Revelation - Introduction

The Bible is far more than simply a record of human history, of God's dealings with mankind, it also contains a great many predictions of the future - these predictions are what is called **Prophecy**.

Most of the prophecies in the Bible have already been fulfilled, but the book of Revelation contains prophecies that relate specifically to **the time in which we are living today**, and they also reveal what is going to happen to this world **in the very near future**, so it's vital that you and I clearly understand the prophecies contained in this book.

The book of Revelation is thought by many people to be a sealed book that is impossible to fully understand. It contains descriptions of strange beasts, dragons, angels and other mysterious creatures and symbols that seem to bear little relation to reality. Yet the very name of the book, **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**, shows clearly that God has always intended the book to be understood. The name "**Revelation**" means a "**revealing**", in other words something that was hidden is now being revealed and explained.

More than this, God has pronounced a blessing on anyone who reads the book of Revelation, or even hears it read...

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

So in this web site we are going to undertake a detailed verse-by-verse examination of the book of Revelation. You will be amazed as you discover how wonderfully Bible prophecy has been fulfilled in human history, how it clearly reveals that God has always been in ultimate control of human events, how it reveals exactly where we today are in the stream of time, and also how it reveals exactly what is about to happen in our world!

However, before we begin our journey, we must recognise that when seeking to understand anything in the Bible, there are two overriding principles that must always be followed. Firstly, we must ask God to send His Holy Spirit to guide and direct us - without this divine guidance we cannot hope to correctly understand these wonderful revelations:

John 16:13 *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:"*

Secondly, we must lay aside any preconceptions we may have and simply let the Bible interpret itself. We do this by following the Bible's own rule of interpretation, given in the book of Isaiah:

Isaiah 28:13 *"But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little;"*

What this means is that the correct way to interpret the Bible is to compare scripture with scripture and take the weight of evidence. This is how to avoid developing false theories about what the Bible teaches, and so this is what we will do - we will let the Bible interpret and explain itself.

So now let's begin the exiting journey as we start to unlock the mysteries contained in the amazing book of Revelation...

Revelation - Chapter 1

Parallels between Chapter 1 and Chapters 4/5

Before we begin our examination of chapter one, we should notice some important parallels between this chapter and chapters four and five.

Revelation 1	Revelation 4/5
1:10 - John was in the Spirit	4:2 - John was in the Spirit
1:10 - Heard a great voice as of a trumpet	4:1 - The first voice as of a trumpet.
1:12 - Seven golden candlesticks	4:5 - Seven lamps of fire
1:4 - From the seven Spirits which are before His throne	4:5 - Before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God
1:6 - Hath made us kings and priests unto God	4:4 - Hast made us to our God, kings and priests
1:12-17 - Description of Christ	4:2-3 - Description of God
1:19 - Write the things which...shall be hereafter	4:1 - I will show thee things which must be hereafter
1:20 - An introduction to the seven churches	5:1-5 - An introduction to the seven seals

When looking at these parallels, it is easily seen that chapter one like chapter four is an introduction. In chapter one we have the introduction to the vision and prophecy of the seven churches, and a description of Christ. In chapter four we have the introduction to the throne of God the Father most glorious in his own person, and with his glory outshining all other things. Chapter four is an opening to chapter five and the vision and prophecy of the seven seals. In chapter five the description changes once again to that of Christ, but this time as the Lamb, so, on this basis we can see that chapter one is an introduction to the seven churches and chapter four/five is an introduction to a new vision dealing with the seven seals.

Now let's begin our examination of chapter one.

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

God gives the message to Jesus and Jesus gives it to His angel (possibly the angel Gabriel, as in the book of Daniel) who gives it to the apostle John, and John takes this message and gives it to the seven churches.

Revelation = Reveal.

Angel = Messenger. The word "angel" comes from the Greek word "*angelos*" which means "messenger".

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

The name Jesus, or names for Jesus, or pronouns referring to Him, are found 140 times in the first three chapters of Revelation, so this is indeed the revelation of Jesus.

