who was not included as one of the stars in his dream).

God uses the imagery of a woman to refer to Israel many times.

- **Isaiah 54:5-6**, For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth. ⁶ "For the LORD has called you, Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, Even like a wife of *one's* youth when she is rejected," Says your God.
- **Jeremiah 3:6-8**, Then the LORD said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there. ⁷ "I thought, 'After she has done all these things she will return to Me'; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. ⁸ "And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also.
- **Ezekiel 16:8-14**, Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine," declares the Lord GOD. ⁹ "Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. ¹⁰ "I also clothed you with embroidered cloth and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk. ¹¹ "I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck. ¹² "I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. ¹³ "Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty. ¹⁴ "Then your fame went forth among

the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you," declares the Lord GOD.

It is best to understand the woman in the sign as Israel.

(12:2), and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

The child must refer to Christ.

- **Isaiah 26:17-21**, As the pregnant woman approaches *the time* to give birth, She writhes *and* cries out in her labor pains, Thus were we before You, O LORD. ¹⁸ We were pregnant, we writhed *in labor*, We gave birth, as it seems, *only* to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, Nor were inhabitants of the world born. ¹⁹ Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew *is as* the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. ²⁰ Come, my people, enter into your rooms And close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while Until indignation runs *its* course. ²¹ For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; And the earth will reveal her bloodshed And will no longer cover her slain.
- **Micah 4:10**, Writhe and labor to give birth, Daughter of Zion, Like a woman in childbirth; For now you will go out of the city, Dwell in the field, And go to Babylon. There you will be rescued; There the LORD will redeem you From the hand of your enemies.
- **Micah 5:2-3**, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." ³ Therefore He will give them *up* until the time When she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren Will return to the sons of Israel.

John sees a sign of struggles of Israel as she is about to give birth to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. And the dragon is intent on devouring the child immediately.

(12:3), Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems.

Verse 9 tells us who the dragon is. **Revelation 12:9**, And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

He is depicted as a **great red dragon**, a fierce creature.

He has **seven heads** = This is likely a reference to the seven world empires that have and will exist.

There have been six world empires to this point.

- Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman

One more to go – Antichrist.

The ten horns = The same description is given of Antichrist in **13:1**.

Jesus is God in the flesh.

In a similar, but counterfeit way, Antichrist is Satan in the flesh.

Kings of the earth who will give their power to Antichrist, after he kills three of them.

See **Daniel 7:1-28**

- (v. 3) Four beasts
 - (v. 4) Lion/Eagle = Babylon
 - (v. 5) Bear = Medo-Persian
 - (v. 6) Leopard = Greek
 - (vv, 7-8) different from the others and had ten horns = Rome
 - Ten horns = ten world leaders
 - (v. 8) Another horn, an 11th, rises among the 10. It has eyes and a mouth.
 - three of the 10 are pulled out by, defeated by the 11th horn.
 - (vv. 19-), Daniel wants to know the identity of the fourth beast, that was different from all the others and the meaning of the ten horns, specifically the 11th horn.
 - (v. 21), The eleventh horn wages war on the saints
 - (v. 23) the fourth beast is a fourth kingdom, it will be different from all the other kingdoms.
 - (v. 24) the ten horns are ten kings. The 11th horn will be different from the others and will subdue three of the kings, destroy them.
 - (v. 25a) He will speak against God.
 - (v. 25b) He will rule for time, times, and half a time.
 - (v. 26) He will eventually be destroyed for eternity.

Seven diadems = ruling crowns indicate tremendous world power.

(12:4), And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. = a reference to the rebellion of the third of the angels as they are all banished, permanently from heaven.

Job 38:7, When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

2 Peter 2:4, For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

Jude 1:6, And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. = Satan's attempt to destroy Christ.

There are three memorable times when Satan tried to devour Jesus.

- At His birth.
 - Herod was filled with envy and paranoia, and he killed all of the boys in the area, two-years-old and under.
- In the wilderness as he tempted Jesus in every way he possibly could.
- When he convinced Judas to betray Jesus and put it in the hearts of the people to cry out for Jesus to be crucified. That would turn out to be the worst mistake of the devil's career.

(12:5a), And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron;

Since it is Jesus Christ who will rule all the nations with a rod of iron, the son spoken of here, must be Jesus.

Psalms 2:9, You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware."

Revelation 19:15, From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

(12:5b), and her child was caught up to God and to His throne = This is obviously a reference to the ascension of Jesus.

In the narrative, it appears that the Son is taken immediately to heaven after the birth.

John's sign skips over the death and resurrection of Jesus. This does not mean that the death and resurrection are unimportant.

The sign John sees is not intending to give a detailed description of the events. Rather, the sign represents major events that point to God's ongoing victory over the dragon.

The crucifixion is of the utmost importance, but the resurrection and ascension is the proof that God accepted the sacrifice of Christ and that He is currently in heaven, where He is inaccessible to the dragon. Jesus did not need to ascend into heaven in order to be safe from the dragon, but the dragon could not longer have access to Him and therefore directed his fierce anger elsewhere. Namely, the woman who gave birth to the child.

(12:6), Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The attacks of Satan on the nation of Israel have been ongoing since the time of Christ.

In A.D. 70 the Roman army, led by general Titus destroyed Jerusalem. Thousands of Jews were killed, the Temple was destroyed.

Hitler and his Nazi party began persecuting Jews in 1933 and tried to exterminate the Jews in Europe during WWII, killing an estimated 6 million.

Jews are persecuted by most every country around them.

During the Tribulation Satan will be cast out of heaven (12:7-12), he will direct his wrath at the woman, that is at Israel. Specifically, the remnant of believing Israel.

She will flee to a place a place in the wilderness where she will be protected by God for the last half of the Tribulation.

God will sustain them just as He did their ancestors for forty years.

Many believe that they will flee to a Petra, a solid rock city located in a valley at the southern end of the Dead Sea. Another option is Masada, the mountain fortress located on the western side of the Dead Sea.

It does not have to be a known place.

Notice that all these signs deal with the nation of Israel.

The church is not mentioned, because the church has already been raptured and God is punishing His enemies and purifying the nation of Israel.

After this very abbreviated history of the battle between Satan and God's chosen people, Israel, the sign shifts from earth to war in heaven.

(12:7), *And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,*

What the war looks like, is completely unknown to us. How long it lasts, is it physical, mental, spiritual, or a combination – we cannot say.

[You can read *This Present Darkness* by Frank Peretti as he imagines what battle between angels and demons looks like.]

(12:8), *and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.*

Michael and his angels were too strong for the dragon and his angels.

Michael, whose name means “Who is like God?” is the only angel referred to as an archangel (Jude 1:16; possibly 1 Thess. 4:16).

Jude 1:9, *But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"*

The definite article the archangel, may indicate that he is the only one of his kind.

He is mentioned five times in Scripture.

- Dan. 10:12-21 – where an angel sent to answer Daniel's prayer tells how Michael came to help him fight against the prince of the kingdom of Persia. (Michael is named in vv. 13 & 21)
- Dan. 12:1 – he is said to be the one who stands guard over the sons of Israel.
- 1 Thess. 4:16 – Speaks of the Lord coming with the voice of the archangel (Michael is not actually named).
- Jude 1:9 – Michael did battle with Satan over the body of Moses.
- Rev. 12:7 – He is doing battle with Satan again.

Michael and the holy angels will defeat the dragon and his angels and will expel them from heaven, they will never have access again.

(12:9), And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

When Satan and his demons are expelled from heaven, they **are thrown down to the earth**. It appears that they are unable to exit the earth and their activity is limited to the earth.

John uses four (or five, depending on how you count) titles for Satan.

- **The great dragon** = the title indicates the fierceness of the devil and his desire to destroy.
- **The serpent of old** = this brings us back to the Garden of Eden when sin entered the human race.
- **The devil** = the name means “accuser” or “slanderer.”
- **Satan** = The name means “adversary.” He is the enemy of all people.
- **Who deceives the whole world** = He deceived Eve in the garden and has deceived man ever since.

Satan losses the war in heaven and is expelled from heaven. He and his angels are thrown to the earth where he will focus his fierce wrath on Israel.

The question is, “When did/does this battle take place?”

Option #1 – It happened at his initial rebellion.

- When Satan tried to be like God and exalt himself above the throne of God, and he convinced one-third of the angels to rebel with him – Michael and the holy angels immediately went to battle casting Satan and his demon horde from heaven.
- Objections to this view:
 - The words **no longer** in 12:8 implies that Satan and his demons had access to heaven for some period of time after the rebellion. And at a particular moment in time, there was a battle, and that access was revoked.
 - That Satan had access to heaven is obvious in the book of Job.
 - **Job 1:6-7**, Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." (See also, Job 2:1)

- **Rev 12:10** calls Satan the accuser of our brethren and states that he accused them before our God day and night.
 - That must mean he had access to heaven after the fall of man.

Option #2 – It happened when Jesus gave power to the 70 disciples to cast out demons. When they returned...

- **Luke 10:17-18**, The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." ¹⁸ And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.
- Objections to this view:
 - Though there is mention of Satan falling from heaven, Jesus appears to be speaking in figurative language. It seems better to see this as a display of the power and authority of Christ over the power and authority of Satan.

Option #3 – It happened at the resurrection of Jesus.

- The final victory over Satan occurred when Jesus defeated the power of death.
- **Colossians 2:13-15**, When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.
- Objections to this view:
 - There was certainly victory at the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But the culmination of that victory is still future.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:20-28**, But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, ²⁴ then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death. ²⁷ For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Option #4 – It happens just prior to the arrival of the kingdom of our Lord on the earth.

- **Revelation 12:10**, Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.
 - The words **now** and **for** are crucial.
 - **Now** speaks of timing
 - **For** speaks of reason
- At the point that Satan is expelled from heaven, there will be no more delay in the establishing of Christ's kingdom on the earth.
- Satan will have great wrath, which he will direct at Israel, because he knows he only has a short time left. (Rev. 12:12).

[Question for last week: At what point during the Tribulation does this take place?] It is probably just after the mid-point.

- The fact that Israel flees into the wilderness for three-and-a-half years (12:6) is the biggest hint.
- You still have Jews in Jerusalem.
- There is still evangelism happening.

Revelation 12:11, "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

And they overcame him = a reference to the brethren in **verse 10**. who overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb.

The proleptic aorist "overcame" lends itself to the probability that this is referring to saints who will be killed after Satan is cast to the earth.

They were able to overcome him and not be subject to him, because they are covered by the blood of the Lamb.

And because of their proclamation of Christ and because they trusted Christ completely with their lives and that standing for Him was more important than their lives.

- **because of the blood of the Lamb**. Obviously, a reference to the crucifixion. Jesus defeated sin and death and in doing so, it was a defeat for Satan.

- There is power in the blood.
- **Revelation 7:13-14**, Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
- **because of the word of their testimony.** The **they** and **their** in this verse probably looks back to the brethren in **verse 10**. (Since the angels did not overcome by the blood of Christ.)
 - They proclaimed Christ in a truly hostile world.
 - They were not ashamed of the gospel, but knew it was the power of God leading to salvation. (Rom 1:16)
- **they did not love their life even when faced with death.**
 - They loved Christ more than their own lives!
 - They took up their cross and followed Him.
 - We often think of death as defeat.
 - For the Christian, death is a promotion.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:8**, we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Revelation 12:12, "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time."

Because of these things: because Satan has been cast out of heaven – the beginning of the end has arrived. It won't be long until Christ comes back to the earth.

It will be so full of judgement that it will seem but a short time in heaven.

rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them = the residents of heaven are rejoicing at what is about to take place.

On earth it will be a very different story!

Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time. =

Satan's only realm of operation will be the earth. He is angry at his expulsion from heaven and his defeat at every turn.

He knows he only has a few years (at the most) to inflict as much damage as he possibly can.

He will mount the most vicious attack of his career.

Like a wild animal backed into a corner – he will be in survival mode and will torment men to fullest of his capabilities.

His primary target will be God's chosen people.

Revelation 12:13, *And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *child*.*

There is no hope for Satan. He will never be allowed back into heaven. He knows he will soon be bound in the abyss for one thousand years.

And he takes his anger out on Israel.

He knows they are God's chosen people. He knows there is a special place in His heart for them – so they are the object of his wrath.

Since God loves them, Satan hates them. Since God chose them, Satan opposes them.

The attack will, in all likelihood, involve every part of Satan's arsenal.

Perhaps it will start out as social persecution, moved to political persecution, and then on to physical persecution.

The Jews will be socially and politically vilified, to the most intense degree ever.

Since Satan will empower Antichrist – this will be done easily and quickly.

Before long it will become open season on Jews and Christians.

John 16:2, *They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.*

This has taken place at various times throughout church history, and it will be true to an even greater degree during the Great Tribulation.

God will protect the believing remnant of His chosen people.

Revelation 12:14, *But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

the two wings of the great eagle = God gives Israel the means to escape quickly.

Some have tried to see this as a reference to the United States, since the symbol of our country is the bald eagle.

Twenty-three other countries use an eagle in their national emblem.

It is highly possible (perhaps likely) that aircraft are used in the escape, and that the reference to the wings of a great eagle is an airplane.

But there is no way to prove that it was an airlift from the United States or any other country since the world rulers will have given their authority to Antichrist.

so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place = Where this is, is unknown.

- Petra – 50 miles south of the Dead Sea
- Masada – east side of the Dead Sea
- Bozrah = the Hebrew word means “fortress” capital of Edom (Southeast of the Dead Sea) of the eight times it is mentioned, twice it is telling us the city Zerah was from. The other six are all associated with God’s judgement of the city.
 - Isa 34:6; 63:1; Jer. 48:24, show that God is judging the city. Jesus is seen coming out of the city covered in the blood of His enemies.
 - **Jeremiah 49:13**, "For I have sworn by Myself," declares the LORD, "that Bozrah will become an object of horror, a reproach, a ruin and a curse; and all its cities will become perpetual ruins."
 - **Jeremiah 49:22**, Behold, He will mount up and swoop like an eagle and spread out His wings against Bozrah; and the hearts of the mighty men of Edom in that day will be like the heart of a woman in labor.
 - **Amos 1:12**, So I will send fire upon Teman And it will consume the citadels of Bozrah.”

where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

Wherever Israel’s hiding place is, God protects and provides for her for three and a half years.

And Satan will not be able to get to her.

Revelation 12:15, And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.

In an attempt to kill the fleeing Jews, it appears that Satan does something miraculous (rather than blowing up a dam) and pours a massive amount of water toward the wilderness hideout in an attempt to drown them.

Revelation 12:16, But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

Whether God opens a rift in the earth with an earthquake, or it is something much more miraculous than that, God protects Israel.

The earth desires to glorify God.

- **Genesis 18:20-21**, - The land cries out because of sin.
- **Romans 8:22**, For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
- **Luke 19:40**, But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

Revelation 12:17, So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Since Satan could not reach the Jews who fled into the wilderness. He turns his wrath toward those Jews whom he could reach, and he aimed his anger at them.

All of the hatred that Satan has for God, for Christ, and for the dedicated Christian is focused on persecuting those who God loves.

This is a believing remnant of Jews (the children of the woman).

- It could be Jews who did not flee into the wilderness.
- It could be Jews who were living in other parts of the world.
- It could be specifically the 144,000.
- It could be a combination of all the above.

It sounds like a renewal of the Holocaust.

Whatever the case. They will experience the wrath of Satan to a degree that no one else ever has.

Chapter 13

2. The Two Beasts (13:1-18)

We are still in the parenthetical pause in judgment that began 12:1 and extends to 14:20.

John is describing the signs he sees. He has previously seen the sign of a woman (Israel) giving birth to a child (Jesus) and a dragon (Satan) ready to devour the child. The child is caught up into heaven, the dragon is cast out of heaven, the woman flees into the wilderness, and the dragon seeks to destroy the woman's other children.

We were introduced to Antichrist in **Revelation 11:7**, *When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.*

In the sign John is given we see the rise to power of the beast, the vast extent of his authority, and his character. We also see another beast, who is the religious counterpart to first beast. The first beast is Antichrist and the second beast is the false prophet.

Revelation 13:1, *And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.*

Satan stood on the shore as the beast comes up from the sea.

The sea is most likely speaking of the sea of humanity.

Revelation 17:15, *And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.*

Antichrist will be a normal person who will be empowered by Satan. That power will be extraordinary! His knowledge, charisma, wisdom, and abilities will be unmatched.

having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names = very similar description given of the dragon in 12:3.

12:3

Seven heads

Ten horns

On his heads, seven diadems

13:1

Seven heads

Ten horns

On his horns, ten diadems

On his heads, blasphemous names

In Daniel 2, the children of Israel were captive to the Babylonians. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which he wanted to know the meaning of. He called all of his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and other wise men and asked them to recount the dream and then interpret it. None of them could. Nebuchadnezzar was so angry that he ordered all of that sort killed. Daniel, who was not in the group who originally appeared before the king was among the wise men to be killed.

He sent word to the king and said that God of heaven would make the dream and the interpretation known.

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that he dreamt of a large statue whose head was made of gold, whose chest and arms were made of silver, whose waist and thighs were made of brass, and whose legs and feet were made of both iron and clay.

Daniel told the king that his dream represented four successive world empires.

- The head of gold = the Babylon empire
- The chest and arms of silver = Medo-Persian empire
- The waist and thighs of brass = the Greek empire
- The lower legs and feet of iron & clay = the Roman empire

In Daniel 7, Daniel is given a vision of four beasts. The four beasts coincide with the four sections of Nebuchadnezzar's statue.

- The lion = the Babylonian empire (v.4)
- The bear = the Medo-Persian empire (v.5)
- The leopard = the Greek empire (v.6)
- The fourth beast that was unlike anything else = the Roman empire (v.7)

The last beast had ten horns (Dan. 7:7)

Daniel 7:20-25, and *the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates.* ²¹ "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them ²² until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom. ²³ "Thus he said: "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the *other* kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. ²⁴ 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. ²⁵ 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

The ten horns are kings, when the larger horn rises, it takes out three of the horns. The rest will sit under the authority of the larger horn.

He will fight against the saints of God until He comes and passes judgement.

The fourth kingdom will tread over the whole earth, unlike anything before.

Daniel 9:24-27, Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*. ²⁵ "So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶ "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. ²⁷ "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Matthew 24:15-22, "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. ¹⁸ "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. ¹⁹ "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. ²¹ "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. ²² "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short."

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. ⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way. ⁸ Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

It is clear that Antichrist will be the world leader.

It may well be (many scholars believe) that Antichrist's kingdom is a revival of the Roman Empire.

Revelation 17:9b, *The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,*

Rome has been called "The city of seven hills."

Roman emperors often deified themselves and required people to worship them as a god.

Antichrist will surpass them with his blasphemies.

Six times in Revelation the center of political and religious activity is called Babylon, which appears to be a commentary on the wickedness of the kingdom.

When Peter wrote his first epistle, from Rome, he ended the letter with, **1 Peter 5:13**, *She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark.*

It is impossible to be dogmatic, but it does seem likely that Rome will be the center of Antichrist's rule. If that is true, then the second beast, (the False Prophet) would likely be a pope.

The world will have been divided into a ten-nation federation, Antichrist will subdue, defeat three of them (Dan 7:24) and the others will give their authority to Antichrist (Rev. 17:12-13)

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

John describes Antichrist in the same terms that Daniel used to describe the four beasts (Dan. 2).

The only difference is that John lists them in reverse order.

This makes sense when you consider that Daniel was foretelling kingdoms yet to come from one side of history and John was looking back at the kingdoms from the other side of history.

Antichrist's kingdom will have elements of each of the past empires.

And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. = Antichrist power comes from Satan and is therefore pure evil.

Satan is using his willing host to exercise his wicked desires and to inflict as much pain on his most hated enemies as possible.

Satan will give Antichrist great power, dominion and authority. Antichrist will use that to persecute and kills Jews and Christians.

Yet all of this is part of God's plan. God allows Satan to empower a man to be emperor of the world and to set himself up to be worshipped by wicked men.

Revelation 13:3, *I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;*

Satan counterfeits everything God creates.

Satan has given the world a counterfeit Messiah, complete with counterfeit resurrection.

He will have his own counterfeit Trinity – he pretends to be the father; Antichrist plays the role of the son, and the False Prophet plays the part of the Holy Spirit.

Antichrist will operate in the power of his father. He will say what his father wants him to say, and he will do what his father wants him to do.

The False Prophet will point people to worship Antichrist and inflict punishment on them if they do not.

Antichrist will perform miracles.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-11, *Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,*

There will even be a counterfeit resurrection.

It is debated whether Antichrist's death is real or faked.

Some believe he actually died, and God allowed him to be resurrected.

Others believe that the wicked of the earth are deluded and believe what is false (see 2 Thess. 2:11 above).

The phrase *as if it had been slain*.

Look back at Rev. 5:6, - these are the exact same words (*esfagmenon*).

The death and resurrection of Christ was real. It appears that the death and resurrection of Antichrist is real (or certainly appears real).

Whether Satan miraculously deceives the entire world into believing that Antichrist has resurrected or if God allows and actual resurrection is impossible to tell.

Either way, the world will marvel!

It stands to reason that people of the world will be amazed. With the technology available today, there will likely be people watching it happen live.

What do you supposed the world would have done if John F. Kennedy has risen from the dead three days after he had been assassinated?

Revelation 13:4, they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"

The response to the resurrection of the beast will result in people worshipping both Satan and the beast/Antichrist.

This is not a temporary worship that fades in a few days. It is on-going. I would not be surprised if their worship of the beast and of Satan is more sincere than the worship of many Christians today.

The worship of Antichrist/beast is often associated with worshipping the image that the False Prophet will create. (13:15; 14:9, 11; 16:2, 19:20; 20:4)

The people will Satan - they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast.

The seemingly unlimited power will cause the people of the earth (that is the earthly, not the believers on earth) will cause them to attribute to the beast divine attributes.

They will say, Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?

“Who is like the beast,” appears to be a play on words.

The meaning of the name “Michael”, the archangel who cast Satan out of heaven, is “Who is like God?”

This is consistent with how Paul describes the beast in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, where Paul refers to him as “the man of lawlessness.”

2 Thessalonians 2:4, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

The worshippers of Satan and Antichrist add to their blasphemy by saying, [and who is able to wage war with him?](#)

They either consider the way he comes to power and/or the resurrection as a sign of his extreme power.

That he had a headwound speaks of a violent death.

His death is probably not an accident, but an assassination. To rise after that would be a reason for people to say, [and who is able to wage war with him?](#)

Verses 5-8 tell of some of the overarching activity of the beast.

Revelation 13:5, [There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.](#)

[There was given to him](#) = Who gave the beast the power?

He has the power to speak blasphemous things and he has power to make war with the saints and to overcome them.

The question comes up, who gave the beast the authority.

Some say that the authority must come from Satan.

The rationale is verses 2 & 4, both say that the dragon gave him his power and authority.

Additionally, many find it difficult to believe that God would give the beast power to overcome the saints.

In response to that we would point to Habakkuk 1:1-17 – where Habakkuk questions why God is allowing the wicked to have dominion over them and God tells him that He is going to let the wicked Chaldeans overcome Judah.

However, God is seen granting power and authority, throughout the book of Revelation, even the power and authority to accomplish even catastrophic and deadly events. (See **6:2, 4, 8, 11, 7:2; 9:3, 5; 16:8**)

Additionally, the time the beast is given is limited to 42 months. Why would the devil limit the power of the beast to only three-and-a-half years?

[a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies](#) = The activities of the beast are the same as those described in Daniel's visions.

Daniel 7:8, [While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.](#)

Daniel 7:25, He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him = Though Antichrist will rise to power during the first half of the Tribulation, his power will seem limitless during the second half of the Tribulation. God will allow him to continue his blasphemous way for the last half of the Tribulation.

Revelation 13:6, And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven.

This verse amplifies the blasphemies that the beast will speak.

The beast will be a political and military leader, as well as being a “religious” leader.

He will speak out against God. He will blaspheme everything to do with God.

His tabernacle = God’s dwelling place, that is heaven and all who are in heaven.

It is a little hard to fathom that a world leader will be so anti-God.

No one that hoped to be elected in America, regardless of their true feelings, would ever be so bold as to publicly speak blasphemies against God.

He will declare war on God. It will begin as a verbal war; it progresses to war with God’s people and will ultimately conclude when the beast and the armies of the world gather to do battle with God.

He will unashamedly curse God and anyone who believes in Him.

Those who dwell on the earth, will apparently agree, or at least not oppose him.

Revelation 13:7, It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

The beast will declare war on those put their faith in God.

He will be unopposed. No ACLU coming to their rescue, no United Nations sanctions or actions. He will hunt them down and kill them. Obviously more will be saved or will him.

Whether out of fear or awe, or a combination of the two, he will have global power.

Revelation 13:8, All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

The people of the earth worship him. They treat him as if he is a god.

Satan will cause the beast to commit the same sin he himself did when he desired to reign over heaven.

This is Satan's Rebellion, the sequel.

Isaiah 14:12-14, How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! ¹³ "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

The entire unsaved population of earth will worship the beast.

They are the ones whose name is not written in [the book of life of the Lamb](#).

The Book of life that Jesus refers to is a registry of those who are saved, those who have been chosen for salvation from before the foundation of the earth.

Daniel 12:1, Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Philippians 4:3, Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of* the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Luke 10:20, Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.

See Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27

Revelation 20:15, And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

[The book of life of the Lamb](#) is the registry of all Believers.

Those who have been born again will not worship the beast. Their faith will sustain them even in the face of death.

They may be afraid at times, they may be concerned, they may have moments of doubt, they may struggle with the fear of man, they may wonder if starving is worth it. But they will not worship the beast.

Revelation 13:9, *If anyone has an ear, let him hear.*

This is a call to listen carefully because an announcement is about to be made.

Revelation 13:10, *If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.*

- This is a warning to the persecutors that they will be punished in kind. (This is how KJV translated it.)
It is said to be an encouragement to the saints that God will punish their persecutors. This view does not fit the context, which is the beast's victory. As warnings to the unbelievers, this would have no meaningful purpose.
- A second view says that this is a call to the saints to be ready to suffer.
- This is the plan of God! Therefore, submit to it.

The beast will take some captive, they will be captive. He will kill some, they will be killed.

This is almost certainly a warning for the Christian.

Notice, that God is saying that they will suffer and be killed by the beast. They should expect it, not fight to prevent it.

Another reason to hold to a pre-Tribulation rapture – can you picture Christians (from the US, being passive in the type of persecution that will come about through Antichrist?

It calls for faithfulness and recognizes that what seems to be victory for the beast is actually the will of God.

The context of the passage is the victory of the beast.

The second (human) beast

In **verses 11-18** John tells of a second beast. He does not exercise the same kind of power – but he is exceedingly evil and imposes the worship of Antichrist upon man.

He displays tremendous power and is given extreme authority.

Along with Satan and Antichrist, he is the third member of the unholy Trinity.

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

John continues with another vision of **another** beast. He uses the word **alloj** to mean another of the same kind; that is another of the same kind as the first beast, Antichrist.

It is the same word Jesus used when He promised to send the Holy Spirit in **John 14:16** saying, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you **another** Helper, that He may be with you forever;

He comes up from the earth, rather than the sea.

The indication seems to be that he is not as fierce as the first beast. As we will see, he is a personal aide to the first beast and promotes a religious response to him.

After this introduction, he is never referred to as a **beast** again. He is referred to as the "false prophet" in **16:13; 19:20; & 20:10**.

He is referred to as the beast here to show that he is of the same breed as the first beast.

Satan continues to counterfeit everything God does.

He sees himself as God the Father, he sees Antichrist as the Son, and the false prophet as the Holy Spirit.

The false prophet is powerful, as seen by his **two horns like a lamb**.

He is not as powerful as Antichrist, who has ten horns (13:1).

The false prophet looks like a **lamb**, but the truth of his character comes out when he speaks because he speaks like a **dragon**.

He appears meek and gentle, unlike the boisterous first beast who speaks great blasphemies.

The second beast is deceptive and persuasive. What he lacks in bravado he compensates for in cunning.

He will somehow come to capture organized religion and convince the unsaved world to worship the first beast as God.

Revelation 13:12, He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

The second beast also possesses demonic power and exercises it for the first beast.

He is not interested in capturing military or political control. He is interested in capturing the hearts and minds of the people and compelling them to worship Antichrist.

He will use everything at his disposal to validate and exalt Antichrist in the eyes of the people.

He will be the pastor of the one world church, the pope of the united church of Antichrist.

The first beast has complete confidence in the second beast and gives him all his authority.

The second beast can sign the first beast's name on checks.

He makes the earth and all those who dwell in it to worship the first beast. That is to engage in gross idolatry by worshipping a man as God.

Continuing the counterfeit, the false prophet will point to the fatal wound of Antichrist which was healed.

We are saved by confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and believing in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead.

The false prophet will compel the world's people to confess their allegiance to the beast, who will appear to have been raised from the dead.

Revelation 13:13, He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

These signs, whether miraculous or deceptive, will compel people to pay attention and follow his mandates.

This is very scary when you think about the vast differences among the world religions now. The one thing they have in common is that they are all lies.

Imagine how much power the false prophet will be to be able to convince, deceive, and manipulate the world's population. Muslims, Catholics, Mormons, Christian Scientists, New agers, and wiccans will all join together in worshipping the same thing.

The false prophet is given the power to perform miraculous signs, like calling fire from heaven.

- God rained fire from heaven to consume Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24).
- God sent fire from heaven to consume the sacrifices of David (1 Chron. 21:26) and Solomon (2 Chron. 7:1).
- The fire of God came down and consumed Job's sheep (Job 1:16).

- Elijah called fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice when he did battle with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:36) and to consume troops sent to him from Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:10,12).

Whichever way the false prophet utilizes these signs they will have the desired effect.

Revelation 13:14, And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

Deception has always been the Devil's favorite weapon.

He used it on Eve in the garden, he uses it today, and will use it to an even greater degree during the Tribulation.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about the day of the Lord and told them

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12, Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Once the people are sufficiently deceived, the false prophet will demand the people to build an image, an idol of the beast, so that they can worship it.

This is certainly reminiscent of Daniel 3, where Nebuchadnezzar had a giant golden statue built and everyone was required to bow down and worship the image.

This is the first of ten references to the image (13:15 3x; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4)

Again, there is attention drawn to the wound that was healed.

Perhaps Antichrist retains visible marks from the fatal blow.

Revelation 13:15, And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

The false prophet is given the power to grant life to the image of the beast.

Some see this as an illusion other as a giant animatronic type of statue.

But the language that John uses indicates something beyond magic.

The image will apparently speak (I don't think it will be a computer-generated voice, but in such a way that people will believe.

Additionally, the image is able to cause those who do not worship it to be killed.

It is unclear if there is an immediate execution of those people, or it is a command of the image for those people to be killed "at some point."

The Greek uses a *ina* clause – a purpose clause and stated that the purpose of the image of the beast is so that it could speak and so that it would cause the death of the non-worshippers.

Revelation 13:16-17, *And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.*

The false prophet assures that the masses will worship the image of the beast by making it impossible to do commerce without receiving the mark of the beast.

The mark shows loyalty, dedication, and surrender to the beast. It is a way to honor the beast as well as a way to show their dependence upon the beast.

It may also be intended to expose the Christians in the world who may have tried to live in the background and not be noticed if that would be possible.

No one is exempt. No medical or religious exemptions available. John uses three sets of contrasting words (small and great, rich and poor, free and slave) to indicate that the order is global, and all are expected to comply.

The mark is probably visible. Something that can be seen as people walk down the street or shake hands. It appears that people will receive it willingly. The people do not appear to oppose Antichrist, they appear to actually love, worship, and willingly identify with the beast.

The seal is likely another counterfeit, parodying the seal of God on the 144,000 in chapter 7.

Many suggestions have been made as to the nature of the mark.

Several ideas have been floated through the years including phylacteries, brandings, tattoos, an invisible mark, or an implanted microchip.

The word used for **mark** is *caragma*, and it was used to speak of the branding of animals or slaves. It was the stamp of ownership.

It will become impossible to conduct business without the mark.

It is not likely that there will be beast loyalists who will shelter Christians in their attics and give them food.

The genuine loyalty to the beast and his image would make such a thing extremely unlikely.

The intent of the injunction is to persecute, punish, or reveal the Christians who had not fled to the wilderness.

The people must get the mark that is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

The number points to the name and the name is equal to the number.

During ancient times, they played a game called *gematria* we might say “numerology” today.

In those days, letter could stand in for numbers. For instance, a = 1, b = 2, c = 3, etc.

A series of letters could form a word as well as indicating a specific number.

Given the number, people would try to figure out the word or even connect it to another word that had the same numerical value.

Archeologists have found inscriptions that use this type of riddle. For example, an inscription was found that said, “I love her whose number is 545 (fme). The number conceals the actual name, which was known only to the author of the inscription.

The total number can be any combination of letters. The higher the number the more combinations it could be.

For centuries people have used Hebrew, Greek, and Latin letters and tried to figure out who the number 666 refers to.

Some names that have been suggested have been Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and many others.

I remember when some people thought it was Ronald Reagan. His middle name is Wilson. So, his first, middle, and last names all contain six letters.

One commentator said it well, “The list of conjecture concerning the meaning of the number...is almost as long as the list of commentaries on the book.” (Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation* in EBC, p. 533)

Revelation 13:18, Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number...

These statements indicate that it will take a special understanding to make sense of this.

Most commentators agree that it is fruitless to try and figure it out until Antichrist is on the scene. At that point, God will open the eyes of those who belong to Him and it will make sense to them and they will be able to understand who the Antichrist is – before it becomes obvious.

3. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1-5)

Chapter 14

A pause between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments began in chapter 12. Although the seventh trumpet sounded in 11:15, the effects of that trumpet are not recorded until chapter 16:1.

Chapters 12-14 give us some details of the Tribulation that happen simultaneously to the seal, and trumpet, and bowl judgements through a series of signs.

- In chapter 12 we were given a very brief recap of the history of Israel.
 - The dragon trying to destroy the woman’s baby.
 - The baby being caught up into heaven.
 - The dragon being excommunicated from heaven (Probably the mid-point of the Tribulation)
 - The dragon’s attempt to destroy Israel and the protection of God on them.
 - The dragon’s rage is then aimed at Israel and Gentile believers who did not flee into the wilderness.
- Chapter 13 we saw the rise of Antichrist and his unrestrained satanic power over the earth.
 - We were also introduced to another beast, the false prophet, who will become the religious leader of the world. He is the completion of the unholy trinity.
 - The false prophet creates an image of the beast and compels all people to worship the image.
 - He creates a mark that reveals loyalty to the beast.
 - He makes it impossible for people to buy or sell anything without having the mark.

At the end of chapter 13 it appears as if all hope is lost. It appears that Antichrist and the false prophet are winning! They control the world, the world (with the exception of the Saints) seems to eagerly follow them.

Satan looks like he is having his way – the people are willingly worshipping him and his puppets and all who dare oppose them are violently executed (except those who fled into the wilderness).

In chapter 14, we are reminded that God is in control.

- We see the 144,000 again.
- We an angel give one last invitation for man to come to saving faith.
- We hear the proclamation of the fall of Babylon (details in chps. 17-18).
- Announcement of judgment on those who took the mark of the beast and worship him.
- Blessings proclaimed on those who die in the Lord.
- The reaping of the earth, the wicked are about to be dropped into the winepress of the wrath of God.

The entire chapter looks at how things will turn out.

In the first five verses, we have an almost complete reversal of what happened in chapter 13.

Chapter 13

- Antichrist reigns over the earth
- Followers of Antichrist with mark
- Antichrist's wrath
- The power of AC's kingdom

Chapter 14

- * the Lamb is standing as Ruler in Zion
- * the servants of Jesus with His seal
- * God's wrath.
- * the fall of AC's kingdom

Revelation 14:1, Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

We were introduced to these men in 7:4-8.

They were sealed by God.

They are apparently believing men from each of the 12 tribes of Israel (with the exception of Dan, who has been replaced with Manasseh).

- The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1-5)

The **Lamb** is an often-repeated reference to Christ. In fact, one-third of the time the word lamb is used, are in the book of Revelation

- Of the 39 times the word lamb is used in the New Testament 32 of those times are in the book of Revelation.
- “Lamb” is used 105x in the Bible, it is a direct reference to Christ at least 36 of those times

Standing on Mount Zion = Where is John referring to?

- One view says it is heaven (Ryrie)
 - **Hebrews 12:22**, But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,
 - They have already died.
 - They hear the song that is sung that only they knew (Rev. 14:2-3).
 - Response:
 - Whether they are dead or not is debated.
 - Even if they had died, they are with Christ and thus resurrected.
 - They hear the song does not mean they must be in heaven.
- A second view says that Zion is the new Jerusalem. That eternal city which will come down on the new earth after the Millennium.
 - The 144,000 are seen after their final work is done.
 - Response:
 - Their final work will be done before the Millennium begins.
 - The timing of events seems off to consider this appearance during the eternal state rather than the Millennial state.
- A third view says that “Zion” is just a symbol of strength.
 - Response:
 - “Zion” appears 162 times in Scripture it almost always refers to the city of Jerusalem or the Jews themselves.
 - If this view were correct, what would it mean that the Lamb was standing on His strength with the 144,000?
 - That does not fit the contrast that is being made with chapter 13.
 - This view makes as much sense as saying that “Zion” stands for grace, or the Word of God, or hope, or a hundred other things.
- A fourth view says this is earthly Zion, it is Jerusalem, specifically, the Mount of Olives.
 - **Zechariah 14:3-4**, Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. ⁴ In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will

be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

- This view sees the 144,000 standing with the Lamb at His second coming.
- Given their physical connection to national Israel and the main focus of their evangelism makes being seen with King Jesus in Jerusalem more meaningful.

(14:1b), and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Will they be killed and resurrected, or will they survive the Tribulation?

See 12:17, 13:7, 10, 15

It seems best to assume that they have been martyred and resurrected.

Revelation 14:2-3, And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard *was* like *the sound* of harpists playing on their harps. ³ And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

Since the song is sung *before the four living creatures*, the twenty-four *elders*, and since no one but the 144,000 could learn the song (they are learning it not singing it). It is difficult to say who is doing the singing.

The best explanation would a new angelic choir. Singing a song that is unique to the 144,000. It somehow must reflect God's unique ministry in and through them.

Revelation 14:4-5, These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These *are* the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

The character of the 144,000.

- **Have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste.**
 - The point is that these men are unmarried virgins.
 - The intent here is not to make commentary on marriage and normal sexual relations between husband and wife.

- The intent is to show the severity of the times and the dedication of these men.
 - They surrendered themselves to follow the Lamb without any hinderances.
 - **1 Corinthians 7:6-9**, But this I say by way of concession, not of command. ⁷ Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. ⁸ But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. ⁹ But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*.
 - **1 Corinthians 7:26**, I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.
 - Paul's point is not that marriage is bad, most adult Christians will be married. His point is, that the work of Christ can be so demanding, and a spouse and children require attention and devotion that could be used for more affective service.
 - The Tribulation period will be such that it will take a high degree of dedication to follow Christ.
 - These men, maintain the highest standards in the midst of a morally, spiritually, and socially corrupt culture.
- They follow the Lamb wherever He goes = They are loyal to Him even to the point of death. If the leading of Christ takes them before wicked judges, so be it. If they are taken before the False Prophet and commanded to bow before the image of the beast, they, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, before them, will faithfully proclaim Christ and keep themselves unspotted by the pressure from the world.
- They have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.
 - First fruits = This is the first of a greater harvest to come.
 - In Israel, the people were to honor God with the first crops harvested from the field.
 - This acknowledged God as the provider and it required them to live by faith, trusting that God would provide more crops.
 - This was done with produce, with animals, with children, and when conquering the land.
 - The word is used metaphorically to speak of a greater harvest to come.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:20-23**, But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For

since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

- **1 Corinthians 16:15**, Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints),
- **James 1:18**, In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

- **No lie was in their mouth** = They are honest men of integrity. They speak the truth. Their “yes” is yes and their “no” is no.
-

It is not hard to imagine that people will feel compelled to lie and cheat to survive.

It is not hard to imagine that there will be Christians who feel as if they are fighting a war, and all is fair in war.

These men will not lie to protect themselves – they will speak the truth and leave the consequences to God.

- **They are blameless** = They are men operating with the highest moral and spiritual integrity. They are completely sold out to the Lamb.

4. The Six Angels (14:6-20)

Six different angels are about to make special announcements or to begin the final stage of God's wrath. (vv. 6,8,9,15,17,18)

The first angel is given the task of proclaiming the eternal gospel to the whole earth.

Revelation 14:6, *And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;*"

The message is urgent because the time is short.

The angel flies in **midheaven** (ESV – “directly overhead,” KJV – “in the midst of heaven,” NIV – “in midair.”)

The word used (messuranhma) means high in the sky.

Apparently, the angel is seen and heard by all. It makes no sense for the angel to fly through the air preaching the gospel if no one can actually hear it.

This is a miraculous display of God’s power as well as His grace.

Obviously, the timing of the message could only be effective for those who had not yet taken the mark.

We are not told how many people will come to saving faith as a result of the angel’s proclamation. We do know that God’s Word does not return empty but accomplishes what He intends. (Isa. 55:11)

Based on the announcements that follow, it appears that it will have little impact on the people of earth who believe the lies of Satan and put their faith in Antichrist.

This is God’s last invitation to man to be saved!

It is not an invitation to consider God, to acknowledge God, to try God, even to believe that there is a God. The

The message: **Revelation 14:7**, and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Fear God = Aor. Pass. Imper. = indicates a sense of urgency.

The command is to fear God and worship Him as opposed to fearing Satan, the beast, or the false prophet (13:4, 8, 12, 15).

To fear God requires a dying to self, a humbling of oneself.

The angel’s proclamation echoes that of **Jeremiah 13:16**, Give glory to the LORD your God, Before He brings darkness And before your feet stumble On the dusky mountains, And while you are hoping for light He makes it into deep darkness, And turns it into gloom.

After Solomon sought meaning in everything he could think of and found it all vanity, he said, **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**, The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His

commandments, because this *applies to* every person. ¹⁴ For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Jesus said, **Luke 12:4-5**, "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵ "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

Give Him glory = recognize God for who He is!

Recognize His power, authority, majesty, holiness, etc. and therefore, repent and call out to Him for the forgiveness of sin and put your faith in Him.

This is the opposite of what was taking place in chapter 13.

The reason: **because the hour of His judgment has come!**

Like Jonah's preaching in Nineveh, the time to repent is now because God's wrath is at the door.

God the Father has fixed a time in which He will come to judge the world, and that time has come!

The only logical response, the rational response, the only sane response, is **worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.**"

Turn to the one true God before it is too late!

God is so gracious to give man so many opportunities to repent.

5. He gave us His Word.
6. He gave us the church.
7. He gave us pastor, teachers, missionaries, and evangelists.
8. He provided multiple witnesses.
9. Even during the Tribulation period, He allows people to come to saving faith.
 - a. He provided detailed predictive prophecy in Danial and Revelation.
 - b. He provided two witnesses in Jerusalem who did miraculous things to confirm the message.
 - c. He provided the 144,000 witnesses to spread the Gospel, and He even sent one of His angels to proclaim the eternal gospel to the entire world, one last time.

Yet, men will reject the witnesses and choose to worship and follow Satan and the beast instead.

The Second Angel (14:8) – Announces the fall of Babylon.

Revelation 14:8, And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

The true nature of “Babylon” will be explained in chapters 16-18.

But even with those chapters the question remains, “What is Babylon?”

There are three main interpretations one of which is fairly easy to dismiss.

10. Jerusalem

- a. This view, held by preterists, claims that all of Revelation was written and fulfilled before 70 A.D.
- b. The fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. is the fall of “spiritual” Babylon.
- c. It is impossible to maintain a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of the Scripture and hold this view.
 - i. It would be necessary to see virtually everything in apocalyptic prophecy as metaphorical or typological or spiritually fulfilled.

11. Babylon, the city along the Euphrates River, in modern-day Iraq.

- a. The river Euphrates is specifically mentioned in Rev. 9:14; 16:12.
- b. City names are used literally in Rev. 1-3.
- c. This is the most consistent with the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of the text.

12. Rome

- a. The name Babylon was used as a way to reference Rome without incriminating oneself, should the letter be discovered.
 - i. **1 Peter 5:13**, She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and *so does* my son, Mark.
 - ii. Peter was in Rome when he wrote the letter (AD 63). Persecution of Christians under Nero began in AD 64 and Peter was martyred in AD 67.
- b. Writers at that time, who were critical of Rome would refer to Rome as “Babylon” to avoid trouble with the roman authorities.
- c. The description of “Babylon” in chapters 16-18 could be metaphorical uses of the name.
- d. Babylon was destroyed in 478 B.C. as part of God’s punishment for their treatment of Israel.
 - i. **Jeremiah 50:13**, Because of the indignation of the LORD she will not be inhabited, But she will be completely desolate; Everyone who passes by Babylon will be horrified And will hiss because of all her wounds.

- ii. **Jeremiah 50:23**, How the hammer of the whole earth Has been cut off and broken! How Babylon has become An object of horror among the nations!
- iii. **Jeremiah 50:45-46**, Therefore hear the plan of the LORD which He has planned against Babylon, and His purposes which He has purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: surely they will drag them off, *even* the little ones of the flock; surely He will make their pasture desolate because of them. ⁴⁶ At the shout, "Babylon has been seized!" the earth is shaken, and an outcry is heard among the nations.
- iv. **Jeremiah 51:29**, So the land quakes and writhes, For the purposes of the LORD against Babylon stand, To make the land of Babylon A desolation without inhabitants.
- v. **Jeremiah 51:37**, Babylon will become a heap *of ruins*, a haunt of jackals, An object of horror and hissing, without inhabitants.

This does not mean that Babylon could never be rebuilt.