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

Blessed is he that reads – it's clear that God has placed a special blessing on the people that read the book of Revelation, who hear and keep the things written in it. The word "read" does not mean a casual reading, but to search...

John 5:39 *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."*

Revelation 22:10 *"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."*

Revelation is for us to understand, it's the meat of the word. Blessed is he that reads and hears – we must listen to what it has to say. **Hear/Listen** = Knowledge.

Philippians 3:8 *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"*

God's word must be the most precious thing to us - the pearl of great price.

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

While these seven churches existed in Asia in the days of John, we will also see they are used symbolically within this book, and represents the time period of the Christian church until the return of Christ. Thus there are three applications that can be made. The first is the literal letter to the literal church, the second is the application showing the time period of the Christian church until the return of Christ, and lastly certain aspects we find in these messages apply to the condition of our own individual Christian experience. This will become clearer as we go through the messages, as we will be mainly looking at the symbolic and personal aspects.

The number seven in the Bible indicates completeness (e.g. the days of creation week), thus we are looking at God's complete church from the time of the Apostles till the end of time. Another example is that the Son of man was standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks/churches (verse 13). If taken literally, Christ is only amidst seven of His churches and leaves the rest to fend for themselves, as there were more than just seven in this area; Colosse, Troas, and Miletus were some. A more appropriate way of looking at it is that Christ is in the midst of His Church all through its history until the end of time. Thus showing the symbolic aspect.

Also, most of the events brought to view in the book of Revelation happened far beyond the lifetime of these churches, thus showing that you cannot limit this to just them alone.

Peace - Only Jesus can give us peace...

John 14:27 *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

Grace and Peace - These two words appear commonly in the salutations of the early Christian epistles, and together apparently constituted a characteristic form of greeting in the Apostolic church. See Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2 etc.

Seven Spirits of God - These seven spirits are referred to as seven lamps of fire, (Revelation 4:5) and seven eyes of the Lamb (Revelation 5:6). The association of the seven spirits here with the Father and with His Son are their attributes, their character as we see in Isaiah. The designation of the number seven also reveals the fullness and perfection of His gifts and operations by which he works through man.

In Isaiah 11:1-2 we find seven attributes of the spirit listed:

- Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him.
- Spirit of wisdom.
- And understanding.
- Spirit of counsel.
- And might.
- Spirit of knowledge.
- And of the fear of the LORD.

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

John 18:37 *"...that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."*

First begotten of the dead - Jesus is also called the first begotten of the dead.

Romans 4:17 *"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations), before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."*

Thus Christ was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the earth.

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

It was by virtue of this fact that Moses and others could be raised from the dead before Christ had even died.

Jesus loves us and has sacrificed so much to wash us from our sins in His own blood...

Romans 5:8 *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

And we are to come to Him just as we are.

1 John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

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

This is the essence of Christianity – being is not the result of doing – but doing is the result of being. God says you are my child therefore you should act like it. God reaches out and makes us His child, we are kings and princes of God.

Revelation 5:10 *"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

Ancient Israel was to be a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

Exodus 19:6 *"And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."*

They were to teach the other nations around them the truth and to offer up sacrifices. They failed miserably and were rejected as God's chosen nation.

Matthew 21:43 *"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."*

Peter picks up the verse in Exodus and applies it to the Christian Church, or spiritual Israel.

1 Peter 2:9 *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;"*

Therefore those that have surrendered all to Christ and are washed in His blood become kings and priests. If we overcome Christ will grant us to sit upon His throne and rule with Him throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

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

Romans 8:14-17 *"14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*

We to are to offer up sacrifices, but they are spiritual sacrifices.

1 Peter 2:5 *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."*

These being anything from prayer, thanksgiving and the most important, the sacrifice of self.

Romans 12:1-2 *"1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

Because every Christian is a priest, he may approach God on his own behalf, without the mediation of another human being, and on behalf of others. For Christ is the only mediator between God and man, and thus these sacrifices are acceptable to God by/through Jesus Christ our great high priest.