But it seems to be that just as Babylon was the most powerful city of its time, and was also known for its wickedness, that any powerful and wicked city that is ultimately destroyed could be described as "Babylon."

Babylon has a long history of wickedness and idolatry. From its founding by Nimrod, who built the city of Babel (Babylon) and the city became to center of idolatry for the people of earth, until God scattered them and confused their languages.

Additionally, Rev. 17:9 indicates that the center of power for Antichrist's reign is a place with seven mountains, many commentators associate this with Rome.

In the end it is ultimately impossible to know for certain where the center of Antichrist's power will be. Whether "Babylon" is the literal city or used metaphorically of another powerful city is impossible to say.

Wherever it may be, Babylon will fall!

she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality = She made all of the nations participate in her immorality.

She was corrupt and led other nations to practice her corruption – specifically, in rebellion to God and in worshipping Satan.

The third Angel – Judgment on those who worship the beast and received his mark. (14:9-12)

Receiving the mark of the beast is the sign of total abandonment of God and allegiance to Satan.

This is a strict warning in opposition to the dictates of the false prophet who pronounces the death penalty on anyone who does not receive the mark (13:15).

People, as in all times, must choose. But during the Tribulation the choice will be more obvious. People will choose to fight against God or with God.

They must choose to live by faith and align with God or live by sight and align with Satan.

They must choose the brutal but temporary wrath of the antichrist or the severe and eternal wrath of God.

There will be strict judgment on those who choose to align with Satan, because they have rejected all of the warnings that God has given them, all of the previous judgments and messages from the prophets, the witnesses, the angels have done nothing to open their eyes.

They have rejected all of God's previous offers of grace and mercy and chosen the lies of the devil.

Revelation 14:9-10, Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God = The same imagery is used in 16:19:18:6.

Drinking from the cup is a metaphor used throughout the Scripture for partaking of something.

Often it refers to God's wrath (Ps. 75:8; Isa 51:22; Jer. 25:25, 17, 28; 44:12; Ezek. 23:32; Hab. 2:16).

It is used of the payment for sin on the cross (Mt. 20:22, 23; Mk. 10; Jn 18:11)

1 Corinthians 10:21, You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Those who show their allegiance to Satan and Antichrist by taking the mark are partaking of the cup of demons and will therefore partake of the cup of the wine of the wrath of God.

which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; =

At the time John writes, a few things were done with the juice of grapes.

13. It was all referred to as wine.
 - a. The fresh juice of the newly crushed grapes – we would call it “grape juice.”
 - b. Some was boiled down into a concentrated paste and rehydrated for later use.
 - c. The juice was stored in animal skins and without refrigeration or pasteurization, or any other preservatives – the juice would ferment and develop an alcoholic content. – what we would call “wine.”
 - i. This wine was generally mixed with water to lower the alcoholic content. The greater amount of water, the more the wine was diluted.
 - ii. The less amount of water, the higher the alcohol content.

The angel announces that those who received the mark will drink the undiluted wrath of God.

The judgment will not be diluted, weakened, lessened, they will bear the full brunt of God’s wrath that has been restrained for so long.

God’s wrath will not be diluted with grace or mercy.

Their torment will be **with fire and brimstone**, as the **holy angels** and **the Lamb** look on as witnesses of their punishment.

[Their presence must be temporary. **Matthew 25:41**, "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,]

This punishment is reminiscent of...

14. Sodom & Gomorrah - **Genesis 19:24**, Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven,
15. Edom - **Isaiah 34:8-10**, For the LORD has a day of vengeance, A year of recompense for the cause of Zion. ⁹ Its streams will be turned into pitch, And its loose earth into brimstone, And its land will become burning pitch. ¹⁰ It will not be quenched night or day; Its smoke will go up forever. From generation to generation it will be desolate; None will pass through it forever and ever.
16. Enemies of Israel - **Ezekiel 38:22**, With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.

The punishment of these people, like all other unbelievers is eternal.

Revelation 14:11, "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

There are some who teach that many, most, or all the residents of hell will on day be able to go to heaven.

One main reason they give is that eternity in hell seems inconsistent with the love of God.

I suggest that they are reinterpreting the love of God while ignoring the holiness of God.

Perhaps the most common reason they give is that they don't believe that the punishment fits the crime.

I also suggest that those people are in no position to determine the significance of the crime!

The criminal is in no position to determine his own sentence.

This view cheapens the holiness of God by saying that denying and disobeying Him is not really all that serious.

the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever = the term "forever and ever" is used to speak of...

17. Eternal God – 4:9, 10; 10:6, 15:7; 22:5
18. Eternal dominion of Christ – 1:6; 11:15
19. Eternal glory to God – 5:13; 7:12
20. Eternal punishment of Satan – 20:10
21. Eternal punishment of the lost – 14:11; 19:3

Revelation 14:12, Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

This provides encouragement to the faithful in the midst of a dire situation.

Their faith in person of Jesus must overcome their fear of death at the hands of Antichrist.

Revelation 14:13, And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

The death of these saints is a precious thing. It is not only the blessing of being in heaven and the presence of God – but it is also the end of their labors. They will enjoy the rest that the Lord provides.

for their deeds follow with them = God will not forget their faithfulness, their perseverance, their suffering for His name's sake.

Revelation 14:14, Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud *was* one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

One like a son of man = Who is this? Is it Jesus or another angel?

22. Those who see this as an angel
 - a. Angels mentioned in vv. 6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18, 19
 - b. Primary reason: The angel in v. 15 issues a command. It seems unlikely that an angel would issue a command to Jesus.

23. It is almost certainly Jesus Christ.
 - a. The fact that angels are mentioned seven other times, would beg the question, "Why not in v. 14, if that is indeed an angel? Why a different descriptor?"
 - b. "*son of man*" distinguishes the person from the angels and indicates that they look more human than angelic.
 - c. This fits with Daniel 7:13-14 where "son of man" is clearly Christ.
 - i. **Daniel 7:13-14**, "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. ¹⁴ "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
 - d. What about the angel commanding Jesus?

- i. It does not need to be seen as the angel giving an order to Jesus. It should be seen as the angel relaying the message from God the Father that the time has come to harvest the earth.
 1. **Acts 1:6-7**, So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;
 2. **Matthew 24:36**, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Having a golden crown on His head = a stephanos (stefanoj), a victor's crown.

And a sharp sickle in His hand = The sharp bladed instrument used to reap the harvest. The imagery of judgment seen as a harvest is used several times.

24. **Joel 3:12-14**, Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations. ¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. ¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.
25. **Jeremiah 51:33**, For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor At the time it is stamped firm; Yet in a little while the time of harvest will come for her."
26. **Matthew 13:24-30**, Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. ²⁷ "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸ "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' ²⁹ "But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'""
27. **Matthew 13:39**, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

Revelation 14:15, And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe."

This is the fourth of six angels used to announce and execute judgment on the enemies of God.

The angel emerges from the temple in heaven and relays the message from God the Father to Jesus.

It is time to complete the harvest of the wicked.

Their wickedness is ripe, it is complete. All that God will allow has been fulfilled. It is time for the enemies of God to face their fate.

Revelation 14:16, Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Obvious symbolic language is used here to speak of the final act of Jesus gathering the wicked for destruction.

Revelation 14:17, And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. This angel (the 5th) will be the agent to gather the wicked for destruction.

Revelation 14:18, Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."

The one who has power over fire =

He tells the fifth angel to gather the clusters from the vine of the earth. – Gather the wicked of the earth for the judgment.

Revelation 14:19, So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered *the clusters from the vine of the earth*, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

The clusters of the wicked, the unbelievers, those who took the mark and worshipped the beast and his image – are cut off and cast into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

Wine presses were usually large carved stone cisterns with a drain in the bottom to drain the wine into vats or jars.

The grapes were thrown into the stone cistern and trampled on by people, who crushed them under their feet until all the juice ran out.

The same symbolism on the judgment of Edom in **Isaiah 63:1-6**, Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save. ² Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? ³ "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment. ⁴ "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come. ⁵ "I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me. ⁶ "I trod down the peoples in My anger And made them drunk in My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

Revelation 14:20, And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

God's enemies will be trampled outside the city – this is probably Jerusalem (14:1).

28. Joel 3:12-14, Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations. ¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. ¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

a. The valley of Jehoshaphat is the Kidron Valley, on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

29. Zechariah 14:4, In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Revelation 16:16, Says that the battle will be in the Har-Magedon. And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.

Har-Magedon = Mt. Megiddo.

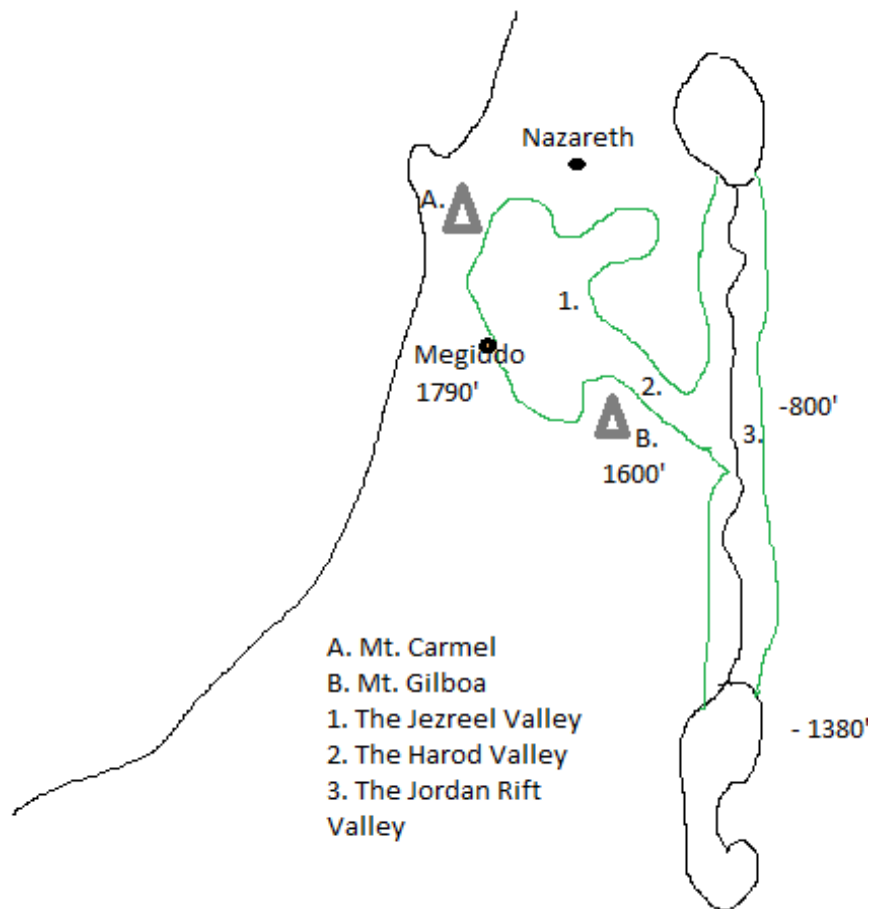
Jerusalem is about 70 miles south of Megiddo.

The seventy miles is not much considering the size of the army that will gather against the Lord.

The blood flow is probably hyperbole and a sea of blood suggests a massive massacre of God's enemies.

The imagery does not require an actual river of blood three feet deep for 200 miles. But it is not difficult to imagine the dead enemies of Christ piled up throughout the length of Palestine.

The entire length of Palestine is approximately 184 miles. Megiddo is in the north and it sits on the edge of the Jezreel Valley and empties into the Jordan Rift Valley and heads to the Dead Sea.



Chapter 15

D. The Seven Bowls (15:1-16:21)

1. The Heavenly Prelude: The Seven Angels with Seven Plagues (15:1-16:1)

Chapter 15, which is the shortest chapter in the book, is a prelude to chapter 16, which begins the final and most severe phase of God's wrath poured out on man. We heard the seventh trumpet

sound in 11:15. Chapters 12-14 were a reiteration of time from the birth of Christ through the entire Tribulation period to the final reaping of the enemies of God from the earth.

Chapter 15 picks up the sequence of events from the end of chapter 11. **Turn to 11:15.**

In chapter 15 we see the seven angels receiving the final seven bowls of wrath and get ready to pour them out on the earth.

While many on earth are probably hoping that the worst was behind them, in reality, the worst is yet to come.

The seven bowls/vials of wrath are strictly intended to be judgment on the enemies of God. The purpose of the Tribulation is no longer to warn man of what awaits those who reject God, these judgements no longer serve as a way to get man's attention or to call him to repentance. It is severe judgment on those who have utterly rejected the Son of God and choose to worship the Beast and his image.

Revelation 15:1, Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are* the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

John sees *another sign in heaven*. (Previously 12:1, the woman who gave birth to the son & 12:3, the great red dragon), this sign is *great and marvelous* (ESV = amazing).

What makes this sign great and wonderful is that it reveals the final judgment of the Tribulation.

John sees *seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last*. There is no more after this.

These last seven plagues complete *the wrath of God*.

On the one hand there is a sigh of relief that the plagues are finally over, Jesus will take His rightful place as the sovereign Ruler of the world. The Beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire and Satan will be bound, completely neutralized.

On the other hand, there is a somberness in realizing that unregenerate man's time is over. He will no longer have the opportunity to repent and turn from sin to Christ.

Man had waited too long! The sins of man have reached the limits of our longsuffering God and now must face His fierce wrath. God's justice demanded that the wages of sin be death and now it was payday!

Woe to those unbelievers who remain on the earth to face the full wrath of the Lamb.

Finished = *etelesqh* (Aorist, passive, indicative – a proleptic or futuristic aorist). It is a form of *telew*, the word that Jesus used on the cross just before He died, when He said, "It is finished."

Revelation 15:2, And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

As John scans heaven, he sees something like a sea of glass that he first saw in 4:6. The only difference is that now it looks like it is mixed with fire.

There is a multitude of people standing on the sea. This is a truly special group of people.

Those who had been victorious over the beast = No doubt the same group mentioned in 12:11 and probably includes those from 6:8-12. They no longer wait for Jesus to avenge their blood. The time has come for that.

They refused to worship the beast and his image and the number of his name. They heard the gospel and put their trust completely in Christ. They became the object of Satan's wrath and willingly chose to suffer the wrath of Satan rather than the wrath of God. Despite the challenges, the threats, and the torments, they refused to give in, and they paid with their lives.

They came through the fire of persecution and came out refined and victorious.

While the beast is responsible for their deaths, they are actually the victors!

They have graduated from the sin-filled earth to the glories of heaven. They are able to say with Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:55, "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"

These overcomers are seen holding harps of God.

Harps are the instrument of the worshippers. See 5:8; 14:2.

This fits with the song they are about to sing.

[Note: harps and trumpets are the only musical instruments mentioned in Revelation.]

Revelation 15:3-4, And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! ⁴ "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

The song of Moses must be a reference to either Exodus 15 or Deuteronomy 32.

Deuteronomy 32 is a song of Moses for the children of Israel as they prepare to enter and conquer the Promised Land. While it exalts God's glory and speaks of Him defeating His enemies, it also speaks of Israel's sin and God's punishment on His people when they disobey Him.

Exodus 15 is the song of Moses that was sung after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea. It glorifies God for His awesome power and the defeat of Pharaoh.

This seems to fit perfectly with the song of those who have been delivered from Antichrist, as God is about to destroy him as His wrath collapses on top of him and his people.

The connection of the Lamb may well be the Passover, that was the last plague that caused Pharaoh to let Israel go and a reference to Christ who is the One to deliver His people from the beast.

The last phrase of the song appears to be a quote from **Psalm 86:9**.

Notice the heavenly perspective of these martyrs.

- **Great and marvelous are Your works**, = Consider what these people lived through and how they died – yet they recognize that God does not make mistakes. His works are great and marvelous.
- **O Lord God, the Almighty** = Everything that happened is under God’s control.
- **Righteous and true are Your ways** = God is completely fair and right in all His judgments. Every judgment He poured out on the earth was right and just.
- **King of all nations!** = (KJV “saints”) The word for “nations” is *eqnoj*, where we get our word “ethnic.” God is the rightful king over all people, not just Israel.
- **Who will not fear, O Lord** = God will rightfully be feared, specifically by those who reject Him.
- **And glorify your name** = What God is doing will bring glory to His name, the glory He alone deserves.
- **For You alone are holy** = He is right in His judgments because no one else can measure up to His holiness, all fall short of His holiness.
- **For all nations will come and worship before you** = during the Millennium and after all nations will worship Him. At the Great White Throne judgment, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- **For Your righteous acts have been revealed** = God perfect righteousness will be evident in the things He does, even in His wrath.

The glory of God will be seen in wrath, His justice, His holiness, and His compassion.

Revelation 15:5-6, After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, ⁶ and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.

John sees the temple in heaven opened.

The Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem were apparently modeled after the Temple in heaven.

Of the 12 times the heavenly Temple is mentioned in Revelation (3:12; 7:15; 11:19 _{2x}; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8 _{2x}; 16:1, 17), 10 times it is associated with God's wrath and specifically with the final phase of judgment. ["Temple" is used four times in Revelation not in reference to the heavenly temple. 11:1, 2; 21:22 _{2x}]

- **Revelation 11:19**, And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.
- **Revelation 14:15-17**, And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶ Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped. ¹⁷ And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.
- **Revelation 15:5-8**, After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, ⁶ and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes. ⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.
- **Revelation 16:1**, Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."
- **Revelation 16:17**, Then the seventh *angel* poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done."

The seven angels come from inside the heavenly Temple with the last seven plagues.

The seven angels are clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.

The clean bright linen is also the clothing of the bride of Christ in 19:8, 14. These angels are not part of the bride of Christ, but the clothing indicates purity while the golden sashes indicate that they belong to the King.

Revelation 15:7, Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.

We were introduced to the four living creatures in 4:6-11.

One of the creatures has the responsibility of handing the last seven bowls of God's wrath to the seven angels.

This will be the final phase, the fullness of God's wrath.

Revelation 15:8, And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

The Temple is filled with smoke to the point that no one was able to enter. The smoke filling the tabernacle and the Temple indicates the presence of God.

- Mt Sinai –
 - **Exodus 19:18**, Now Mount Sinai *was* all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.
- The dedication of the Tabernacle -
 - **Exodus 40:34-35**, Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
- The dedication of Solomon's Temple
 - **1 Kings 8:10-12**, It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. ¹² Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud.

It is sometimes referred to as the "shekinah" glory of God.

"Shakan" (שָׁכַן) = dwell. It is the word used to speak of God dwelling among His people.

God alone is occupying the heavenly Temple until the seven bowls of His wrath is completed.

It is like God is unapproachable as He focuses on the final phase of judgment.

Chapter 16

2. The Six Bowl Judgments (16:2-12)

These seven bowls of God's wrath are the most severe judgments ever experienced by mankind.

While there are still three significant times of judgment to come (the Battle of Armageddon (19:17-21), the last battle with Satan and the nations he deceives at the end of the millennium (20:7-9), and the Great White Throne judgment (20:11-15), these seven bowls of wrath complete the Tribulation period. It will culminate with the armies of the earth gathering to do battle with God and being destroyed.

The judgment must be so severe that if it had continued, everyone would die.

Matthew 24:21-22, "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. ²² "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

It is difficult for some people to imagine that God will pour out such wrath on the earth.

There are two main reasons for this: First, God has been gracious and long suffering for more than two millennia. Not since the flood has there been a global display of God's wrath. This world has really only experienced God's grace, mercy, and patience. The day is coming when the patience of God will come to an end.

Second, Man has a very low view of the sinfulness of sin. Unregenerate men cannot fathom that their sin is worthy of such wrath and eternal punishment. They have a faulty view of God and man. They minimize God's holiness and their sinfulness.

The day is coming when God will stop offering His gift of grace to sinful man. His patience will end, and His forgiveness will no longer be available. It will be too late!

Revelation 16:1, Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

This must be the voice of God, Himself since He is the only One in the temple (15:8).

The order is given to start the final phase of judgments.

Each angel has his orders. He will pour out his bowl of wrath at a specific time and on a specific location.

It appears that the judgments are poured out in rapid succession, with little to no time for the people of earth to recover before the next bowl is poured out.

- First bowl – poured on earth
 - people with the mark are plagued with sores
- Second bowl – on sea
 - the sea is turned to blood all sea life dies
- Third bowl – on fresh water
 - All fresh water turned to blood
- Fourth bowl – on the sun
 - The sun heats up and scorches men
- Fifth bowl – on the throne of the beast
 - Darkness and intense pain from their sores
- Sixth bowl – on the Euphrates River
 - The river is dried up to make way for the armies from the east
- Seventh bowl – on the air
 - Widespread devastation: thunder, lightning, earthquake, cities destroyed, mountains crumble, island sink/move, massive hailstones crush men

The first bowl -

Without delay the angels begin pouring out their bowls of wrath.

Revelation 16:2, So the first *angel* went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

All who took the mark will suffer from severe sores.

(KJV: noisome and grievous; ESV: harmful & painful; NIV: ugly & Painful)

It is the same word that is used in the LXX for boils on the Egyptians in Exodus 9 and Job in Job 2.

A boil was any skin eruption or sore/infection.

Some have suggested that they will be open, offensive smelling, gangrenous sores! They are extremely painful (16:11).

Whatever the type of sore, the cause is obvious, it is directly related to receiving the mark of the beast.

It appears that everyone will experience the tormenting sores at approximately the same time.

It is as if God said, “You want an identifying mark? I will give you an identifying mark, fit for those who belong to Satan.”

No one who has the mark will be exempt! Not even the beast or the false prophet.

The second bowl –

Revelation 16:3, *The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.*

The oceans and seas of the world become blood, and everything dies.

During the second trumpet judgment, one third of the sea became blood (8:8-9). We said, at the time, it is ultimately impossible to know if the third is limited to a particular area of the earth, or particular sections of each ocean/sea. One third of the sea life died (which would certainly have been significant).

While the judgment in chapter 8 served to get man's attention this bowl judgment is not intended to get man's attention, it is intended to punish man.

All of the earth's oceans and seas are turned to blood and everything that lives in the seas will die. That would include all fish, all mammals, all plant life, and shellfish.

Imagine the devastation. Two-thirds of the earth's surface has been turned to the blood of a dead man.

The earth's most abundant food source suddenly gone, the stench that will travel the globe.

Shipping ground to a halt as the top layer of water is littered with dead fish, dolphins. Sharks, whales and no more predators in the sea to clean up the mess. Seaweed and kelp covering the rest of the surface of the water. Every shoreline in the world will be covered in layers of rotting fish as literally tons of dead sea life are washed ashore by bloody waves.

Men with their oozing, tormenting sores must try to clean up and discard the putrid mess. They will drive their bulldozers through the blood-stained sand as wave after wave deposit more dead fish onto the shore.

The third bowl –

Revelation 16:4, *Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood.*

Just as the second bowl judgment followed the pattern of the second trumpet judgment, so does the third.

In the third trumpet judgement, one third of the fresh water was turned bitter and deadly (8:10-11). In the third bowl judgment – all fresh water is turned to blood!

Whatever fresh water sources man had been using are no longer available! Every lake, every river, every waterfall, every underground spring, every well is turned to blood. The Mississippi, the Colorado, the Amazon, the Nile, are all turned to blood.

Fresh water is essential to human survival. Man has been so determined to live their lives without God, let's see man create clean drinking water.

What will man use to water their fields, to wash their clothes, to clean their oozing open sores?

Will men kill for a bottle of water?

Revelation 16:5-6, And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; ⁶ for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it."

The angel who pours out the bowl of wrath on the water gives commentary and proclaims that God's judgment is justified.

The Holy One is righteous in giving man what he deserves.

Revelation 16:7, And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

Is this the personification of the altar or is it a reference to another angel?

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

Whether it is an angel speaking or the altar itself speaking, the voice John hears echoes the sentiment of the third angel – God's judgments are righteous!

He has every right to do what He is doing.

Wicked men have killed the prophets, they killed His Son, they killed His servants, they killed His children, they disobeyed His commands, and they worshipped Satan – they are worthy of the full weight of God's wrath.

The fourth bowl –

Revelation 16:8, The fourth *angel* poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.

The angel pours out his bowl on the sun and greatly increases the sun's intensity.

God turns the thermostat way up. The air around the globe becomes super-heated.

This is much greater than the highs of Death Valley. (Highest recorded temperature was in Furnace Creek, Death Valley (July 10, 1913 – 134 degrees)

The first summer I lived in Palm Springs it hit its highest temperature on record, July 28, 1995 – 123 degrees.

I believe when God cranks up the temperature it will be much worse than that.

[It was given to it \(the sun\) to scorch men with fire.](#)

It appears than man's skin will burn if it is exposed to the sun.

Some of the possible effects of super-heated air:

- Man and animals burned by intense heat
- Heat stroke
- Dehydration
- Crop failures which have no water (only blood)
- Cattle dying of heat and thirst
- Power failures
- Spontaneous combustion
- Asphalt melting
- Rubber tires melting
- Vehicles overheating
- Polar ice caps and mountain glaciers melting and causing massive flashfloods
- No relief from oceans, lakes, or rivers since they have all been turned to blood
- Air travel becomes nearly impossible
 - Hot air expands and becomes less dense and produces less lift.
 - Most Boeing plans are rated to fly in 126 degrees.

Q. Are the believers spared?

A. There is a remnant that God is protecting somewhere in the wilderness. They are probably spared, just as the Jews were spared from the plagues in Egypt. If there are other believers, other than those, who have not been killed by the beast or the false prophet, it is difficult to know how they are affected.

Revelation 16:9, [Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.](#)

Though men knew the cause was God, they knew God had the power over the plagues, like Pharaoh, they did not repent. Instead, they shook their defiant fist at God and blasphemed Him.

Notice that their repentance would give Him glory!

But those who have taken the mark, cannot repent! (14:9-11)

Q. Will there be any unbelievers at that time who have not yet taken the mark?

The fifth bowl –

Revelation 16:10, Then the fifth *angel* poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain,

The throne, is the center of the beast's power.

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

That throne now becomes the focal point of God's wrath.

and his kingdom became darkened = This is referring to the scope of his rule, which is worldwide.

Therefore, the darkness extends around the world.

It is as if God had turned up the sun and then turned it off.

We are not told how long each of these judgments last.

Exodus 10:21-23, Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt." ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. ²³ They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.

and they gnawed their tongues because of pain = The people are literally chewing on their own tongues because of the pain.

The pain may be caused by the grievous sores from the mark and the scorching of the sun; or it may be a different pain that accompanies the darkness.

Revelation 16:11, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

Again, the people know these plagues come from God – that He sent them and He alone can take them away, yet they refuse to repent and instead, they blaspheme God.

The sixth bowl –

Revelation 16:12, The sixth *angel* poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.

There is no immediate impact on mankind.

It is preparation for the coming battle, in which Christ will destroy all who gathered to fight against Him.

The Euphrates is the great river that was the western boarder of the ancient Roman Empire as well as the border of the land that God promised to Abraham.

It's drying up is to prepare the way for the kings of the east (literally, “from the rising of the sun.”) to travel west, unimpeded.

Isaiah 11:15-16, And the LORD will utterly destroy The tongue of the Sea of Egypt; And He will wave His hand over the River With His scorching wind; And He will strike it into seven streams And make *men* walk over dry-shod. ¹⁶ And there will be a highway from Assyria For the remnant of His people who will be left, Just as there was for Israel In the day that they came up out of the land of Egypt.

The effects of this will be seen in **19:19**.

3. The Earthly Parenthesis: The Gathering to Harmagedon (16:13-16)

Just as there was a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seal judgments and the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments, there is a brief (the briefest) parenthesis between the sixth and seventh bowl judgments.

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

These reptilian-like spirits embark on a demonic propaganda campaign.

Their purpose is to convince all the kings of the earth to join the king from the east for battle against God.

Unclean spirits = refers to demonic activity. (Mt. 10:1; Mk. 1:23-24; 3:11; 5:2,3; Acts 5:16; 8:7.

John says they were like frogs = it is uncertain in what way they were like frogs. But it is no coincidence that frogs are considered unclean in the Law.

Leviticus 11:10-11, But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers that does not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water, and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you, ¹¹ and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest.

Frogs were one of the plagues on Egypt (Ex. 8:5; Ps. 78:45; 105:30)

Revelation 16:14, for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

These spirits are demonic ambassadors.

This will be the first and only time that all the armies of the world will be on the same side

They will unite for the foolish purpose of intending to defeat God.

The utter foolishness of their attempt proves the depths of their deception and depravity.

It is utter foolishness just based on God's divine attributes.

- He is all powerful – He rained fire down and destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24). He flooded the entire world (Gen. 7).
- He is all knowing, He knows all of their plans before they could even speak them. (Ps. 139:4; Prov. 16:9; Heb. 4:13)
- God, holds all of earth together (Col. 1:17)
- He causes the sun to rise and sends the rain (Mt. 5:45)
- He gives all things life and breath (Acts 17:25).

Yet mankind, will foolishly fight against God as if they could, first, defeat Him, and second, survive without Him!

Psalm 2:1-12, Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, ⁶ "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." ⁷ "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' ⁸ 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. ⁹ 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'" ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, show

discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. ¹¹ Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. ¹² Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

The gathering of the armies of the earth to battle God will be the climax of the history of mankind.

Joel 2:30-31, "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Revelation 16:15, ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.")

This warning is a plea to the reader!

Jesus speaks an aside to the reader, Jesus breaks the "fourth wall" and addresses the audience directly.

It is intended to be an encouragement to those who see what is happening and looks to Christ and is clothed in His righteousness before it is too late, and he/she must experience the wrath of God that is about to be described.

It is a warning to pay attention and be alert for the imminent return of Christ and thus guard against spiritual nakedness.

Revelation 3:18, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Revelation 16:16, And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.

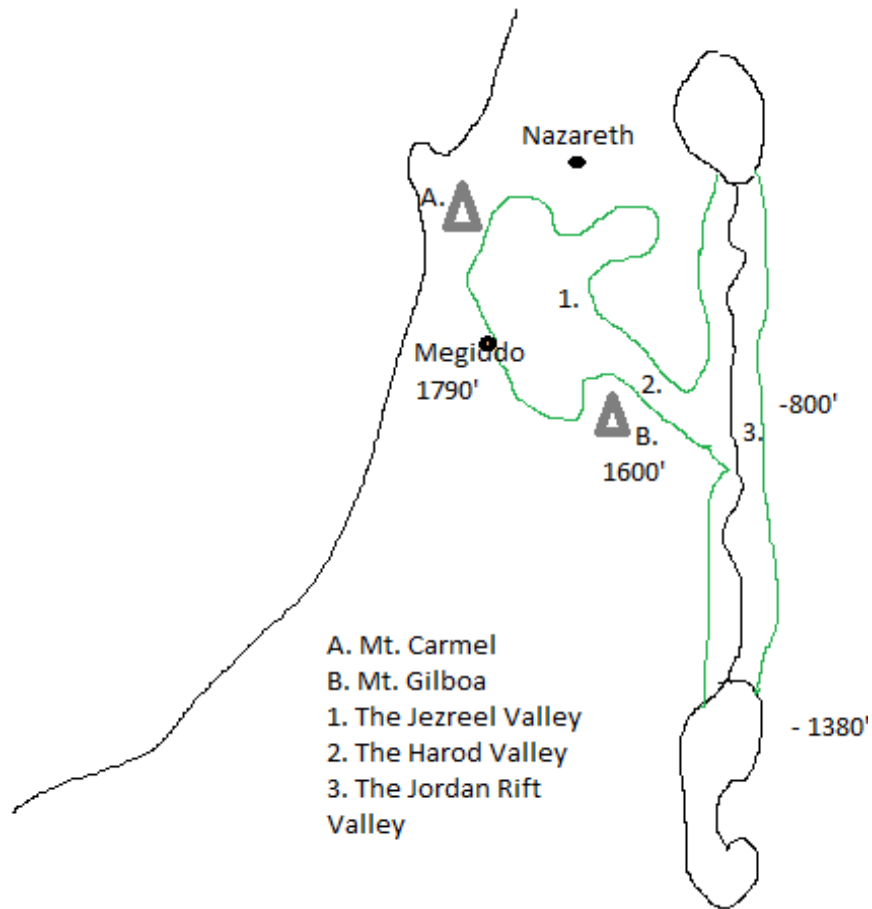
This is connected to v. 14.

John tells the reader the Hebrew name of the place where the armies will gather because the original readers were Gentiles in Asia Minor and did not speak Hebrew.

Har-Magedon = (KJV, NKJV, NIV, ESV all say **Armageddon**) The NAS says Har-Magedon because the word has a rough breathing mark. ~Armagedw,n

Either way is fine, and it means, "the Mount (or hill country) of Megiddo."

The valley of Megiddo is also known as the Plain of Jezreel/ Jezreel Valley.



This area has been the sight of several important battles.

- Deborah & Barak's victory over Sisera (commander of the Canaanite army) – Judges 4:1-24; 5:19
- Gideon's victory over the Midianites – Judges 6:33; 7:1-25.
- Saul died there – 1 Samuel 31:1-13

4. The Seventh Bowl (16:17-21)

Revelation 16:17, Then the seventh *angel* poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done."

The seventh angel pours out his bowl upon the air.

[1st on man, 2nd on the sea, 3rd on fresh water, 4th on the sun, 5th darkness, 6th on Euphrates River, 7th on the air]

Upon the air = indicates the widespread impact of the plague.

All of the plagues have had global effect (with the possible exception of the 6th). This plague appears to be the most pervasive.

A loud voice came of the temple from the throne = This is God's voice.

- The voice came from the throne
- God was the only One in the temple (see **15:8**).

God says, *It is done* = not the same word used in **15:1**.

This phrase includes everything from **10:7** to **19:21**

Revelation 16:18, And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake *was it, and so mighty*.

Thunder, lightning, and earthquakes have been used by God in the past as instruments of judgment.

Isaiah 29:6, From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, *With* whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.

These initial "natural" phenomena are just the beginning of the effects of the seventh bowl,

16:17-21 does not describe the entirety of the event.

The seventh bowl of wrath include everything from **16:17** to at least **19:21** and possibly even through **21:8**.

{Dr. Robert Thomas sees the seventh bowl covering everything from **16:17-22:5**}

Chapters 17-18 are not intended to follow chronologically after **16:21** but are further results of the last bowl of wrath and are probably happening concurrently with the judgments in **vv. 18-21**.

These chapters give further details of Babylon the great, including its rise, its impact, and its destruction.

The seventh bowl is the wiping out of all man-made rule and reign. It is the destruction of God's enemies, leaving a clean slate for the rule and reign of Christ.

The last bowl of wrath will bring events that are unparalleled in the history of the world.

Daniel 12:1, Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Mark 13:19-20, "For those days will be a *time of tribulation* such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will. ²⁰ "Unless the Lord had shortened *those* days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

Hebrews 12:26-29, And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." ²⁷ This *expression*, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Revelation 16:19, The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

The great city =

- Babylon
 - called "Babylon the great" Dan. 4:30; Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2*, 10, 21
 - Destruction of Babylon follows in chapters 17&18.

- Jerusalem
 - Three specifics mentioned
 - The great city
 - The cities of the nations
 - Babylon the great

- The distinction between the great city and the cities of the nations (eqnoj = Gentiles) is strong indication that “the great city” is a Jewish city.
 - It would make no sense to refer to Babylon as “the great city” and then two phrases later refer to it as “Babylon the great.”
- Jerusalem called “great city”
 - Rev. 11:8; 16:19
 - It is consistent with **Zechariah 14:4-5**, *In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.* ⁵ *You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!*

and the cities of the nations fell = Imagine the devastation.

The collapse of cities around the world, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Singapore, Tokyo, Hong Kong.

Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

God is fully aware of the way the evil world system has treated Him and His children.

God will not leave Babylon unpunished

The downfall of Babylon will be revealed in stages - 17:16; 18:8; 19:18-21.

Revelation 16:20, *And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

There will be a total change in the topography of the surface of the earth.

Mountains crumbling, filling in every valley, crevasse, and canyon around it.

Imagine the collapse of not just Mt Rainer, but of the entire Cascades range, the Rocky Mountains, the Alps, and the Himalayas.

Revelation 16:21, And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

Hailstones used in judgment several times.

Josh. 10:11; Job 38:22-23; Isa 28:21; Ezek. 13:13; 38:22-23.

One hundred pounds = a talent = 108 - 130 pounds.

The largest hailstone ever recorded fell in Bangladesh on April 14, 1986. It weighed 2.25 pounds. Ninety-two people were killed in that storm.

A similar sized stone was found in South Dakota on July 23, 2010. It was eight inches across and weighed just under two pounds.

The hailstones that God will hurl to the earth will weigh 50 times that!

All things being equal, these hailstones will be about 2.5 feet across.

and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe. = the people still blaspheme God!

John uses two words to describe the severity of the plague and to drive home the point that it was really bad.

megalh = adjective meaning “greatest, largest”

sofdra = adverb meaning “greatly.”

The effects of the seventh bowl do not end here – the effects continue through chapter 19.

Chapter 17

IV. The Third Vision: The Second Coming of Christ (17:1-21:8)

The events of chapters 17 and 18 do not follow chronologically after the seventh bowl of wrath. As we saw in chapters 12-14, there is an overview of how the global religious and commercial world systems came to be and how all the armies of the world end up gathering together in one place, making it possible for the final aspect of the last bowl of God’s wrath to be completed.

These two chapters are challenging to fully comprehend. Most scholars are in agreement as to the basic interpretation of the two main sections but may differ on the meaning when it comes to the specifics.

The two chapters focus on the rise and fall of Babylon. Chapter 17 describes “religious” Babylon and chapter 18 describes “commercial” Babylon.

Babylon is seen as both a system and a city. Just as we refer to Wall Street as the financial system of our nation as well as an actual location.

Babylon started in Genesis 10:10, when Nimrod built the city of Babel.

It soon became the center of religious idolatry with the building of the tower of Babel (11:4).

The city and empire flourished under Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:30).

As mentioned previously, there is debate over whether Babylon is describing Rome or the actual city along the Euphrates River.

Isaiah 13:19-22, And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁰ It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; Nor will the Arab pitch *his* tent there, Nor will shepherds make *their flocks* lie down there. ²¹ But desert creatures will lie down there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches also will live there, and shaggy goats will frolic there. ²² Hyenas will howl in their fortified towers And jackals in their luxurious palaces. Her *fateful* time also will soon come And her days will not be prolonged.

Jeremiah 51:24-26, "But I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all their evil that they have done in Zion before your eyes," declares the LORD. ²⁵ "Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, Who destroys the whole earth," declares the LORD, "And I will stretch out My hand against you, And roll you down from the crags, And I will make you a burnt out mountain. ²⁶ "They will not take from you *even* a stone for a corner Nor a stone for foundations, But you will be desolate forever," declares the LORD.

In the end, the actual location will have little or no impact on the interpretation of the passage.

Revelation 17:1-2, Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed *acts of immorality*, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

I mentioned that this chapter deals with religious Babylon.

It is important to note that religion will not disappear from the earth just because Christ raptures the true church.

False religion will actually flourish and will become very powerful during the Tribulation period. That is until Antichrist turns against it.

Now, there is no mention of worship or religion or church in this chapter.

How do we know that this chapter is referring to religious Babylon?

Notice in verse 1 (NAS), the use of **great harlot** (ESV/NIV = great prostitute; KJV = great whore).

In verse 2 (NAS/ESV), **immorality** 2x (KJV = fornication; NIV = adultery)

Then verse 4 (NAS/ESV), **immorality** (KJV = fornication; NIV = adultery)

Verse 5 (NAS, KJV), **mother of harlots** (ESV/NIV = mother of prostitutes)

These terms are what identify this as religious Babylon.

In prophetic language, prostitution, fornication, adultery are the equivalent of idolatry and religious apostasy (apostasia = defection/ revolt).

Isaiah 1:21, How the faithful city has become a harlot, She *who* was full of justice!
Righteousness once lodged in her, But now murderers.

Jeremiah 2:19-20, Your own wickedness will correct you, And your apostasies will reprove you; Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter For you to forsake the LORD your God, And the dread of Me is not in you," declares the Lord GOD of hosts. ²⁰ "For long ago I broke your yoke *And* tore off your bonds; But you said, 'I will not serve!' For on every high hill And under every green tree You have lain down as a harlot.

Jeremiah 13:24-27, Therefore I will scatter them like drifting straw To the desert wind. ²⁵ "This is your lot, the portion measured to you From Me," declares the LORD, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood. ²⁶ "So I Myself have also stripped your skirts off over your face, That your shame may be seen. ²⁷ "As for your adulteries and your *lustful* neighings, The lewdness of your prostitution On the hills in the field, I have seen your abominations. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will you remain unclean?"

Nahum 3:4, speaking of Nineveh, *All* because of the many harlotries of the harlot, The charming one, the mistress of sorceries, Who sells nations by her harlotries And families by her sorceries.

Ezekiel 16 (all 63 verses) deal with Israel's adulterous ways. Ezekiel uses the word "harlot" or prostitute, or whore over 20 times plus other graphic language to describe Israel's idolatry.

Additionally, commercial, political Babylon will turn on against the harlot (17:16-18).

For these reasons it is understood that the whore of Babylon is the wicked idolatrous religion during, at least the first half of the Tribulation.

The whore of Babylon should not be associated with the false prophet. The false prophet will be promoting the worship of Antichrist/Beast, which is certainly idolatrous, but is not the same as the world religious powers.

The great harlot will apparently be aided by the political powers and will eventually be deemed a threat to Antichrist's power and authority and will be eliminated.

She will be the epitome of spiritual fornication or idolatry. Her existence is a travesty of the worship of the true God.

The depth of her depravity is seen in **vv. 2, 4, 5, 15, 16** – all are variations of the word *porneia* (vv. 2, 4) or *pornh* (vv. 5, 15, 16) where we get our word “pornography.”

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, = There is no point in trying to determine which of the seven angels, is dealing with John. But if we were to take a guess, the seventh angel makes the most sense, since it was the bowl he poured out that brings about the ultimate destruction of Babylon.

Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, = We will be told in **v. 15**, that the many waters are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. In other words, it is the world's population, with the exception of those who have not taken the mark and who have put their trust in Christ.

Revelation 17:2, *with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."*

The global religious movement appears to appeal to all people (this may be relatively speaking and obviously does not include the believers.).

Consider the freakish religion needed to appeal to the vast majority of people. Whatever it is, it is completely incompatible with the worship of the One True God and therefore amounts to spiritual prostitution.

Have you seen the bumper sticker that spells out “coexist” using different religious symbols? There is a star and crescent, a peace sign, a star of David, yin-yang, a pentagram, and a cross.

Anyone who knows anything about the belief systems that those symbols represent would know that true adherents to those systems can't possibly agree with each other as if every belief is equally valid.

Satan will, somehow, combine all the idolatrous worship under a single umbrella.

The rulers of the world will join in the Babylonian system and sacrifice whatever spiritual principles are necessary, joining with her in her prostitutions.

The unsaved of the earth are [made drunk with the wine of her immorality](#). They become intoxicated by her wickedness.

See 14:8.

In their spiritually drunken stupor, the people will lust after more false gods.

Revelation 17:3a, [And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness;](#)

John is moved by the Spirit to a wilderness area. It is an unknown location.

There he describes what he sees.

Revelation 17:3b, [and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.](#)

The [woman](#), who we have already explained is religious Babylon. It is a religious system, rather than a specific person – though there will no doubt be a specific person or people involved in the running of the global religion.

The [scarlet beast](#) – we were first introduced to the beast in **13:1**. With the exception of the [scarlet](#) description, the [seven heads and ten horns](#) are the same.

The [scarlet beast](#) is Antichrist.

Revelation 17:3c, [full of blasphemous names.](#)

The function of this spiritual monstrosity profusely profanes the name of God.

The ultimate act of blaspheme (and apparently connected with the destruction of the great harlot, is when Antichrist declares himself to be God and requires people to worship him).

[The seven heads](#) = **vv. 9-10** tells us that they are seven mountains and seven kings.

We will look at that a little closer when we get to those verses.

ten horns = ten rulers (**v. 12**) ten kingdom/nation federations during the time of Antichrist.

The woman rides the beast but also depends upon the beast. There will be friction between the two that will reach its climax in **vv. 16-18**.

Revelation 17:4a, *The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls,*

The woman is beautifully, elegantly, regally clothed.

The colors denote luxury and royalty.

Many of the false religions of the world have been very wealthy. The Catholic church, the Greek Orthodox church, the Mormon church are all obscenely wealthy.

Revelation 17:4b, *having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality* = The cup is full of the ceremonial and moral impurity of the idolatrous behavior.

She spreads her corruptions and reveals in getting the inhabitants of the earth drunk on her abominations.

Revelation 17:5, *and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*

The label on her forehead.

The mystery - the true character of the woman - is about to be revealed.

Revelation 17:6, *And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.*

This is on the chief indictments of the woman. It is not just what she promotes, it is also what she opposes.

She has a lust for violence against those who belong to God and witness for Jesus.

See. 11:10; 13:7, 15.

What John sees causes John to greatly wonder.

- Perhaps at the level of wickedness that exists.
- Perhaps at the brazen blasphemes.
- Perhaps at the opulence.
- Perhaps at the sheer number of types of people that are part of this global religious debauchery.
- Perhaps it is simply that he does not understand what he is seeing.

Revelation 17:7, [And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.](#)

vv. 7-18, the angel explains to John what he sees, specifically the woman, the beast, the seven heads, and the ten horns.

Revelation 17:8, ["The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.](#)

[The beast](#), in the context of the next two chapters is either an empire or the ruler of the empire.

Each head is a part of the satanic power that appears to have unlimited authority over the affairs of earth and man.

[The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction](#) = this speaks of the one who was, suffered the death wound, and then was resurrected. **See 13:3, 12, 14.**

He comes up out of the abyss / bottomless pit– **see 11:7**. Antichrist's power and authority come from Satan.

The unredeemed of the earth will marvel at the resurrection of the beast.