Also then, as priests, we are to "go and teach all nations".

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

Here is the promise of His soon coming and every eye will see Him.

Behold he cometh with clouds - Clearly a description of Christ coming in the clouds of glory the second time.

Luke 21:27 *"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."*

Matthew 24:30 *"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

The clouds are a reference to Christ's form of transport as seen in Daniel.

Daniel 7:13 *"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him."*

Christ's form of transport is none other than the angels.

Psalms 18:10 *"And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind."*

Psalms 68:17 *"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."*

Therefore, the angels are represented by the clouds. This fits with His second coming as He comes with all His angels.

Matthew 25:31 *"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:"*

In the distance they look like a cloud because of their glory.

Every eye shall see him - When Christ returns it will not be a secret event, but every person shall see Him coming.

Matthew 24:27 *"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."*

Also Christ is to come in the same manner as He left, visible to the eye.

Acts 1:9-11 *"9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."*

Also:

2 Peter 3:10-12 *"10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."*

And:

Psalms 50:3 *"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him."*

They also which pierced him - Those who were part of the murder of Christ will be resurrected to witness his return. Zechariah says:

Zechariah 12:10 *"...they shall look upon me whom they have pierced..."*

Those who condemned Him will also see Him come.

Matthew 26:64 *"Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."*

All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him - Those who during their lives did not seek the Lord, who did not prepare to meet Jesus at His return, will wail when they realize that they have consumed their opportunity upon the things of this life, and worse than wasted their time. The things which were so important to them only moments before become the object of their hatred as they realize that they are lost. They wail because they are lost and they know that it was their own choosing. Christ has freely offered salvation, but they have rejected it.

Isaiah 2:19-21 *"19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. 20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; 21 To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."*

Isaiah 33:14 *"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"*

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

He is the beginning and the end.

Alpha and Omega - The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It is a phrase that is the same in meaning as the first and the last.

Revelation 22:12-13 *"12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."*

Which is, was, and is to come - Previously we have seen that this applies to the Father and His eternal immortal aspect. But now we need to take it in context of the preceding verses and the One mentioned in them. Doing this we see that this is a reference to Jesus. So we can see that Jesus and the Father share certain names, as they have the same divine character.

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

I John your brother and companion in tribulation - John is now revealing the place and circumstances of this revelation. He associates himself with the universal brotherhood of the Church and also reminds them that he shares in the tribulation that each of them faces because of their faith in Jesus Christ. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 14:22 *"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us."*

2 Timothy 2:12 *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"*

In the kingdom...of Jesus Christ - We are counselled to come before the throne of grace.

Hebrews 4:16 *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

If you have a throne you have a kingdom, thus it would be the kingdom of grace. John recognized that each person who had committed their soul to Jesus Christ was a part of the kingdom of grace which was established by the gift of Jesus on Calvary. However, this also looked forward to the coming of the kingdom of glory at the Second Coming when the eternal kingdom would be set up.

Matthew 25:30-31 *"30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:"*

And Patience - John reminded the believers that tribulation and temptation bring patience and hope in the Christian experience.

James 1:2-4 *"2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*

Romans 5:3 *"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;"*

The Island of Patmos is only mentioned in the book of Revelation. It was a barren rocky place and it was there at around the age of ninety that John was banished for about eighteen months. Prior to this somewhere between 81 AD and 96 AD, the apostle John was banished to Patmos by the emperor Domitian for preaching the gospel at Ephesus. His gospel declared that Jesus is Lord and God, but Domitian required to be called Dominus et Deus "Lord and God". Something had to give!! So to shut him up, Domitian had John thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil before the Porta Latina at Rome, but John suffered no injury! The only way that Domitian could get rid of him was the same way he got rid of his wife - exile.