Revelation 17:9-10, ["Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.](#)

[Seven mountains](#) = seven successive world empires.

[Seven kings](#) = seven empires.

five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. = This is best understood as being from John's perspective.

Five have fallen = five world empires have fallen = Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece.

One is = Roman

The other has yet to come = the future empire of the beast.

The last empire will be very powerful but will only last for a little while.

Revelation 17:11, The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is *one* of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

The possible answer to this is that the beast is one of the seven – the empires, his is the seventh empire.

He dies of a head wound and is resurrected and his kingdom will be different after that – it is also the eight (while he, himself, is still part of the seven.

His power grows and his kingdom is different, more powerful, more influential, fiercer than before.

Revelation 17:12, "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

The seven heads are seven empires/kingdoms.

The ten horns are ten kings without kingdoms.

Ten leaders of the ten-nation federation will join the beast's confederation.

Daniel 7:24, As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.

The beast will appoint these kings as rulers over specific regions of the world – their sole purpose (one hour) is to give their power and authority to the beast.

Revelation 17:13, These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

This is a part of God's plan (v. 17).

- They will be unified in their hatred for the harlot.
- They will be unified in their hatred, blasphemes, and warfare against the Lamb.

Revelation 17:14, These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the called and chosen and faithful*."

This is merely a summary of the downfall and destruction of Babylon.

The Lamb will be victorious because He is the Lord of lords and King of kings.

He is not the first among equals, He is the supreme ruler, vastly superior to all earthly rulers.

This is a divine title for Jesus. It shows equality with God the Father.

Deuteronomy 10:17, "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.

The called and chosen and faithful = are with the Lamb when He overcomes the kings of the earth. This is one of the things we (Christians) will be involved with when are with the Lord.

Revelation 17:15, And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

The waters = multitudes of people.

This speaks of the wide range of influence.

Revelation 17:16, And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.

The ten kings and the beast will eventually turn against the great harlot.

We are not told the cause of the hatred.

God has used allies to turn against each other in the past.

Ezekiel 16:37-41, therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, even all those whom you loved *and* all those whom you hated. So I will gather them against you from every direction and expose your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness. ³⁸ "Thus I will judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy. ³⁹ "I will also give you into the hands of your lovers, and they will tear down your shrines, demolish your high places, strip you of your clothing, take away your jewels, and will leave you naked and bare. ⁴⁰ "They will incite a crowd against you and they will stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. ⁴¹ "They will burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. Then I will stop you from playing the harlot, and you will also no longer pay your lovers.

(See Ezek. 23)

It is probable that the corrupt religion will hold too much power and sway over the people. The beast will not tolerate rivals.

Interestingly, at that moment in time, Satan's kingdom will be divided against itself.

Mark 3:23-27, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴ "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ "If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶ "If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished! ²⁷ "But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

Make her desolate = plunder her wealth.

Make her naked = expose her moral corruption

Eat her flesh = destruction of man by man

- **Psalm 27:2**, When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, My adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell.
- **Jeremiah 10:25**, Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You And on the families that do not call Your name; For they have devoured Jacob; They have devoured him and consumed him And have laid waste his habitation.
- **Micah 3:3**, Who eat the flesh of my people, Strip off their skin from them, Break their bones And chop *them* up as for the pot And as meat in a kettle."
- **Zephaniah 3:3**, Her princes within her are roaring lions, Her judges are wolves at evening; They leave nothing for the morning.

Burn with fire = total destruction.

Revelation 17:17, For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

God still controls the hearts of all people. Including the ten kings.

They all agree to join together to destroy religious Babylon, in order to assure global loyalty to the beast.

God has used evil people for His purposes.

- Jer. 25:9-11
- Judges 7:22

- 2 Chron. 20:23
- 1 Sam 14:40
- Ezek. 38:21
- Hag. 2:2
- Zech. 14:14

The kings think they are acting on their own accord and for their own benefit. But they are fulfilling God's sovereign plan.

Revelation 17:18, [The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.](#)"

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 continues the destruction of Babylon, this time it is commercial or economic Babylon.

The title *Babylon* in this context, refers to a location and a system.

We can divide the chapter into three paragraphs

- vv. 1-3 – the preliminary announcement of Babylon's fall and the overarching reason.
- vv. 4-20 – Further reasons leading to its destruction and the response of the rulers and merchants.
- vv. 21-24 – The pronouncement of utter desolation.

There are several parallels between chapters 17 & 18.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| "Babylon the great" | 17:5 | 18:2 |
| Sin of immorality | 17:1, 2, 4, 5, 16 | 18:3 |
| Kings of earth drink her wine | 17:2 | 18:3 |
| Burned with fire | 17:16 | 18:8, 9, 18 |
| Left desolate | 17:16 | 18:17, 19 |
| Royal garments | 17:4 | 18:16 |
| Responsible for martyrs | 17:6 | 18:24 |

The main difference between the two chapters is the reason given for the judgment.

Chapter 17 – her abominations/ fornications/ harlotries

Chapter 18 – her love for sensuality and wealth and ease.

Chapter 17 – no one appears to mourn the destruction of religious Babylon

Chapter 18 – the king of the earth and the merchants/sailors mourn the destruction of commercial Babylon.

Revelation 18:1, *After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.*

This is not Christ, despite the *great authority* and *illuminous glory*.

To see this as Christ, would be demeaning to Christ, by seeing Him as just like other angels (**See 10:1 & 14:8**)

Great authority = because this angel does not command anything and does not execute any judgment but gives an announcement – it seems best to understand his *great authority* as a reference to his voice.

That is, he speaks with such a commanding voice that the people on earth cannot ignore the announcement.

The earth was illumined with his glory = This is, no doubt, a reflective glory, similar to that of Moses after being in the presence of God.

Exodus 34:29-35, *It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him. ³⁰ So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers in the congregation returned to him; and Moses spoke to them. ³² Afterward all the sons of Israel came near, and he commanded them to do everything that the LORD had spoken to him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out; and whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel what he had been commanded, ³⁵ the sons of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone. So Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him.*

Revelation 18:2, And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

Cf. **14:8; Isa. 21:9; Jer. 50-51**

There is some question as to whether all the events of Jeremiah 50-51 apply to ancient Babylon or if some of the prophecies apply to future Babylon.

Just as there are some Messianic prophecies that applied to the first coming of Christ and some that apply to the second coming of Christ.

Isaiah 9:6-7, For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Verse 6a has been fulfilled, vv. 6b-7 will be fulfilled at His second coming. But we would not know that until Jesus spoke of returning to earth, was crucified, resurrected, and ascended into heaven.

She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird = those things that are unclean, undesirable.

This speaks of desolation. It is a place that is no longer fit for humans.

Revelation 18:3, "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed *acts of immorality* with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."

The reasons for her utter destruction.

She has enticed all the nations to participate in her immorality.

All the rulers of the earth have joined with her in committing immorality.

The merchants of the earth have become rich through ungodly means.

This would be like who gets rich by laundering the Mafia's money.

The world has been intoxicated by the luxuries that she promises and provides.

They crave her wealth and life so much that they are willing to accept her wicked ways.

Revelation 18:4, I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues;

This voice from heaven is probably speaking everything from v. 4 – v. 21.

This is probably another angel who is speaking for God.

The command is for God's people to come out of Babylon.

This would be similar to God calling Lot and his family to leave Sodom.

Genesis 19:12-13, Then the *two* men said to Lot, "Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring *them* out of the place; ¹³ for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

Jeremiah 51:6-10, Flee from the midst of Babylon, And each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, For this is the LORD'S time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her. ⁷ Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, Intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad. ⁸ Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; Wail over her! Bring balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed. ⁹ We applied healing to Babylon, but she was not healed; Forsake her and let us each go to his own country, For her judgment has reached to heaven And towers up to the very skies. ¹⁰ The LORD has brought about our vindication; Come and let us recount in Zion The work of the LORD our God!

Those who have trusted Christ, who were still alive, and who were living in Babylon, are to flee before they are overtaken by the wicked influence **and participate in her sins** or stay to close and suffer the effects **of her plagues**.

The reason judgment is coming.

Revelation 18:5, **for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.**

The Babylonian system tried to build a tower to reach the heavens.

Genesis 11:4, They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

The last Babylonian system has sins that pile up to reach heaven.

But God has remembered her iniquities.

God is a God of justice and therefore, He must punish sin.

Romans 6:23a, For the wages of sin is death...

God overlooks the wickedness of man for a time – but at some point, that time runs out and God will dole out the appropriate punishment.

In this case the appropriate punishment is double.

Revelation 18:6, "Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.

God will punish Babylon according to His divine standard and not according to man's standard.

Man is too soft on himself.

There is a question as to whom is the command given?

Option one: God's people

Option two: Angels

Option three: Other wicked nations/people on the earth

Option four: Unknown

Give back to her double according to her deeds =

Does this mean the same amount back, therefore doubling the original amount?

- **Psalm 28:4**, Requite them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices; Requite them according to the deeds of their hands; Repay them their recompense.
- **Psalm 62:12**, And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, For You recompense a man according to his work.
- **Isaiah 59:18**, According to their deeds, so He will repay, Wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies; To the coastlands He will make recompense.
- **Jeremiah 17:10** "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

- **Romans 2:5-6**, But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶ who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:
- **2 Corinthians 11:15**, Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.
- **2 Timothy 4:14**, Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.
- **1 Peter 1:17**, If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*;
- **Rev 2:23; 20:12-13; 22:12.**
- **See Rev. 18:7**

The Mosaic Law:

- **Exodus 21:22-25**, "If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges *decide*. ²³ "But if there is *any further* injury, then you shall appoint *as a penalty* life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.
- **Leviticus 24:19-20**, 'If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him.
- **Deuteronomy 19:21**, "Thus you shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

This is the concept known as *Lex Talionis* (Lat.) = the law of retaliation.

It was found in Babylonian law and later in Roman law.

Does *Give back to her double according to her deeds* mean to give her twice as much as the original?

Twice as much as the original =

Exodus 22:4, "If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double.

(Also **Ex. 22:7, 9**)

2 Samuel 12:6, He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.

Isaiah 40:2, Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins.

When Adam and Eve ate the fruit, in addition to other punishments, they were given a sentence of death. (Gen 3:16-19)

Ezekiel 18:4, Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Who is to say what *according to* our deeds really means?

What punishment would be *according to* the sin of rejecting Christ?

Revelation 18:6b, in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.

This is a stringer than normal mix, it points to harsher punishment.

See **Rev. 14:8-10** – “mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger”

Revelation 16:19, The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

I think the intent is to be to pay her back twice as much for her sin.

Revelation 18:7, "To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT *as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW*, and will never see mourning.'

God will replace her self-glorification and sensuality or luxury with an equal amount of **torment and mourning**.

That is, the more she exalted herself, the more she will suffer.

The more she lived for luxury and sensuality, the more she will wail and mourn.

The reason her punishment is her arrogance - **for she says in her heart, 'I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.'**

She thinks she is beyond pain and suffering.

Turn to Isaiah 47:1-9

Her self-exaltation is tantamount to self-deification.

I SIT as A QUEEN = claim to have sovereign control over her empire and thus over everything

I AM NOT A WIDOW = claim to be secure

and will never see mourning = use of *ou mh*, she is claiming that she determines suffering and mourning.

Revelation 18:8, "**For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.**

For this reason = looks back to **v. 7**.

in one day her plagues will come = It very well could take place in one day.

Whether the judgment happens in a single day is probably not the intention. The intention is to say that it happens abruptly and rapidly. It appears that it happens by surprise.

Notice the three areas of suffering and how they correspond to Babylon's boast.

Pestilence = *qa,natoj* = death. (NAS missed it here. Every other major translation gets it right).

This is in response to her claim that she is not a widow.

Mourning = in response to her claim that she will never see mourning.

Famine = in response to her trust in her wealth and abundance.

As a part of her punishment, *she will be burned up with fire.* (cf. **17:16**)

Fire is often used in judgment.

Gen. 19:24; Judg. 1:7; Ps. 11:6; 18:8, 12, 13; 21:9; 46:9; 50:3; 97:3; 104:4; 105:32; 106:18; 140:10

for the Lord God who judges her is strong. = The strength of the city or of the empire is no match for the strength of God!

He is the ultimate cause of judgment, regardless of the means He uses to execute the judgment.

The first group of mourners: the kings of earth

Revelation 18:9, "*And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning,*

The political leaders of the world, like those ten kings who were appointed by the beast, that have aligned themselves with the wickedness of the Babylonian system. They overlooked her wickedness, her immorality, her fornication, her murdering ways – because they were becoming very wealthy as a result of her ways.

Apparently, the destruction of the city also includes the destruction of the system.

When the earthly leaders see the devastation and they watch the city burn, they will weep and wail as the smoke rises – apparently with no possibility of stopping it.

Revelation 18:10, *standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'*

Afraid of getting too close, the kings of the earth, stand at a distance and mourn the demise of the *great and strong city of Babylon.*

The description of the destruction sounds like a nuclear explosion or some other accident that would cause an explosion and the resulting fire, death, that will make the city uninhabitable.

Be it a power plant, a weapons plant, or something completely different, the city and the system will suffer catastrophic destruction.

The kings of the earth can only stand back and watch. They are unable to do anything to help the city they loved more than anything else.

They seem to recognize that it is **judgment!**

'Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come. =

They all bought into the illusion that Babylon could defy God, murder His saints, live with impunity, as they controlled their own fate. That illusion has been shattered in one day.

The second group of mourners: the merchants.

Revelation 18:11-13, And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more-- ¹² cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every *kind of* citron wood and every article of ivory and every article *made* from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, ¹³ and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and *cargoes* of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.

Not only were the kings of earth made wealthy, so too were the businessmen, the merchants of the world.

Their wealth is apparently tied to the city and the system of Babylon.

It appears that they would import the most expensive, high-end things to Babylon. It reminded me of Dubai in the UAE.

Verses 12-13 list luxury items.

There are 28 items in seven categories.

Many of the items listed are used to describe the wealth in places like Jerusalem, or in Tyre.

John lists items that would have made sense to his original readers and still make sense to us, today. For instance, John does not say they were importing Rolex watches

- The first category: Jewelry - **Gold, silver, precious stones, pearls** =
 - These are still signs of wealth today.
 - At the time John wrote, pearls were valued just below diamonds.
 - They were imported from the Persian Gulf (highest quality) and India (largest amount).
- The second category: Fancy fabric – **Fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet** =
 - The finest clothing, bedding, etc.
 - Purple fabric was made with dye from shellfish, one drop at a time. It took many drops of dye, to achieve a rich purple look. The dye was actually much more valuable than any of the fabrics.

- The third category: Costly furniture –
 - Citron wood (ESV = “scented wood,” KJV = “Thyine wood”). It is from a North African citrus tree. It was used to make ornate doors or dining tables.
 - Ivory (used for furniture, handles for knives, etc),
 - costly wood (KJV = “precious wood”). It would include maple, cedar, cypress, and others.
 - Bronze, iron, marble. These were used in both artwork as well as functional items. Marble was used as flooring, wall covering, countertops, etc.

- The fourth category: Precious fragrance –
 - Cinnamon = was imported from South China and East Asia. It used more for its scent than its taste
 - spice (KJV, NKJV omit spice or combine it with incense),
 - incense (KJV = “odours”) = expensive aromatics that were combined. When burned they produced a fragrant smoke. Often used in worship, but also used by the wealthy to perfume their homes.
 - perfume (ESV, NIV = “myrrh,” KJV = “ointments,” NKJV = “fragrant oil”) = this is the general term for a sweet-smelling ointment.
 - frankincense = a fragrant gum-resin used to be a pleasant smell. Also added to wine at some banquets.

- The fifth category: Food –
 - Wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat = these were the staples at the time of John. Wine has always been a luxury item (depending upon the vintage). [Much of land in central coast of California has been covered by vineyards.]
 - There are many different levels of olive oil. The assumption, based on everything else on these lists, is that it is a high-quality oil.

- The sixth category: Agriculture and domestic animals –
 - Cattle, sheep, horses, chariots = These had always been a sign of wealth through the Old and New Testaments.
 - The animals, in John’s day were used more for milk and labor than for food. Horses, in many circles are more a sign of wealth than they are a useful animal. [The winner of the 2000 Kentucky Derby, Fusaichi Pegasus, sold for \$70 million.]
 - Chariots = most likely refer to modes of transportation – but John is writing so that his contemporary readers can understand.

- The seventh category: Human trafficking –
 - Slaves, human lives = this can mean both that people are actually being bought and sold as slaves, that there is a labor class.

- More likely it refers to the fact that the Babylonian system enslaves people. (ESV = “human souls,” KJV, NKJV, NIV = “souls of men”). People are sacrificing, quite literally, their eternal soul to be a part of the Babylonian city and system.

Revelation 18:14, "The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and *men* will no longer find them.

Everything that these people had lived for was taken away.

Everything that they desired for pleasure, for comfort, for fulfillment, for ease, have been taken away, almost instantly.

They are never coming back. There is such destruction that there will be no recovery.

The entire world economy is apparently bound to the great Babylonian city and system; so much so, that the destruction of the city spells economic doom for the world.

Revelation 18:15-17a, "The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, ¹⁶ saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; ¹⁷ for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!'

Like the kings in **v. 10**, the merchants will stand in the distance and mourn her destruction.

These merchants became wealthy.

They dare not rush in and try to stop the destruction for fear of being caught up in her torment. So, they stand at a distance and watch the city fall, and the great wealth of the city being evaporated in a single moment.

Revelation 18:17b-18 And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, ¹⁸ and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What *city* is like the great city?'

This is a third group who mourn the destruction of the city. They are related to the second group.

Those who own ships or works in shipping also stood at a distance and wept as they saw the city and their own wealth go up in smoke.

They mourned the loss of the city that was unlike any other city. [When the Twin Towers collapsed on 9/11, the nation mourned the loss of life and the devastation of being initiated into the world of terrorism. But there was always hope to rebuild and a resolve to be strong and help. Though it certainly had a huge impact on society, it did not destroy the economy.]

The destruction of Babylon has a devastating ripple effect.

Revelation 18:19, "And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'.

The dust on their heads is a sign of significant mourning.

After the Children of Israel were defeated at Ai, because of Achan's sin, **Joshua 7:6**, Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

When Job's friends heard about all that he suffered they came to be with him, **Job 2:12**, When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky.

(Also – Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 27:30)

The wealth of the city and the system spread to many people.

The kings of earth, the merchants of earth, and those who worked in shipping (we could probably include shipping via air) all became rich, beyond their imagination. When it was all destroyed in one day, they all mourned their great loss.

Like the Titanic, the people thought that the city was indestructible.

Power, wealth, security – as all an illusion apart from a right relationship with Jesus Christ.

John now refers to an entirely different reaction to the devastation.

Revelation 18:20, "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."

The opposite of the earthly groups; this heavenly group made up of **saints** (the general term for all believers), **apostles** (probably a reference to the N.T. men sent out by Jesus, if not it is used in the most technical sense to refer to anyone sent out by God), and **prophets**, must refer to N.T. prophets because God is judging wicked Babylon for her punishment of the prophets, whereas Israel was guilty of killing the O.T prophets (Mt. 23:29-30, 37; Lk. 11:47).

While those who attached themselves to the beast, through worship and the mark mourn over the destruction of Babylon, the saints in heaven rejoice at their vindication.

God has pronounced judgment for you against her = This is the answer to the plea in **6:9-11**.

The vision changes from what the destruction of Babylon will look like to the announcement of the totality of the devastation of Babylon.

This is a return to the message in **18:4-8**.

Revelation 18:21, Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.

First there is a symbolic act of judgment, followed by statements that point to the utter annihilation of the city.

Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone = A strong angel picks up a large stone that reminded John of a large millstone.

A large mill stone in John's day was about 4-5 feet in diameter, it was 12 inches thick and weighed thousands of pounds and was moved around the mill by a donkey.

and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence = The angel cast the stone into the sea and declares it to be a picture of the total obliteration of Babylon.

The city will be thrown down with violence = means suddenly and violently – like an invading army.

This is not a slow demise, like when the main industry moves away and people lose their jobs.

This is like a huge splash that happens in a moment and the stone sinks into the sea and is gone forever.

and will not be found any longer. = Babylon will never recover. The strong negation is used here – ou mh.

Revelation 18:22a, "And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; = no arts, no joy, no celebrations, not even any mourning. This is the permanent disappearance of all music from Babylon.

Revelation 18:22b, and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; = no tradespeople ever again.

Revelation 18:22c, and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; = no industry ever again. It will all be gone forever.

Revelation 18:23a, and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; =No streetlights, no porch lights, no headlights, no homes light up, no buildings with offices lit up or signs lit up.

Revelation 18:23b, and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; = no celebrations, no parties, no joy.

All work, fun, life events cease to exist because the city is completely demolished!

Revelation 18:23c, for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery. = another reason – her sorcery (farmacwn) where we get our word pharmacy. It can refer to drug use, but more precisely it refers to mixing potions and is associated with magic, thus sorcery.

The idea is that Babylon used some sort of sorcery to deceive the nations and convince them to align with her.

Another reason:

Revelation 18:24, "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."

Babylon is guilty of killing those who belong to God and speak for Him.

See 6:10; 11:7; 13:7; 17:6; 19:2.

God will be completely victorious, and He will destroy religious and commercial Babylon. He will utterly annihilate the chief city of Babylon and then He will take His aim on its leaders and the rest of His enemies.

Chapter 19

This is the chapter we have been waiting for! This is the song of victory!

In this chapter we see the destruction of the beast and the false prophet and the beginning of the second coming of Jesus. We see the preparation of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!

This is truly a glorious chapter.

This chapter is the antithesis to chapter 18. The despondent laments of those on the earth in chapter 18 are replaced with shouts of celebration of those in heaven.

In chapter 18 we saw the kings of the earth, the merchants, and the ship owners mourn the destruction of commercial/economic Babylon.

In chapter 19, we see various groups in heaven rejoicing and praising God for His victory and that He is about to defeat His enemies and take back control of the earth.

The chapter can be divided into two sections: vv. 1-10 – songs of praise in heaven; vv. 11-21 – the events preparing for the second coming of Christ.

vv. 1-10 – Songs of praise in heaven

Revelation 19:1, [After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;](#)

[After these things](#) = refers to the events in chapter 18. John often uses this phrase (meta tauta) to change the subject.

Here he changes from the response of those on the earth who were followers of the beast and his demonic system to those in heaven who belong to God.

So, after the utter decimation of religious and commercial Babylon, after the destruction of the wicked world system – John's attention is drawn back to heaven, where he hears four declarations of praises to God.

Just as there were three groups mourning the destruction of Babylon (the kings of the earth, the merchants, and the ship owners), there are three groups and one individual angel in heaven that praise God (vv. 1-2, 4, 5, 6-9).

[I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven](#) - The [great multitude](#) shout,

Hallelujah = The word “**hallelujah**” is very popular in Christian lingo despite the fact that it is only used four times in the New Testament, and all in Rev. 19:1-6.

Hallelujah is an exclamation of praise. It is a transliteration of two Hebrew words, “halelu” – *praise* and “Ya” – a shortened form of *YHWH*.

The praise to God is because **Salvation and glory and power belong to our God** = the completion of the salvation that God has granted to all who believe requires the removal of everything on earth that stands in the way of pure righteousness. That would include Satan, the beast, the false prophet, the wicked system, and all unbelievers.

God is to be glorified. God’s ultimate glory requires the eradication of wickedness and rivals for His glory.

All true power belongs to God. There is no power that He does not ultimately have power over.

All the forces of evil are no match for God’s power.

Revelation 19:2, BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER."

Additional reason for the shouts of praise.

BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS =

These qualities have been spoken of previously. **See 15:3; 16:7.**

The loud voice appears to be referencing **Psalm 19:9, The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.**

The **judgements** of the Lord are **true and righteous** – they are in harmony with the factual realities, and they are justifiable in their execution.

In other words, God is acting fairly when He judges the wicked. The punishment fits the crime.

for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality = in light of the **corrupting** things that **the great harlot** has done and the fact that man has chosen to completely reject God and align himself with the beast and be united in their hatred and opposition of God – the wrath of God is justified.

and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER." = The beast and the false prophet thought they could kill God's people with impunity. They were wrong.

They may not have had to answer to any world leaders or any world court, but they will answer to a much higher authority.

This seems to be a combination of two passages:

Deuteronomy 32:43, "Rejoice, O nations, *with His people*; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And will render vengeance on His adversaries, And will atone for His land *and His people*."

2 Kings 9:7, 'You shall strike the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.

Revelation 19:3, And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER."

The group sings "Hallelujah" for a second time and declare that HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER.

Her, contextually, refers to [the great harlot](#), Babylon. It may refer to the city, the system, or the leaders.

- The city – it will eventually be destroyed, along with the rest of the things of earth (Rev. 21:1). This will take place after the Millennium.
- The same is true of the system.
- The leaders – Satan, the beast, and the false prophets will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10) and their punishment will be eternal.

While it is possible that the smoke from the destruction of Babylon continues to rise for 1,000 years, it seems more likely that it is speaking of the utter and permanent destruction of Babylon as well as the eternal punishment of those who joined in her immorality.

- **Matthew 3:12**, "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."
- **Mark 9:43**, If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,

Who makes up this first group?

There are really only a few options.

Option #1 – These are the church age saints

Option # 2 – These are the Tribulation saints

Option # 3 – These are angels

- Since they are commanded to praise God in verse 5 and do so in vv. 6-9 – it seems best to view the praises of vv. 1-3 coming from angels.

Revelation 19:4, *And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"*

We were introduced to the *twenty-four elders* and the *four living creatures* in chapter 4, as John describes his first view of heaven.

They are constantly seen worshipping God.

We said that the elders likely represent the church.

A more likely identification is that they are representatives of the church age saints.

- They are wearing *white garments*
- They have *golden crowns*
- The near context identifies them as church age saints (**See Rev. 2:10; 3:5, 11, 18, 21**)
- They sing of redemption in 5:9-10.

The four living creatures

We will just have to be content to get their description and their activity.

If it were important to know what they symbolize, if they symbolize anything, God would have made it clear for us.

These two groups, that occupy the throne room of heaven, combine to sign out, "*Amen. Hallelujah!*" (Same words used in Psalm 106:48, the last words of the fourth book of the psalter)

This is the last appearance in the book of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures.

Revelation 19:5, *And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great."*

This is most likely an angel who is near the throne who commands the church age saints to give praise to our God.

Bond-servants = (douloi) slaves.

You who fear Him =

The small and the great = everyone

These all refer to Christians.

This is also a reiteration of the command in **18:20**.

In response to the command of **v. 5** the heavenly saints loudly praise God.

Revelation 19:6, Then I heard *something* like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

This must have been very loud, because John tries to describe the volume three different ways.

The voice of a great multitude = You might think of a stadium as it breaks the decibel level.

Like the sound of many waters = like standing next to Niagara Falls.

Like the sound of mighty peals of thunder = In Sparta, Greece a thunder and lightning storm hit. It was literally flash/boom with no space between.

This massive choir of the redeemed also sing "Hallelujah!"

The reason for the praise – "For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns."

This is a proleptic aorist. It is yet future but so certain that it is spoken of as having already begun.

Revelation 19:7, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb:

Another reason for rejoicing is that the marriage supper of the Lamb has arrived.

His bride, the church, is ready.

The betrothal period is over and the time to consummate the marriage has come.

In the Old Testament, God was the bridegroom and Israel was the bride.

- **Jeremiah 31:31-32**, "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.
- **Hosea 2:19-20**, "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, ²⁰ And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD.
- Also: **Isa. 54:6; 62:5; Ez. 16:7-14**

In the New Testament, Christ is the bridegroom, and the church is the bride

- **2 Corinthians 11:2**, For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.
- **Ephesians 5:25-27**, Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

How does the bride make herself ready?

It is the work of Christ, according to Ephesians 5:25-27.

This preparation must take place at the rapture when we are made to be like Christ.

- **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**, Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

There are two key questions associated with the marriage supper of the Lamb.

- (1) When will take place?
- (2) Who makes up the bride?

When will the Marriage Supper of the Lamb take place?

- It must take place in heaven
 - **1 John 3:2**, Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.
 - We cannot be the pure and blameless bride that is fit for Jesus until He transforms us and removes our sin nature. That will not happen until we are with Him.
- It must take place before the second coming of Christ.
 - In **Rev. 19:8, 14**, the bride is dressed in her wedding clothes.

The language of Rev. 19:7-14 seems to indicate that the marriage supper takes place just prior to the second coming.

It is ultimately impossible to say for certain, but the marriage supper could have begun just after the rapture and extend through the Millennium.

Or it could be, that the rapture of the church was part of the betrothal, and the marriage supper takes place at the end of the Tribulation. This position seems strongest, for reasons that will become clearer with **verse 9**.

In biblical times, the wedding took place in two parts. During the betrothal, the groom-to-be would prepare a place for his bride. He would clear a spot and set up his tent or build his house. When he was ready, he sent for her, or went to get her himself and that would bring about the second part of the wedding, the consummation, and the celebration with the marriage supper. Those celebrations could last two weeks.

The Tribulation time can be seen as the time of preparation for the bride's home, the New Jerusalem (21:2).

John 14:2-3, In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

The second question: who makes up the bride?

The candidates are the Old Testament saints, the church age saints, the tribulation saints, Millennium saints (?).

The church is a certainty.

- **Eph. 5:32; 2 Cor. 11:2.**
- It appears that only the church age saints will have been resurrected by the rapture.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**, Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:13-17**, But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.
- The Old Testament saints and the Tribulation saints will be resurrected after the Tribulation and in time for the Millennium.
 - **Daniel 12:1-2**, Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. ² "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.
 - **Ezekiel 37:12-14**, Therefore prophesy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. ¹⁴ "I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD."

- This appears to describe the New Jerusalem.
- The Millennial saints, that is if any believers die during the thousand years, will be resurrected at the end of the Millennium.
 - **Revelation 20:5-6**, The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Revelation 19:8, It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

This is the wedding garment.

It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen = Notice, the ability of the saints to make themselves ready is given to her by God.

fine linen = expensive, high-quality fabric. Suitable for kings and princes and to honor someone.

- **Genesis 41:41-42**, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck.
- **1 Chronicles 15:27**, Now David was clothed with a robe of fine linen with all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the singing *with* the singers. David also wore an ephod of linen.
- **Esther 8:15**, Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.

bright (lamproj) = shining, brilliant

clean (kaqaroj) = pure, innocent, clean – speaks to the moral purity.

This is same outfit worn by...

- the overcomers in **Revelation 3:5**, 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
- The twenty-four elders in **Revelation 4:4**, Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.
- The Tribulation saints in **Revelation 7:9**, After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands; **Revelation 7:13-14**, Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
- The angels in **Revelation 15:6**, and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.

for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. =

Before we were saved, all our righteousness were nothing more than filthy rags.

Isaiah 64:6, For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

But in Christ, we have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

- **Romans 13:12-14**, The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.
- **Galatians 3:27**, For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

This is applied corporately to the church and not to individuals.

Clothe herself (singular). But the righteous acts are those of the individual saints.

In other words, all the saints are clothed the same. There are not a variety of garments with each saint dressed differently.

Revelation 19:9, Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

John is instructed by the angel from **17:1**, to write a beatitude. This beatitude is aimed at those invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Who are the invited guests?

- Some say it is the church. At first, that sounds logical, until you realize that the church is the bride, not an invited guest.
- It must be people who believed God, leading to salvation but are not part of the church.
 - It must be those who believed unto salvation when the church was not an option.
 - **O.T. saints** who are said to be at the wedding feast.
 - **Matthew 8:11**, "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline *at the table* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;
 - **Luke 13:28**, "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out.
 - **Hebrews 11**.
 - **John the Baptist**
 - **John 3:29**, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.
 - **Tribulation Saints**
 - Those who died during the Tribulation and were glorified
 - Those who survived the Tribulation and live on the earth

Since the **Old Testament saints** will experience the benefits of the Millennial Kingdom, they must be resurrected prior to it.

It makes the most sense to see them resurrected after the Tribulation and before the beginning of the Millennium.

Daniel 12:1-3, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. ² "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt. ³ "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

The Tribulation saints.

Revelation 20:4-5, Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

This also means that the marriage supper of the Lamb must take place, or at least extend, past the end of the Tribulation.

And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

This statement by the angel affirms the truth of God's promises to Israel and to all His people.

Revelation 19:10, Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

John is so overwhelmed by what he has seen and heard that he begins to worship the messenger.

The angel quickly informs John that he is merely a fellow slave (*sundouloj* = "slave with") and all other Believers.

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. = That is to say, testifying about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Or, to put it another way, all prophecy ultimately points to Jesus.

All Old Testament prophecy and all New Testament proclamation has as its focus, Jesus Christ.

B. The Establishment of New Jerusalem (19:11- 21:8)

1. The Return of Christ (19:11-16)

The first of eight scenes (The appearance of the warrior King and His army - 19:11-16)

Revelation 19:11, *And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.*

This is the first of eight scenes, distinguished by the words, **I saw**. These eight scenes (19:11-21:8) constitute the actions that make up the seventh bowl of wrath and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The eight scenes are:

- (1) The appearance of the warrior King and His army (19:11-16)
- (2) The invitation to all the birds to come feast on human flesh (19:17-18)
- (3) The defeat of the Beast, the false prophet, and the earthly enemies of God (19:19-21)
- (4) The binding and imprisonment of Satan (20:1-3)
- (5) The Millennium and Satan's ultimate defeat (20:4-10)
- (6) The Great White Throne is set up (20:11)
- (7) The judgment of those whose names were not written in the Book of Life (20:12-15)
- (8) The new heaven and the new earth (21:1-8)

Because these eight scenes depict the victory of Christ, the defeat and judgment of His enemies, and the complete reversal of the curse – it is reasonable to see them all as a part of the seventh bowl of wrath.

Jesus is not depicted, here, as a meek and mild Lamb, but as a powerful conquering warrior King. The way He was seen in the prophets.

Isaiah 13:4, *A sound of tumult on the mountains, Like that of many people! A sound of the uproar of kingdoms, Of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts is mustering the army for battle.*

Isaiah 31:4, *For thus says the LORD to me, "As the lion or the young lion growls over his prey, Against which a band of shepherds is called out, And he will not be terrified at their voice nor disturbed at their noise, So will the LORD of hosts come down to wage war on Mount Zion and on its hill."*

Isaiah 42:13, The LORD will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse *His* zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies.

Ezekiel 39:1-5, And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, "Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal; ² and I will turn you around, drive you on, take you up from the remotest parts of the north and bring you against the mountains of Israel. ³ "I will strike your bow from your left hand and dash down your arrows from your right hand. ⁴ "You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field. ⁵ "You will fall on the open field; for it is I who have spoken," declares the Lord GOD.

The rider of the white horse is Jesus Christ.

This is seen in the titles and description in the next six verses.

Faithful = See **Rev. 1:5** - Faithful to fulfill His promises

True = See **Rev. 3:7; 6:10; 15:3; 16:7** - Absolute truth in what He says and what He judges

Faithful and true = See **Rev. 3:14**

In righteousness He judges and wages war.

Jesus is not cruel or arbitrary, He is not an unreasonable dictator. He is a righteous judge. Everything He does (specifically in His judgements) are completely righteous.

Matthew 13:41-43, The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Romans 2:5, But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed.

On a **white horse** – the conquering warrior. He was previously seen as the meek and mild servant riding on a donkey (Mt. 21:4-7), that figuratively took Him to the cross. But here He is seen as a victorious commander riding on a white stallion.

Jesus is both judge and warrior. He judges His enemies with a righteous judgment and then goes to war with them to defeat them.

Isaiah 11:1-5, Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; ⁴ But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. ⁵ Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.

Revelation 19:12, His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself.

eyes are a flame of fire = **See 1:14; 2:18**

Nothing escapes His notice, assuring the righteousness of His judgments.

on His head are many diadems = He is the sovereign ruler.

In **12:3**, Satan is seen with seven heads and each head with a diadem. But Jesus is seen with one head and *many diadems*.

He is the King of kings. There is no Ruler more powerful than Him.

Revelation 19:13, *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood = is the blood His own or that of others?

- Is it His own blood?
 - **See Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11**
- Is it the blood of others?
 - **Isaiah 63:1-3**, Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." ² Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? ³ "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment.

and His name is called The Word of God = This is the only place in Scripture where Jesus is referred to as **The Word of God**.

He is referred to as “the Word” in **John 1:1-3**, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:14, And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Psalms 33:6, By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.

The Word that is powerful enough to create all things, is powerful enough to defeat any enemy.

Revelation 19:14, And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.

This is the Bride of Christ (See **19:8; 17:14; 2:26-27**)

The church age saints will follow behind Jesus.

We are not dressed in battle array; we are not seen with any weapons. We will not need them.

We are not with Him to fight, but to observe our Lord slay all His enemies single-handedly.

Revelation 19:15, From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Isaiah 11:4, But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.

Isaiah 49:2, He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.

From His mouth comes a sharp sword = This is the power of Christ to effect judgment simply by declaring it to be done.

Job 4:9, By the breath of God they perish, And by the blast of His anger they come to an end.

2 Thessalonians 2:8, Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

and He will rule them with a rod of iron = The He is emphatic in the Greek. “He will tend them like a shepherd Himself.”

Had they submitted to Him earlier, He would have tended to them with a shepherd's crook. But now, He will deal with them with a [rod of iron](#).

Psalm 2:9, 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'

The iron rod speaks of the irresistible control that Christ will have over the earth.

See Rev. 2:27 (the overcomers); **12:5** (Christ).

and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. = Combined with the [rod of iron](#), the implication is destruction, not merely dominance.

All of God's enemies on earth will drink the wine of His [fierce wrath](#).

Revelation 19:16, And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

That is on the garment that covers the thigh.

See 17:14.

This speaks of His complete sovereign authority over all rulers. All the kings of the earth ultimately answer to Jesus.

Every ruler must answer to Jesus. It is good for us to remember this!

The second of eight scenes (The invitation to all the birds to come feast on human flesh - 19:17-18)

Revelation 19:17-18, Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."

This is an invitation to an avian smorgasbord!

Every carrion bird in world is invited to the feast. Eagles, vultures, hawks, falcons, and other raptors will migrate to the battlefield to clean up the massive pile of dead bodies.

The generals and the privates, the commanders and the commoners will all become fodder for the birds of the world.

In the judgment of God earthly rank provides no accommodation.

The battle will be short, the carnage will be massive, and the clean-up will be efficient.

This will, undoubtedly, be the largest death toll of any battle in the history of warfare.

The angel who gives the announcement, stands in the [sun](#), so as to be completely visible.

This is not something that takes place in secret.

Perhaps, as the armies advance toward Armageddon, they will see the sky filled with birds heading in the same direction, wondering why the birds are flying toward the west.

“Look at all those birds, I have never seen anything like that before, have you? I wonder where they are all going?”

Ezekiel 39:17-20, "As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, "Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood ¹⁸ "You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, as *though they were* rams, lambs, goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. ¹⁹ "So you will eat fat until you are gluttoned, and drink blood until you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. ²⁰ "You will be gluttoned at My table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all the men of war," declares the Lord GOD.

This is a radically different type of supper from the one in 19:9.

The indignity that the dead will face is like what was shown to the two prophets of God, when their dead bodies were left in the streets of Jerusalem for three-and-a-half days (**11:9-10**).

The third of eight scenes (the last for this chapter) (The defeat of the Beast, the false prophet, and the earthly enemies of God - 19:19-21)

Revelation 19:19, [And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.](#)

With the birds of the earth standing by, waiting for the dinner bell, the armies of the earth gather, united in their opposition to God. The [beast](#) leads the futile campaign.

There has never been and never will be again, a coalition like this one. All the armies of the world, fighting on the same side, the wrong side, with the intent of defeating [Him who sat on the horse and His army](#).

Some have speculated that Jesus returns and has gathered the hidden and protected Jews and that is what prompts the beast to come out will all the armies of the earth.

Whatever the immediate cause, the outcome is certain.

This will be the most momentous battle in the history of the world, yet it is described with relatively few words – compared to its significance.

The shortness of the description almost makes the battle anticlimactic. But it shows that all the armies of the earth gathered against God are about as intimidating as a gnat trying to do battle with nuclear bomb.

Revelation 19:20, [And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.](#)

There is no description of the battle, no indication that there was any effective resistance.

We are not told how or specifically by who, but [the beast](#) and [the false prophet](#) are [seized](#).

I sort of picture Christ grabbing them by the scruff of their neck and picking them up like rag dolls and throwing them into [the lake of fire](#).

The [beast](#), the counterfeit Messiah and [the false prophet](#), who used counterfeit miracles to deceive the population of the world, convincing them to worship [the beast](#) and his image and to receive the mark of the [beast](#) on their right hand or their forehead.

The two of them are thrown into the [lake of fire](#) while still alive. They were not killed in battle, they were captured.

That they were thrown alive into the lake of fire, implies a greater level of suffering.

The picture is one of horror and unimaginable suffering.

Hell

We see in Revelation 19-21 the mention of “the lake of fire,” “the abyss,” “death,” and “hades.”

That brings up the question of what is the difference between each of them?

In the Old Testament the word “hell” is never used.

The word that is used is Sheol (**lwav**).

It is used to speak of the grave and of a place of punishment. The context must determine the intended meaning.

Grave:

- Jacob mourning, what he thought was the death of Joseph in **Genesis 37:35**, **Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, "Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son." So his father wept for him.**
- **Psalm 6:5**, **For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?**
- **Psalm 16:10**, **For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.**

Punishment:

- Speaking of the revolt of Korah in the wilderness, **Numbers 16:30**, **But if the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD."**
- Speaking of spanking your children, **Proverbs 23:14**, **You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol.**

There are a number of passages that could be taken as the grave or as punishment.

In the New Testament there are basically two words used.

There is a third word used but it is used only one time.

Tartaroo (tartarow) - **2 Peter 2:4**, For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

Hades (a[dhj]) = it is basically used the same way that the Old Testament used Sheol.

Grave:

- **Acts 2:27**, BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAy.

Punishment:

- **Matthew 11:23**, And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.
- **Matthew 16:18**, "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.
- **Luke 16:23**, In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

Gehenna (geenna) = Always used as a reference to hell. Jesus used it eleven of the twelve times it is used. (The 12th time is James 3:6 where he says that the tongue is set on fire of hell.)

The name is derived from Ge Hinnom, or the "Valley of Hinnom" located south of Jerusalem.

During the reigns of Ahaz and later Manasseh (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6) the Jews joined in the worship of the Ammonite god Molech.

As part of their worship, they would sacrifice their children by throwing them into the fire.

Later garbage and unclaimed dead bodies were burned in the same location. The horrors of the child sacrifices and the constant burning began a popular symbol for the eternal suffering in the flames of hell.

- **Matthew 5:22**, But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.
- **Matthew 5:29-30**, "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and

throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

- **Matthew 10:28**, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Hell is also described as:

- **Matthew 3:12** - A place of unquenchable fire.
- **Matthew 13:42** - A furnace of fire and a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- **Matthew 25:41** - An eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;
- **Jude 1:13** - the black darkness
- **Revelation 21:8** - the lake that burns with fire and brimstone

In **2 Corinthians 5:6-8**, Paul told the Christian to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. We know that between the death of the Christian and the rapture of the church that Christians have some sort of interim body. At the rapture/resurrection of the Christian, we will receive glorified/permanent bodies.

A similar thing happens to the unbeliever. In Luke 16, in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, Jesus said that the rich man was in Hades being tormented in flames.

In **Rev. 19:20**, the beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into a burning lake of fire, 1,000 years before anyone else (**Rev. 20:11-15**).

After the 1,000 years, the sinners will be resurrected, judged, given an eternal body, and then thrown into the lake of fire where the beast, the false prophet, and Satan are already bound (**Rev. 20:10**).

That the beast and the false prophet are thrown in alive seems and 1,000 years before everyone else, seems to indicate a special level of punishment just for them.

God radically judges those who turn others from the truth to a lie.

Revelation 19:21, And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

This is not merely a reference to the rest of the armies, but also to the rest of the unbelievers on the earth.

The only survivors left on earth will be those who have trusted in Christ and have not worshipped the beast or taken his mark.

Those survivors will constitute the core of the Millennial kingdom citizens.

killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse =

While the forces of earth will use conventional weapons (conventional for the time), The Lord will use His Word.

While we are not told how the weapon that the Lord uses works, it is clear that the results are lethal just the same.

In the beginning God spoke the universe into existence. He gave man breath, and He sustains all of creation. It may be as simple as saying, "Die!"

Jesus will hit the "delete" button of the lives of His enemies.

Then the avian feast will commence, and [all the birds](#) will eat their fill of the [flesh](#) of the wicked.

[[Before we move on to chapter 20](#), last week I said that the non-military unbelievers who survived to the end of the Tribulation must be part of [the rest](#) in 19:21. I think I was wrong.

See Matthew 25:1-13 – the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins; **vv. 14-30** – the parable of the Talents. Both parables speak of giving an account at the return of Christ.

See Matthew 25:31-46 – the Sheep & Goat judgment. This judgment must take place at the end of the Tribulation. This must be the time when God separates those who will populate the millennial kingdom and cast those who are unbelievers out.

Ezekiel 20:33-38, As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. ³⁴ "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; ³⁵ and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. ³⁶ "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. ³⁷ "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸ and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress

against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD.

Joel 3:1-3, "For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, ² I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land. ³ "They have also cast lots for My people, Traded a boy for a harlot And sold a girl for wine that they may drink.

[The Judgment Seat of Christ:

- *What is it?*
 - It is the place where Christians give an account to God for what we did and did not do since salvation.
 - **Romans 14:10**, But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:10**, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
- *When will it take place?*
 - It must take place after the rapture and before the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, since His bride must be purified. It makes the most sense for it to take place in the early days after the rapture.
 - **See 1 Corinthians 3:11 - 4:5]**

Chapter 20

Chapter twenty is a packed chapter.