Was in the island of Patmos - A small island in the Aegean Sea about 50 miles southwest of Ephesus. It measures about 10 miles north to south and about 6 miles from east to west at its widest point. This is a rocky and barren island, supposed by contemporaries of John to be a penal colony. (Pliny's Natural History written about AD 77)

For the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ - Thus we see that John's only "crime" had been his faithfulness to the scriptures and the testimony of Jesus Christ himself. Domitian, the Roman Emperor, had exiled John to Patmos after failing to remove him by boiling him in oil, thinking that he had disposed of the preacher of righteousness. People today remember the name of John, but how

many remember the name of the emperor who banished him to Patmos? This gives a good fulfilment of Proverbs 10:7...

Proverbs 10:7 *"The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot."*

Jesus reminded His disciples, when upon earth, that the servant is not greater than his lord, and if they persecuted Him, they will also persecute them.

John 15:20-21 *"20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."*

We are told that all who choose to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

2 Timothy 3:12 *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

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

In the Spirit on the Lord's day - There is often a dispute about which day this is, but in Mark it tells us:

Matthew 12:8 *"For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."*

Mark 2:28 *"Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."*

Here it says Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath and John was a disciple of Jesus, and John here in Revelation was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. In Exodus it tells us:

Exodus 20:10 *"But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:"*

John was communicating with God and keeping the Sabbath day Holy – the Lord's Day.

John 14:15 *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

John loved Him so he was keeping His commandments.

Unlike any other day in history, God rested from all His work upon the seventh day, blessed it, and sanctified it.

Genesis 2:2-3 *"2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."*

Jesus asks us to remember His commandments.

Exodus 20:8 *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."*

In the time of Isaiah the Sabbath was called by God, My holy day.

Isaiah 58:13-14 *"13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."*

Voice as a trumpet - The description of the voice of God often associated with the communicating or speaking of God to man.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"*

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

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

Alpha and Omega, first and the last - This is a reference to the Godhead once again, to the fact that it is the beginning of all things and the end of all things. In this context it is Jesus who is speaking, not the Father (see verse 12-15) ,thus all the attributes of Deity are equally attributable to Him.

What thou seest write in a book - John was encouraged to write down the visions in order that others might read them also. Thus this message in the Revelation is not John's ideas or opinions but the words of God as shown to him in vision.

The Seven churches - The sequence here given is the way a messenger from Patmos would take a message to the seven cities in geographical order. However, the context reveals that the seven Churches are the first in a long series of sevens found throughout the book of Revelation. This includes the Seven lamps of fire (4:5) seven Spirits (v4) seven candlesticks (v12) seven stars (v16) a book with seven seals (5:1) seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb (5:6) seven angels with seven trumpets (8:2) seven thunders (10:4) a dragon with seven heads and seven crowns (12:3) a beast with seven heads (13:1) seven angels having seven vials containing the seven last plagues (15:1, 7) a beast with seven heads, which are stated to be seven mountains and seven kings. (17:3, 9-10). Thus this repeated use of the number seven with so many different symbols implies that it too is to be understood in some sort of symbolic sense.

Throughout the scriptures the number seven when used symbolically is generally understood to indicate completeness and perfection. When applied to the seven Churches then, this number implies that the literal and local descriptions of seven of the Churches of Asia fulfil conditions that will be found in the Church of God from that time until the end, as can be seen by the parallel prophecies outlined in further chapters.

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

Voice - John turned to see who was speaking to him, who it was that was the Alpha and Omega, who was the first and the last, who was asking him to write down what he was to see.

Seven golden candlesticks - According to verse 20 the seven candlesticks represent the seven churches, to whom the revelation is addressed. Seven candlesticks were found in the first apartment, the holy place, of the sanctuary/temple in Israel. The fact that Jesus uses sanctuary imagery reminds us that Jesus is interceding in the heavenly sanctuary at this time. Thus John sees Christ in the first apartment, the holy place, of the heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly sanctuary was a copy.