There are four scenes; five key events in the chapter.

- The binding of Satan for a thousand years (vv. 1-3)
- The resurrection of the Tribulation saints (vv. 4-6)

- Satan's release from the pit and final defeat (vv. 7-9)
- Satan cast into the lake of fire (v. 10)
- The Great White Throne judgment (vv. 11-15)

The fourth of eight scenes: (The Binding and imprisonment of Satan - vv. 1-3)

This picks up where **19:20** ends. After the beast and the false prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire, the leader of the evil trinity is captured and imprisoned in the pit/abyss.

Revelation 20:1, Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

An unnamed angel descends from heaven and given the task of seizing and binding and imprisoning Satan.

The angel carries two things with him, [the key to the abyss and a great chain](#).

It should go without saying that both the key and the chain are symbolic of the binding and imprisonment of Satan.

There is no locked door, in the physical sense that we think of that is concealing the abyss.

No humanly manufactured chain could hold Satan (Luke 8:29, demoniac kept breaking chains).

A physical chain could not bind a spirit being.

The binding of Satan is clearly a means to keeps him from deceiving the world. Therefore, it must be a real place that really locks him away.

The binding of Satan is not the charismatic idea of limiting his influence in your life. No where are we told that we can bind Satan with our prayers or any other activity.

In fact, God must have limited Satan's ability to resist for the angel God sent to capture him and bind him.

The imagery of a key and chain are relatable to the reader. They assure us that the angel took Satan into custody, and he is unable to do what he has been doing for so long.

Revelation 20:2-3a, [And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him,](#)

Any one or certainly any combination of two of these verbs would be enough to convey the point that Satan is bound and made ineffectual [for a thousand years](#).

By stacking the five verbs on top of each other, John wants to make clear, with no ambiguity, that Satan will be taken out of commission, unable to interact with anyone or anything. Specifically, he will be unable to deceive the nations (**See 12:9; 16:13-14; 19:20**).

Still, there are those, today, who say that Satan is currently bound and that the wickedness we see in our world today is merely the result of man's inherent sinfulness.

Or Satan is bound by a long chain, sort of like chaining a dog to a pole. Satan is free to go as far as the chain will reach.

Others say that Satan is bound, but only from touching the Believer.

The five verbs say otherwise.

Five (aorist) verbs are used to describe the binding of Satan.

- **Laid hold of / seized**
 - ekrathsen from krates = "I take hold of"
- **Bound**
 - edhsen from dew = "I bind"
- **Threw**
 - ebalen from ballw = "I throw"
- **Shut**
 - ekleisen from kleiw = I shut
- **Sealed**
 - esfragisen from sfragizw = I seal.

This is an absolute stopping of Satan's activity in this world.

Those who say that Satan is bound today, also, by necessity, believe that we are currently in the Millennium. This is the Amillennial (no actual millennium) position.

They say that the term **a thousand years** (cilia eth) merely means a long period of time.

The word "millennium" comes from the Latin (*mille* = thousand, *annus/annum* = year) for "one thousand years."

The words **thousand years**, appear six times in the first seven verses (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). That sort of repetition is more than trying to convey a long but indeterminate period of time. If John

were trying to convey a long period of time, he could have varied his vocabulary to include words such as: “a long time” (cronizw) or “many years” (tosoutoj etoj) or (poluj etoj).

The characteristics of the Millennium as described in Scripture argue against the Amillennial or post-millennial positions.

- *Global worship of God*
 - **Isaiah 2:1-5**, The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war. ⁵ Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

- *Peace in the animal kingdom*
 - **Isaiah 11:6-9**, And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. ⁷ Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

- *Extremely long life will be the norm, peace between men*
 - **Isaiah 65:17-25**, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *for* rejoicing And her people *for* gladness. ¹⁹ "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. ²⁰ "No longer will there be in it an infant *who lives but a few* days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will

be *thought* accursed. ²¹ "They will build houses and inhabit *them*; They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² "They will not build and another inhabit, They will not plant and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, *so will be* the days of My people, And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. ²³ "They will not labor in vain, Or bear *children* for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, And their descendants with them. ²⁴ "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. ²⁵ "The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the LORD.

- *Christ will rule over all*
 - **Daniel 7:14**, "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
 - **Zechariah 14:9**, And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be *the only one*, and His name *the only one*.

The non-literal millennial views are forced to reinterpret these and other passages to a less than literal interpretation. To see the state of our world now as fitting the biblical description of the millennium takes quite an imagination.

The dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan Each of the four titles for Satan appear in several other passages of Scripture. The four are seen together in **Rev. 12:9**.

- The great dragon = the title indicates the fierceness and his destructive nature.
- The serpent of old = takes us back to the Garden of Eden and the origin of man's sin.
- The devil = means "accuser" or "slanderer"
- Satan = means "adversary."

Satan is seized, bound, thrown into the pit. The pit/abyss is closed and sealed.

There is not much more John could say to indicate the utter isolation of Satan from mankind.

Revelation 20:3b, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

This also speaks of the literal binding of Satan away from mankind. He has been deceiving since man has been on the earth.

Genesis 3:13, Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

2 Corinthians 11:3, But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Revelation 12:9, And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revelation 16:13-14, And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; ¹⁴ for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

During the thousand years, Satan (and presumably his demons) will not be able to deceive, influence, or otherwise interact with mankind. The only sinful influences that will exist are the sin natures in man.

The nations will be composed of those who are born during the Millennium.

Those on earth who are faithful to Christ and survived the Tribulation will enter the Millennium and populate the Kingdom of God. There will be many Jews and many Gentiles.

Because life will be good, and righteousness will prevail, and life will be much longer (Isa. 65:20), the population will increase dramatically. The offspring of the believers who survived the Millennium will constitute the nations.

after these things he must be released for a short time.

Why **must** Satan be released for a short time?

There are things that God has said must take place. He does not always explain why.

See Rev. 1:1; 4:1

Mark 8:31, And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mark 13:7, "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; *those things* must take place; but *that is* not yet the end.

Luke 24:44, Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

This is part of God's sovereign plan. It reveals that man is a sinner and no matter what situation he is in; he will act sinfully.

- In the Garden – man was sinless, but Satan deceived man = man rebelled against God.
- In the O.T. – men were sinners, Satan was active, but God gave him law to obey = men rebelled against God.
- In the N.T. – men are sinners, Satan is active, but God gave grace = men rebelled against God.
- In the Millennium – men will still have a sin nature, Satan will be bound, Jesus will reign in a perfect environment, Satan will be released for a short time = men will rebel against God.
- In Eternity – Believers will be glorified, Satan will be eternally judged, God will reign, Believers will be sinless forever.

The wickedness of Satan and the perverseness of the unredeemed hearts will be evident very quickly.

This will be reminiscent of the Children of Israel after they entered into the Promised Land. That first generation was relatively faithful but the generations that followed rebelled against God.

Though the generations in the Millennium will not face the same temptations and deceptions, they will rebel against God quickly after Satan is released from his confinement.

Ultimately, we cannot know the exact reason why God has chosen to do things this way. The answer to why, is left in the sovereign wisdom of God.

Isaiah 55:8, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.

A short time = unknown how long this will be.

The fifth of eight scenes: (The Millennium and Satan's ultimate defeat - vv. 4-10)

- The resurrection of the martyred Tribulation saints (vv. 4-6)

Revelation 20:4, Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Then I saw thrones = There are questions about who is sitting on these thrones.

We are told that judgment was given to them, so, that narrows down the possibilities.

- The disciples - **Luke 22:29-30**, and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - The only time that it would be possible for them to sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel would be during the Millennium. In eternity, it would not be necessary.
- The church age saints - **1 Corinthians 6:2**, Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?

It seems likely that the thrones are occupied by a mix of disciples and Gentile church age saints. Perhaps the disciples judge the tribes of Israel, and the church age saints judge the Gentiles.

The judgment will be concerning those who live in the Millennium. We will adjudicate whatever disputes arise and laws that broken. Since we will be glorified by that time, our judgments will be perfect. We will be right, fair, and compassionate.

John then noticed {The second use of *saw* in verse 4 is in italics and not in the original text and is therefore not a separate scene.} the souls of the Tribulation martyrs being resurrected.

See 13:15

They faithfully stood with Christ, even at the cost of their own lives.

They are raised to life to reign with Christ for a thousand years.

This is probably the time when Old Testament saints are also resurrected.

They are promised that they will reign with God as well.

Ezekiel 37:12-13, "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people."

Daniel 12:1-3, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. ² "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt. ³ "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

Combined with, **Daniel 12:13**, "But as for you, go *your way* to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise *again* for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Note on Daniel 12:11-12, "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there will be* 1,290 days. ¹² "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!

Three-and-a-half years (at 360 days per year) = 1,260 days. That leaves an extra 30 days.

There is a blessing for those who arrive at 1,335 days – or 75 days after the end of the Tribulation.

The extra 30 days are probably when the Sheep and Goat judgments take place. The resurrection of the Tribulation martyrs and Old Testament saints may take place during that time.

The other 45 days may be setting up the administration of the Kingdom (whatever that looks like).

Revelation 20:5, The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

The rest of the dead = the unbelieving dead, as confirmed by v. 6.

This is the first resurrection = It is best to see the first part of **verse 5** as parenthetical. That connects this last phrase to the end of **verse 4**.

The first resurrection should be seen as a category rather than a chronology.

As a category, the first resurrection would include all of the resurrections of the righteous.

It would include:

- The resurrection of Jesus
 - **1 Corinthians 15:20-23**, But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,
- The resurrection of the dead Church age saints
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:16**, For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
- The resurrection of the Tribulation Martyrs
 - **Rev. 20:4**
- The resurrection of the Old Testament Saints
 - **Daniel 12:2**, Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.

It is in contrast to the second death – **2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8**

The unbelieving dead will be punished in Hades for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:6, Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Blessed and holy = This speaks of the happiness and bliss that comes with the holiness.

Not only will those with the Lord be happy, but they will also be holy – set apart for God's special use.

The first resurrection = See notes on v. 5.

Jesus confirms two (types) of resurrections.

- **John 5:28-29**, Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

Paul affirmed the two resurrections in his address to Felix.

- **Acts 24:14-15**, But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

The second death = This is eternal punishment.

The first death must be the death of the body and the second death is the death of the body and soul after judgement, since the righteous are exempt from it.

- **Matthew 10:28**, Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
- **Hebrews 9:27**, And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,

but they will be priests of God and of Christ = the precise role of the glorified priests in the Millennial kingdom and beyond, is not entirely clear.

- We might suppose that the glorified priests are imparting knowledge of God to the Millennial citizens.
- As **priests of God and of Christ**, we will enjoy unlimited access to and fellowship with God and Christ.
- This role extends beyond the millennium, see **Rev. 22:3, 5**

and will reign with Him for a thousand years. = Most of what we know of the Millennium comes from the Old Testament.

- The Millennium can rightly be seen as a type of Sabbath. A rest from the influence of Satan.
- It can be seen as an answer to the prayer that Jesus told us to pray.
 - **Matthew 6:9-13**, Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ 'Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
- It can be seen as a time of refreshing and renewal.
 - **Acts 3:19-21**, "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.
 - **Daniel 7:13-14**, I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. ¹⁴ "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
 - (vv. 15-25, speak of Antichrist's reign)
 - **Daniel 7:26-27**, 'But the court will sit *for judgment*, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. ²⁷ 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom *will be* an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

In to restore all things:

- God choose Abraham as the channel through whom He would bless the world.
 - **Genesis 12:2-3**, And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."
 - **Genesis 15:18-21**, On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: ¹⁹ the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite

²⁰ and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim ²¹ and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

- **Genesis 17:1-8**, Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. ² "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly." ³ Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, ⁴ "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. ⁷ "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. ⁸ "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."
- God choose the line of David
 - **2 Samuel 7:16**, Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.
 - **Psalms 89:28-37**, "My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, And My covenant shall be confirmed to him. ²⁹ "So I will establish his descendants forever And his throne as the days of heaven. ³⁰ "If his sons forsake My law And do not walk in My judgments, ³¹ If they violate My statutes And do not keep My commandments, ³² Then I will punish their transgression with the rod And their iniquity with stripes. ³³ "But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness. ³⁴ "My covenant I will not violate, Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. ³⁵ "Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. ³⁶ "His descendants shall endure forever And his throne as the sun before Me. ³⁷ "It shall be established forever like the moon, And the witness in the sky is faithful.
- God affirmed His promises through His prophets.
 - **Isaiah 11:1-9**, Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; ⁴ But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. ⁵ Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His

waist. ⁶ And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. ⁷ Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

- **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
- Atonement for sin was made and memorialized until it is fully realized
 - **Galatians 3:10-14**, For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." ¹¹ Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." ¹² However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"-- ¹⁴ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
 - **Mark 14:22-25**, While they were eating, He took *some* bread, and after a blessing He broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, and said, "Take *it*; this is My body." ²³ And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵ "Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."
 - **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**, For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same way *He took* the cup also

after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

- Creation awaits the reversal of the curse
 - **Genesis 3:17-19**, Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."
 - **Romans 8:18-22**, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
 - **2 Peter 3:13**, But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

All of these things must be fulfilled and in the eternal state that follows.

- Satan's release and Sinner's rebellion - vv. 7-10

Revelation 20:7, When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison,

At the close of the Millennium, Satan will be released from the abyss, now called his prison.

Revelation 20:8, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.

He will deceive the nations, the offspring of the saved who survived the Tribulation and formed the basis of the Millennial kingdom population.

Because of the long lives people will live, the absence of war, violence, and disease, the population will increase dramatically. Sadly, there will end up being an extraordinary number of unbelievers by the end of the Millennium.

[the nations which are in the four corners of the earth](#) = a colloquial way of saying, all over the earth.

[Gog and Magog](#) =

Magog is first mentioned in **Genesis 10:2** as one of the sons of Japheth (Noah's son).

The main mention of Gog and Magog is in Ezekiel 38-39, where the battle of Armageddon is in view.

The terms [Gog and Magog](#) seem to be used as a general term for God's enemies. In **Ezekiel 39:1**, Gog is depicted as the leader of Magog.

It is like referring to the "Axis."

- In 1941 the Axis referred to Germany, Italy, and Japan.
- In 1992 the term was applied to Tehran, Bagdad, and Damascus.
- In 2002, the term was used to refer to North Korea, Iran, and Iraq.

That John equates [Gog and Magog](#) with [the four corners of the earth](#), means that it should not be considered a specific geographical location or country.

God had used certain names in this book to represent reoccurring evil.

- (To Pergamum) **Revelation 2:14**, 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of [Balaam](#), who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit *acts of immorality*.
- (To Thyatira) **Revelation 2:20**, But I have *this* against you, that you tolerate the woman [Jezebel](#), who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit *acts of immorality* and eat things sacrificed to idols.
- **Revelation 11:8**, And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which mystically is called [Sodom and Egypt](#), where also their Lord was crucified.

the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. = Interestingly, sadly – despite the relative perfection of life on earth during the Millennium, the vast number of those who rebel against God and gather to do battle against Him, and His people is astounding!

Revelation 20:9, And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

The newly deceived rebels come from all over the earth and surround the city of Jerusalem.

the beloved city = God loves Jerusalem.

- **Psalms 87:2**, The LORD loves the gates of Zion More than all the *other* dwelling places of Jacob.
- **Jeremiah 3:17**, "At that time they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart.

Those of us who are in the city (the camp of the saints) will not fear. There will be no need for us to prepare for battle.

God will devour the enemy with fire.

God has used fire to destroy His enemies many times.

- **Genesis 19:24**, Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven,
- **Leviticus 10:1-2**, Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. ² And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.
- **Ezekiel 38:22**, With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.
- **Ezekiel 39:6**, And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD.

- **2 Kings 1:10**, Elijah replied to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. (Also v. 12)

A quick and decisive victory!

Revelation 20:10, And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Satan is then thrown into the Lake of Fire – never to be heard from again! Never to deceive another person, never to put forth another temptation to rebel against God, never to make another accusation against the believer! His defeat is ultimate and permanent.

He will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Obviously, there is no day or night in the lake of fire – this just means non-stop torment.

The sixth of eight scenes: (The Great White Throne is set up - v. 11)

Revelation 20:11, Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

This verse is the last traces of the present order.

The great white throne distinguishes from all other judgments.

White = most often point to purity. Thus, the purity of God's judgment is seen.

Him who sat upon it = This is, no doubt, God.

from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. = We will talk more about this in **21:1**.

The judgment takes place outside the universe as we understand it.

Earth and heaven (the universe) will flee from the presence of God, and since God is everywhere – it seems to imply that the present earth and heaven will be eliminated from existence.

The seventh of eight scenes: (The judgement of those whose names were not written in the book of Life - 20:12-15)

Revelation 20:12, And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

This is the resurrection of the unbelievers of all time.

This judgment leads to the second death and therefore cannot include any believers (20:6).

The *book of life* is opened to show that their names do not appear there.

and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds = God has kept a record of all the deeds of the believers and the unbelievers.

- **Deuteronomy 32:32-35**, For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, And from the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes are grapes of poison, Their clusters, bitter. ³³ "Their wine is the venom of serpents, And the deadly poison of cobras. ³⁴ 'Is it not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up in My treasuries? ³⁵ 'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them.'
- **Psalm 56:8**, You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are *they* not in Your book?
- **Matthew 12:37**, For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

This truth is reiterated at the end of v. 13.

All those who hoped to be judged according to their works, will finally get what they wanted.

They thought that their good deeds would outweigh their evil deeds. They will find out that their “good” deeds were not any better than filthy rags (**Isaiah 64:6**, For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.) and all their evil deeds are piled up much higher than they ever imagined.

Any one of the wicked deeds are worthy of death, together they are worthy of eternal punishment.

Revelation 20:13, *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.*

Sequentially, this verse belongs in the middle of **v. 12**.

The dead are raised to be judged and to receive their eternal sentence.

The sea gave up the dead which were in it= burials at sea, those who died in shipwrecks, wars, etc....

Being eaten by great white shark does not free one from the great white throne judgment.

Death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them = this speaks of normal death and burial. It might be best to think of *death* as the state of the person and *Hades* as the location of the person.

It is as if God sends the wicked to a certain location for “safe keeping.” And then at the appointed time, He recalls them, and the locations give the dead back to God for judgment.

and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds = The judgment of the unbelievers will be done individually. It will be just and each one will be without excuse.

Revelation 20:14, *Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*

No more need for death or Hades. They were a part of the curse. The curse is being reversed; therefore, death and Hades are no longer needed.

They join their victims in the lake of fire.

They are thrown into the lake of fire, where Satan, the beast, and the false prophet are.

- **1 Corinthians 15:26**. *The last enemy that will be abolished is death.*
- **1 Corinthians 15:54-55**, *But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ⁵⁵ "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"*

Revelation 20:15, And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This is the final stop!

Those whose name was not written in the book, those who died without Christ will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

The words here leave no room for universal salvation, an intermediate state, purgatory, soul sleep, a second chance, or annihilation.

- **Matthew 25:41**, Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;
- **Matthew 25:46**, These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Revelation 14:11, "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Chapter 21

This is a chapter of new beginnings! A new heaven & earth, a new Jerusalem, a new relationship with God, and a new way of life.

Revelation 21:1, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.

This is the 8th and last of the visions that began in **19:11**.

*Why 21:2 is not one of the visions.

I saw = kai eidon = 19:11-16, 17-18, 19-21; 20:1-3, 4-10, 11, 12-15; 21:1-8.

Each of these passages begin the exact same way with the same two words "I saw."

However, 21:2 begins completely different.

21:2 - kai. th.n po,lin th.n a`gi,an Vlerousalh.m kaih.n ei=don = “and the city the holy one Jerusalem new I saw...”

It does not fit the pattern of the previous visions.

A new heaven and a new earth.

There is an ongoing debate as to whether this is speaking of renovation or replacement.

Renovation:

Scriptural support:

- **Acts 3:19-21**, "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.
- **Romans 8:19-22**, For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
- **Genesis 48:4**, and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.'
- **Psalms 119:90**, Your faithfulness *continues* throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands.
- **Ecclesiastes 1:4**, A generation goes and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever.
- **Revelation 21:5**, And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

Michael Vlach's arguments for renewal (*The Greatness of the Kingdom*, pp. 505-27).

- Renewal fits the Bible's storyline.
 - Creation was very good – Gen. 1:31.

- Though marred in with the Fall of Man, God intends the restoration of all things – Acts 3:21.
- Annihilation would be giving Satan the victory over God’s creation
- Creation longs for renewal – Rom. 8:21.
 - If the fate is annihilation, then there is nothing for creation to hope for.
- The fate of creation parallels the fate of man, which is resurrection and renewal, not annihilation and start-over.
- Scripture indicates renewal.
 - **Matt. 19:28 (NIV)**, Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[**Matt. 19:28 (NASU)**, And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.]

[**Matt. 19:28 (ESV)**, Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.]

[The word “renewal” or “regeneration” can mean “rebirth” or “next age” or “next world.”]

Replacement:

Scriptural Support

- **Psalms 102:24-26**, I say, "O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days, Your years are throughout all generations. ²⁵ "Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. ²⁶ "Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed.
- **Isaiah 34:4**, And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as *one* withers from the fig tree.
- **Isaiah 51:6**, Lift up your eyes to the sky, Then look to the earth beneath; For the sky will vanish like smoke, And the earth will wear out like a garment And its inhabitants will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not wane.
- **Matthew 24:35**, Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

- **2 Peter 3:7-13**, But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

- **Revelation 20:11**, Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

- An entirely new Jerusalem indicates a new earth too.

- Seven things that will no longer exist on the new earth (four indicate a replacement).
 - No sea (v. 1)
 - No sun (v. 23; 22:5)
 - No moon (v. 23)
 - No night (v. 25; 22:5)

 - No death/mourning (v. 4)
 - No crying (v. 4)
 - No pain (v. 4)

The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:2, And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

The inner permanent quality of the New Jerusalem is holiness.

There is some confusion as to whether the New Jerusalem is in existence during the Millennium or only in the eternal state.

Verses 1-6 seem to describe the eternal state.

Verses 7-8 seem to speak of the sheep & goat judgment which takes place at the beginning of the Millennium.

Verses 9-26 seem to be describing the eternal state.

v. 27 seems to describe the millennial state.

It seems best to see it all as the eternal state and deal with the few verses that appear to be in the Millennium.

- **vv. 7-8**, are a solemn warning for readers until the Lord returns.
- **v. 27** may be the same answer given for **vv. 7-8**.
 - In other words, it is a statement of fact that such a thing is impossible.

At the end of the day, it may be impossible to know for certain which some of the verses are referring to.

Bride = numfh = this is a different word from the one used in **19:7** (gunh). Both terms are used in **21:9**.

“**New Jerusalem**” stands for the people of God and for their abode.

Revelation 21:3, And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

We will finally get to dwell with God, and He will dwell with us! (See **21:11, 23; 22:5**)

Tabernacle brings to mind the wandering in the wilderness.

We will no longer be separated by sin or by space (realm/dimension)

We will fully, completely, perfectly, and eternally God's people.

Revelation 21:4, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.

We will never again experience sadness, sorrow, loss, death, a broken heart, or the like. No fear, no sorrow, no sickness, no temptation, and no sin for all eternity.

God is speaking in vv. 5-8. This is the first (unquestionable) utterance of God since 1:8.

He explains His personal concern for us.

Revelation 21:5, *And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."*

The statements of God tie the entire book together and give a sense of purpose to everything that has taken place.

Behold = used to introduce a special announcement.

I am making all things new = God is making a new unspoiled creation for us to enjoy for eternity.

God tells John to *Write*.

It is possible that John was overwhelmed with all he was seeing and then hearing God speak to him. Or it could just be a statement that John was to be assured that what he was seeing was real.

There is a similar statement in 22:6 that applies to the entire book. However, in 21:5 it appears to apply to the statement God had just made.

Revelation 21:6, *Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost."*

It is done = the judgements are over. They have been completed. This is not the same word used by Jesus on the cross, when He said, "It is finished." However, a form of that word is used when God said that He is *the beginning and the end*.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end = Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and is also used as an ordinal number (A number that defines its position such as "first" or "last").

God is saying that He is the beginning and the end of all things.

This speaks of His ultimate sovereignty.

God started it all and it all ends with Him.

As a part of God's sovereign plan, He issues two promises:

First, *I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.*

The metaphor of “thirst” is used to describe spiritual need several times.

- **Isaiah 55:1**, Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.
- **Psalms 42:1-2**, As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?
- **Psalms 63:1**, O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- **John 4:13-14**, Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

God promises to freely give the water of life.

- **Revelation 7:16-17**, They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."
- **Revelation 22:17**, The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Revelation 21:7, "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Some stumble over **vv. 7-8** and how they fit in. They seem to fit better with the end of the Millennium than they do with eternity.

These verses fall into the category of the completed judgments that God was speaking about in **verse 6**. In other words, **vv. 7-8** are describing the completion of the judgments not the next chronological event.

As part of the completion of the judgment was the promise to Believers and the judgment on unbelievers.

As to the promise to Believers - **He who overcomes will inherit these things** = The overcomers are the saved (cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

God's promise is, **I will be his God and he will be My son** = God promised to make us His children. This makes us joint heirs with Christ.

Romans 8:16-17, **The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,** ¹⁷ **and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.**

Verse 8 is the completion of the judgment of the wicked. The list appears to be specific to those who lived during the Tribulation.

Revelation 21:8 **"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."**

the cowardly and unbelieving = those who feared men and the loss of things more than they feared God.

- **Mark 8:35-36**, **For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.** ³⁶ **"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"**
- **2 Timothy 1:7**, **For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.**

These may be those seeds that fell among the thorns and the stones.

abominable = Those who commit abominations, those whose abominations permeate their lives.

murderers = whether they actually committed murder or merely hated Christians so much that they gave ascent to the murder of the Believer or even merely turned a blind eye to it.

immoral persons = The rampant and acceptable immorality that will characterize the Tribulation period.

sorcerers and idolaters = the worship of the Beast and his image

all liars =

These are those whose lives were characterized by sin and not by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

They have a very different inheritance from those mentioned in **v. 7**.

Their inheritance will be **in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death**. See **20:14**.

V. The Fourth Vision: The Eternal State (21:9-22:5)

Revelation 21:9, Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

A previous angel, that John recognizes as having one of the seven bowls of wrath (the last set of judgments), speaks to John and will take him to get a better look at [the bride, the wife of the Lamb](#).

While it is true that the Bride of Christ is the purified church, the angel is giving John a more complete picture of the place where the bride dwells. The New Jerusalem and the purified church saints are so connected that the angel can refer to them both as the bride of the Lamb.

Some see this as a description of the Millennial kingdom.

The reasons:

- The mention of nation – **21:24, 26**
- The mention of the healing of the nations – **22:2**
- The descriptions of those inside and those outside the city, implying two different types of people (righteous and unrighteous) – **22:14-15**

However, the chronological context makes that view very difficult to reconcile, since **21:1-5** is clearly something that happens post-millennial.

This description of New Jerusalem cannot be the Millennial kingdom.

- The absence of a Temple – **21:22** (cf. **Ezek. 40-48**, which describes temple worship during the Millennium.)
- The absence of the sun & moon – **21:23**
- The absence of night – **21:25**
- The absence of the curse – **22:3**

We will address **21:24, 26; 22:2, 5** when we get to those verses.

Revelation 21:10, And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

John is taken by the angel to a high vantage point to see the massive city that is descending from heaven to the earth.

The bride is both the people and the city. It is the purified church as well as the city where we will dwell.

In **vv. 11-21**, John gives a physical description of the city – he speaks of the construction, the materials, and the dimensions.

Revelation 21:11, *having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.*

having the glory of God = this is the shekinah glory (Heb. Shekan = “dwell”) of God that radiates throughout the city. Since He dwells there with His people, His glory fills the city in the same way it covered the top of Mt. Sinai.

As His glory was seen in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple.

The shekinah glory is what is seen by people when God dwells among them.

Exodus 40:34, *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

2 Chronicles 7:1-3, *Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house. ² The priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD'S house. ³ All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD, saying, "Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting."*

having the glory of God = is an overall description of the city. (e.g. Seattle = the Emerald city; Paris = the city of lights)

Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper = this is also a reference to the shekinah glory.

Revelation 4:2-3, *Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. ³ And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.*

The color of the jasper was used to describe the radiance of God in **Rev. 4** and again here in **Rev. 21**.

John is given the difficult task of describing an eternal heavenly city, made by God, out of materials no one has ever seen to finite minds.

John is trying to give the best description he can using things that people can relate to on some level.

crystal-clear jasper = possibly like a diamond.

Revelation 21:12, It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels = that is an angel at each gate.

Since evil will ne non-existent in the new creation, the presence of the angels may be symbolic of safety and purity. or they have a function that we do not know.

Each gate is named after one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Revelation 21:13, *There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.*

cf. Ezek. 48:31-34, description of Millennial kingdom, but it probably will be similar for eternal Jerusalem).

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| Reuben | Judah | Levi |
| Gad | | Dan |
| Asher | | Benjamin |
| Naphtali | | Joseph |
| Simeon | Issachar | Zebulun |

Revelation 21:14, *And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

These must be massive foundation stones, each one named for one of the apostles. (Matthias v. Judas Iscariot)

The picture of the foundation stones being named for the apostles and the gates being named for the tribes of Israel brings together the Old Testament and the New Testament into one unit.

Revelation 21:15-16, The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

The angel is going to measure the city and give the information to John.

The city was a cube.

“12,000 stadia” = 1,400 to 1,500 miles.

It is 1,400 – 1,500 miles long, wide, and tall!

To give you some perspective that would be from the U.S./Canada border to the U.S./Mexico border (North & South) and the West coast of California to the East edge of Texas (West and East).

Revelation 21:17, And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.*

seventy-two yards = 144 cubits = 216 feet.

This must refer to the width of the wall – **see v. 12**, *It had a great and high wall*

according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. = Means that the angel did the measuring and reported the number that John would understand – human numbers.

Revelation 21:18, The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

cf. 4:3

It appears that the glory of God radiates throughout the city.

the city was pure gold, like clear glass. = This is unlike anything known to man. Again, John is trying to express the majesty of what he is seeing. Notice the words “like.”

Revelation 21:19-20, The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; ²⁰ the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

The idea is not so much that the foundation stones are decorated with the jewels mentioned, as much as the foundation stones are made up of the precious stones mentioned.

There seems to be different descriptions of some of the stones, that is different colors attributed to them in different places.

In general – **jasper** = white/green; **sapphire** = blue; **chalcedony** = greenish; **emerald** = green; **sardonyx** = browns & whites & reds; **sardius** = red/orange; **chrysolite** = light green/yellow; **beryl** = green; **topaz** = yellow/green; **chrysoprase** = apple green; **Jacinth** = white/red/blue; **amethyst** = purple.

Revelation 21:21, *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

John returns to give a description of the gates he mentioned in **vv. 12-13**.

Each gate is made of *a single pearl*.

That is pretty impressive, especially considering the size of a city gate.

It is not like the gate in the fence to your yard. It is more like the door to an airplane hangar.

And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. = This is the same description that he gave to the city itself.

This verse is why heaven is sometimes referred to as “The Pearly Gates” and “streets of gold.”

No man, other than John, has ever seen a city so beautiful and so opulent.

Revelation 21:22, *I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

John did not see a temple, because, in a sense, the entire city is a temple.

God’s presence will not be contained to a room inside the temple (the holy of holies), accessible to the High Priest one time per year. He will be in the city and accessible to everyone at all times.

There is no need for a temple, because there will never again be a need for sacrifice or reconciliation.

Revelation 21:23, And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

The unfading shekinah glory of God is all the light that will ever be needed.

Isaiah 60:19-20, "No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And your God for your glory. ²⁰ "Your sun will no longer set, Nor will your moon wane; For you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And the days of your mourning will be over.

No moon means no night, because there is no need for sleep.

Revelation 21:24, The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

The big question that has caused a lot of discussion is, who are the **nations**?

There are at least 11 different views.

- (1) Millennial nations. This is a reference to the Millennium and not to the eternal state. They start by honoring God, in the beginning of the Millennium and end up rebelling against Him at the end.

The problem – this view neglects the chronological flow of visions John was given – the eight times he said, “Then I saw. As well as the fact that the New Jerusalem and new creation are clearly in view in **vv. 9ff.**

- (2) The followers of Christ who resisted the beast.

The problem – there is no scriptural support, and it creates other questions, such as, why aren't they separate from the citizens of the New Jerusalem?

- (3) They are those who belong spiritually but not racially to the 12 tribes of Israel.

The problem – the implication is that only saved Jews get to occupy the New Jerusalem.

- (4) They are new earth nations – these are new nation under new kings, that were saved before the new creation. These new nations were sort of grandfathered into the new creation.

The problem – the separation of people and earthly kings seems to be a hold over from the fallen earth and inconsistent with a place where only God and the Son are on the throne.

- (5) They are unsaved people during the eternal state. They are listed in the book of life, but do not know Christ.

The problem – unsaved people who were not cast into the lake of fire and get to enjoy the perfection of eternity.

- (6) These are the nations that did not join with Satan at the end of the Millennium.

The problem – this ignores the sheep and goat judgments. Why are they separated from the New Jerusalem?

- (7) This indicates universal salvation. The citizens of New Jerusalem were saved before the Great White throne judgments and “the nations” were saved after. The “nations” get the blessings of eternity but not the blessings of New Jerusalem.

The problem – it ignores the passages about the eternality of hell. **vv. 14:10-11; 20:10, 14-15.**

- (8) The terms “nations” and “kings” are for the purpose of emphasizing the universality of the knowledge of God, but the details of their identity are ultimately meaningless.

The problem – there may be some truth in speaking of the universality of the knowledge of God. But this view chooses not to explain the difficulty.

- (9) These are saved Gentiles who were not part of the church. _ They must have been saved during the Tribulation or the Millennium.

The problem – this view separates the children of God into favorites and non-favorites. It also sort of punishes those who were born during the Millennium, even though they became believers, they were not part of the greater family of God.

- (10) This is saved people who survived the Millennium, who did not rebel, who enter the eternal state without glorified bodies but are made like Adam and Eve before the fall.

The problem – there would be people without glorified bodies (second class citizens) in heaven.

- (11) These are simply the believers from every tribe, language, people, and nation that are part of the eternal kingdom of God. These are all believing Gentiles.

Every nation and every class are united and fully equal in the eternal kingdom.

In Revelation, the “nations” has referred to the pagan and rebellious Gentiles (eqnoj).

The words “nations” and “kings” most often refer to pagans.

“Nations” See Rev. 11:2, 9, 18; 14:8; 16:19; 17:15; 18:3, 23; 19:15; 20:3, 8

Other uses of “nations” See Rev. 2:26; 5:9; 7:9; 14:6; 15:4

“Kings” See Rev. 6:15; 16:12, 14; 17:2, 10-18; 18:3, 9; 19:18, 19

Other uses of “king” See Rev. 15:3; 17:14; 19:16

It seems best to see the mention of nations and kings in Rev. 21-22 as referring to believing Gentiles who are citizens of the New Jerusalem, along with believing Jews.

That is to say, that the inhabitants of the eternal city, the inhabitants of God’s eternal kingdom originate from every tribe, people group, language, and nation; and they come from every walk of life.

In eternity, all believers will be on the same level – equally children of God.

The kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

It is important to note that John switched verb tenses in verses 21:24-27 from aorist tense to future tense.

v. 24 – will walk

v. 25 – will be no night

v. 26 – they will bring

It is best to see these verses as a warning to the reader that God will heal the nations, in the eternal kingdom, everyone will honor and give glory to Him, there will be no more curse, but only those whose names are written in the book will enter His presence (which would be everyone in the kingdom - 20:15).

Revelation 21:25, *In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;*

This verse should be considered a parenthetical thought.

City gates would close at or before sundown.

The gates of New Jerusalem will never close because it will always be daytime and nothing bad can enter the city, because nothing bad exists.

Revelation 21:26, and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;

This picks up at the end of v. 24.

All people will surrender all honor to God the Father and God the Son.

See Rev. 4:10

Just as they gave their glory to God, so will all people in eternity.

Revelation 21:27, and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Continuing the warning aspect of vv. 24-27, John warns the reader that no sinner will ever enter the eternal kingdom - only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

When John says nothing unclean (or impure) can enter, he uses the strongest negation, ou mh.

Chapter 22

The first five verses continue the tour of the New Jerusalem.

John moves on to some description of the inside of the city.

He starts with a prominent feature.

Revelation 22:1, Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

The source of the river is the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The purpose does not need to be the sustaining of eternal life but is the constant reminder where the eternal life comes from.

Revelation 21:6, Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.

Revelation 22:17, The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

John 4:13-14, Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

John 7:38, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

Since there is no sea, no sun & moon, there can be no hydrologic cycle, as we know it.

Therefore the river seems to be symbolic of the eternal life we have been given.

But we must also remember that all the rules of nature that we are accustomed to are no longer needed.

The word **throne** is singular. That is both the Father and the Son are on the **throne**.

Revelation 22:2, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The tree of life, this takes our minds back to the Garden of Eden.

This is the heavenly/eternal counterpart.

The fruit of the tree is the reward for the Christian.

Revelation 2:7, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

yielding its fruit every month = since there is no time in the eternal state, this is anthropomorphic language to help us understand that the tree is constantly bearing fruit.

Whether the fruit is actually fruit as we know it or something entirely different – it is always in bloom and it does more than a fruit tree.

and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. = Since there is no longer a curse (v. 3), and therefore no longer illness or injury, no more hurt feelings, no arguments or animosity, no pride, and no rivalry, there is no need for healing in the sense that we typically think of it.

The word that is translated here **healing**, is the Greek word *qerapeian*, where we get our word "therapy."

That is that the leaves, whether consumed or merely by their existence, promote well-being and a kindred heart among all of God's people.

Revelation 22:3, *There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;*

There is no curse! God's rule will never again be challenged or questioned. His desires never again be hindered by Satan or man's sinfulness.

There will be nothing that will be able to hinder perfect, unbroken fellowship with God!

Our relationship with God will still be a Master/slave relationship.

He will forever be our benevolent Master and we His loyal and willing slaves.

How we serve Him remains a mystery to us.

Notice *the throne of God and of the Lamb* and *His bond-servants will serve Him* = the first phrase listing the Father and the Son, the second phrase is singular – promoting the unity among the triune God.

Revelation 22:4, *they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.*

Like Adam & Eve did in the Garden before the fall. We will see God!

What an amazing privilege it will be to be in the immediate presence *of God and of the Lamb*.

Additionally, His mark of ownership will be on our *foreheads*.

I don't know what that will look like – but we will wear it with great joy.

Revelation 22:5, *And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.*

John reiterates that there is no night and no need for any light source, because the glory of God is all the light that will ever be needed.

Who are *they*?

Revelation 3:21, He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

2 Timothy 2:12a, If we endure, we will also reign with Him.

What an amazing place the New Jerusalem will be!

Its indescribable beauty will only be surpassed by the glory of the presence of God and the Lamb!

VI. The Epilogue (22:6-21)

As John wraps-up this letter, he hears from an angel and from Jesus.

Much of the epilogue reaches back to chapter one and ties the commission given to John at that time to the completion of that commission.

There are three main components to the closing message:

- Affirmation regarding the truthfulness of the message.
 - vv. 6-7, 8-9, 16, 18-19
- Warning regarding the imminence of Christ's return
 - vv. 6-7, 10, 12, 20
- Warnings to the unbeliever
 - vv. 11-12, 15, 17-19

The purpose of recording the information in this book is more than offering prophetic information about the end of the cursed world – it is also a warning and an invitation to the unsaved to turn to Christ before it is too late.

Revelation 22:6, And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

The angel is affirming that everything that John saw and heard was true.

The message comes from the Lord, who is the God of the spirits of the prophets.

Just as God spoke to other prophets, such as Daniel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, He has also spoken to John.

God sent his angel to show his slaves the things which must take place soon.

This goes back to chapter one.

See Rev. 1:1

Revelation 1:1, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John,

This creates nearly identical book ends.

Revelation 22:7, "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

Jesus speaks of His imminent return for His church. Christ can return for His church at any moment and all of the events written in this book will begin to be fulfilled.

There is no foretold prophetic event that must take place before Christ will come for His church.

For that reason, those who listen to [the words of the prophecy of this book](#) will be [blessed](#).

See Rev. 1:3

Revelation 1:3, Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Again, this book is every bit evangelical as it is prophetic.

Revelation 22:8, I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

John confesses that he became so overwhelmed by what he has seen and heard that he actually falls to the ground and worships the angel who was speaking to him.

See Rev. 1:17

Revelation 1:17, When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

Revelation 22:9, But he said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God."

The angel quickly and (probably) gently rebuked John and reminded him that he is a fellow servant (sundouloj).

- He is a fellow servant of John, of other N.T. prophets and of all those who listen to the book.

For that reason, he must [worship God](#) only.

Revelation 22:10, And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

[Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book](#) = Make it available and accessible to all people, right away.

Send it off to the seven churches immediately.

See Rev. 1:11

Revelation 1:11, saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

This is not to be kept a secret.

It is too bad that so many preachers and commentators have made the book so complicated and have convinced Christians that the book is scary and cannot be understood.

Revelation 22:11, "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."

At first glance this looks like a fatalistic verse, as if there is no hope for the sinner; or that people are either born sinners or righteous.

However, it is best to take this as a warning that once the Lord returns, it will be too late to change.

If one is to be transformed from filthy to faithful – that will have to take place while there is time. Since no one knows the day or the hour when the Lord will return – they need to seek the Lord's forgiveness and transforming power now.

This points to the immediacy of Christ's return and is a warning for sinners to make an immediate choice to repent.

Repentance is an option, but it must be done while one is alive and before one takes the mark of the beast, otherwise it will be too late.

Hebrews 9:27, And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,

Revelation 14:9-11, Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Revelation 22:12, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

The warning continues and is accompanied by a promise.

The promise is that Jesus is coming soon and will reward His followers according to their works.

The warning is that Jesus is coming soon and will judge the unsaved accordingly.

Revelation 22:13, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

See Rev. 1:8, 17

Revelation 1:8, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:17, When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

See notes on 21:6 - God is saying that He is the beginning and the end of all things.

This speaks of His ultimate sovereignty.

God started it all and it all ends with Him.

Revelation 22:14, Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

There are blessings for those who come to saving faith while they can.

They are the ones who have access to the tree of life and may enter the gates of the city!

See Rev. 7:14

Revelation 7:14, I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 22:15, Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

This is not saying that there are sinners wandering around outside of the New Jerusalem.

It should be seen as a warning to the reader.

To be excluded from the eternal city is to be in the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:15, And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8, But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

This is a warning to those who are currently on the outside of God's kingdom – not yet kingdom citizens.

They cannot continue in their sinful rebellion against God and think they will be able to sneak into the city where nothing spiritually corrupt can enter. All the people listed in this verse will be in the lake of fire.

This verse is NOT teaching a future reality during the eternal state; in the sense that unbelievers gather outside the eternal city and are held there for their own protection.

Rather, it is a warning to the contemporary reader to examine themselves.

Revelation 22:16, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

First the angel testified to the truth of what has been said, and now, Jesus, Himself, is testifying to the truth that He sent His angel to testify of these things.

Revelation 1:1b-2, and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw.

Jesus gives this information to the churches to inform the faithful and to warn the "fakers."

I am the root and the descendant of David = **Isaiah 11:1**, Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

the bright morning star = It could be as simple as a reference to the fact that the morning star signifies the dawning of the new day, so too, the arrival of Christ signifies the dawning of a new era.

Balaam when trying to curse Israel, prophesied instead, **Numbers 24:17**, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.

To the overcomers in Thyatira - **Revelation 2:28**, and I will give him the morning star.

Possible references:

Matthew 2:2, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

2 Peter 1:19, *So* we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

Revelation 22:17, The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

This is the last invitation of the Bible!

The invitation comes from the Spirit and from the church (the bride).

The invitation comes from those who hears the truth of the word of God and understands.

Let the unbeliever come and drink the free gift of the water of life!

Revelation 7:17, for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

See Rev. 22:1

Revelation 22:18-19, I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

Q – does this warning apply only to Revelation or to the entire Bible?

There are similar warnings in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 4:2, "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32, "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.

Proverbs 30:5-6, Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. ⁶ Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

Clearly there were books of the Bible written after Deuteronomy and Proverbs.

So, the warning applies at least to the book of Revelation.

However, Since John is the last living apostle and he is the last to have apostolic authority, and since these are among the last verses of the last chapter of the last book to receive an apostolic endorsement (needed for the canonization of the New Testament), it seems appropriate to apply the warning to the entire Bible.

Additions & subtractions are strictly prohibited!

Any type of “prophetic utterance” would alter the Bible in some way – either adding to it or taking away from it.

The warning would cover any would-be prophet or theologians who are trying to drive an agenda (as opposed to those who are trying to fit the existing text into a theological framework.).

Anyone who seeks to change what the Scripture says is doing battle with God and will lose.

The one who adds to the Scripture should expect to suffer the plagues listed in this book – specifically the type of wrath that God spells out in the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments.

The one who seeks to erase anything God has declared, anyone who weakens the warnings, who omits part of the message will be guilty of such an egregious sin that he/she will prove that they are an unbeliever and will remain so.

To intentionally change God's Word – to add one's own word or to decide that God has said too much, is the height of arrogance and is to appoint oneself as God's editor.

Revelation 22:20, He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Jesus affirms that He will come and John voices his desire for that to happen!

Amen = so be it! Come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:21, The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

John closes with blessing that all who read will be the beneficiaries of the Lord's *grace*.

This was a common ending to a New Testament letter. (13 books of the NT end with a similar statement – 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Phil. 4:23; Col. 4:18; 1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 3:18; 1 Tim. 6:21; 2 Tim 4:22; Titus 3:15; Phile. 1:25; Heb. 13:25)

Come. Lord Jesus!