Hebrews 8:1 *"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."*

After Jesus ascended to heaven to begin his high priestly ministry he entered into the holy place, or first apartment, delineated by the presence of the candlesticks. This description also gives us the time frame for this prophecy that John is about to write down. Throughout the book of Revelation John uses sanctuary terminology that gives us insight into the time frame described. Thus the period here outlined begins at the time of Christ, as he begins His ministry in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and continues until His second coming. Thus the starting date for this prophecy is 31 AD when Christ ascended into the holy place of the sanctuary in heaven. (See Daniel 7).

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

In the midst - The son of man, which is Jesus Christ, is seen in the midst of the candlesticks, that is the seven churches.

Matthew 16:13 *"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"*

Matthew 28:20 *"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

He is with us always, not in some distant place, but among his people.

When the glorified Christ manifested Himself to John in celestial splendour, He still appeared to him in the likeness of a human being. Christ took on humanity for all eternity to come. What a comfort to know that our ascended, glorified Lord is still our brother in humanity, yet at the same time also our God!

Down to the foot - A long garment is a symbol of dignity.

Paps - That is, the breast.

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

White hair - Here it is not attributed to age and loss of power but as Proverbs says it represents His power and glory.

Proverbs 16:31 *"The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."*

Eyes of Jesus - In His eyes are found mercy, love, kindness, compassion, but also His eyes can read our heart, our innermost thoughts.

Hebrews 4:13 *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."*

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

Feet of Jesus – Brass. The most enduring brass the Romans had was called Corinthian brass, which was made up of copper, gold and silver and was considered of more value than gold.

Isaiah 52:7 *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"*

Do we take good tidings to others?

Voice of God – Like thunder and many waters, but also majestic and mellow, sweet and kind. God has the ability to speak and to touch your heart and mine.

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

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

Seven stars in His hand – According to verse 20 the seven stars represent the "angels" or "messengers" of the seven churches, and the messengers are the leaders or ministers of the churches. The word "*angelos*" in Greek simply means messenger, whether human or divine.

Faithful teachers of the gospel are represented as stars that shine forever.

Daniel 12:3 *"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."*

And false teachers are called wandering stars.

Jude 13:13 *"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*

"These spiritual stars shine as long as they remain in the right hand of Christ. When they stray from Him they become wandering stars, and eventually disappear in the darkness." ***The Seven Epistles of Christ, by Taylor G Bunch, page 99***

Thus Christ has the leaders of His Church in His hand of strength, so long as they remain faithful to Him.

Sharp two-edged sword - This is a reference to the sword of the Spirit, which is a symbol of the Word of God.

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

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

It is this same sword with which He smites the nations.

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

Just as the Word of God has two parts, the old and new testaments, likewise the sword has two edges. If we fall on this two-edged sword we are cut to the heart. Anyone who has been converted has felt the cutting of this two-edged sword. That's what Christ does for us. Since the two-edged sword

proceeds from the mouth of Christ, this tells us that the Word of God, the Bible, is Christ's own words - He is the One who inspired it all to be written.

2 Peter 1:21 *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

At His second coming Jesus will again be seen with a sword coming out of his mouth, and so it is up to us to decide which sword we desire to cut us to pieces. The sword now will convert us, and cut away our self and sin, but at His second coming it will cut us into pieces, as probation will have already closed. Which will it be for us?

Countenance as the sun - The glorified Jesus shone as the sun when it shines in its strength, for He is the Sun of Righteousness.

Malachi 4:2 *"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."*

The sun is here used to show the extreme brightness of Christ's glory, His righteousness. Peter, James, and John, when at the mount of transfiguration, saw Christ's face shine like the sun.

Matthew 17:2 *"And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."*

Saul expressed the same words when seeing Christ on the road to Damascus.

Acts 26:13-15 *"13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."*

At His second coming we will see the Lord with the glory He shared with the Father from eternity past.

John 17:5 "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

Right hand - This is usually a description of power and authority.

Psalms 20:6 *"Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand."*

Psalms 18:35 *"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great."*

Matthew 26:64 *"Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."*

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

Fell as dead - As was Daniel's reaction in the Old Testament, so was John's in the New Testament.

Daniel 10:5-10 *"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished*

brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground."

At the presence of Christ, all strength left the human who was so privileged to behold the glorified Lord. But Jesus laid His right hand of strength upon John to strengthen him, and encourages him not to be afraid, for He is the beginning of all things and the ending of all things, as found in Isaiah 44 - it is Christ our redeemer.

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

He that liveth, was dead, alive forever - This is a clear description of Jesus who lived on earth, who died for the sins of mankind and then rose to live forever more. Death has no more dominion over Him.

Romans 6:9 "Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, [a]is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him."

Have the keys of hell and death - Satan claimed to have the power or dominion of death. But Christ took part in the same flesh and blood as we and, by His death, broke that dominion, thus being able to hold the key/power/authority over hell, which is the grave and death, this enables Him to raise us from the dead.

Hebrews 2:14-15 "14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

The wages of sin is death.

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Christ never sinned.

1 Peter 2:22 *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:"*

Therefore, death has no dominion over Him.

Psalms 68:20 *"He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death."*

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:25-26 *"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."*

Which is hell / the grave.

Revelation 20:14 *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."*

Jesus is telling John this because through the book of Revelation we see a lot of persecution of God's people. Thus Jesus is telling them not to be afraid to seal their faith with their blood, for He has the keys to unlock death and the grave and can raise them to immortality when He comes the second time.

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

Write the things seen, which are and which shall be - Here is a direct command to write both his past experiences with Christ, what he is currently seeing and what will be in the future, which he is about to see in the time he spends with the Saviour.

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

As we saw already, these were messages for the seven churches.

Angels = Messengers

Seven = Completeness / perfection

Revelation - Chapter 2

The Seven Churches

Chapter two begins Christ's messages, or letters, to the seven churches. Here Christ is writing to the Christian church, symbolised by the seven churches, and being God you find that He is organised and that everything takes place in order. He writes in the same format/order to all seven churches.

The letters are each broken up into seven parts:

1. Greeting
2. Identification (Christ identifies Himself)
3. Condition
4. Problem
5. Counsel
6. Promise
7. Closing (sometimes the promise and the closing are switched around)

The number seven indicates completeness/perfection; hence there are seven churches and seven parts in the letter to each church.

Each of the messages to the seven churches has three applications:

1. **To the local church** – a message given to the literal church of that time.

2. **To us as individuals** – a message given to us as a people. Paul wrote 13 epistles or letters. Out of those 13, four of them are to individuals, nine to churches, and we read these letters to find guidance and direction in our lives. So if we read Paul's letters for guidance then why should we not also read Christ's letters, which means that the letters in Revelation apply to you and to me today, just the same as they did back then.

3. **To the church age** – a particular time period in the history of the church as a whole. We should not try to tie these churches down to exact dates, but only around these time periods.

These are personal letters that Jesus wrote, and He gave them to John to give to the Churches. Imagine having a personal letter from Jesus. Well, the Bible is one long letter to those that love and follow Him, and this was His counsel to them and to us.

The Church of Ephesus

The "Desirable" Church.

31 AD to 100 AD.

Introduction

The early church age covers the period from around 31 AD to 100 AD.

The name of this first church, Ephesus, means "desirable". Ephesus was a lovely place to live and there was much about the church there that was desirable. Ephesus is on the Aegean sea, it had one of the best ports in Asia minor, ships came there from all over the world.

Now in this city they worshiped a goddess by the name of Diana, this is where Paul got into trouble because the silversmith there said that he was taking away their business by preaching about Jesus.

Acts 19:34 *"But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."*

They believed that Diana came from Heaven, she was known as the "Queen of Heaven", and they worshipped her as a goddess of fertility, and they had a temple dedicated to her, which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. In fact there were two temples built, the first one was destroyed in 356 BC, which burned to the ground on the very day that Alexander the Great was born, and later when he came to age and power he offered to rebuild the temple of Diana, but they turned him down saying they would build it themselves, which they did. It was a huge temple, 442 feet long and 225 feet wide, it had 171 pillars in it which were 66 feet high and 7 feet in diameter and made out of marble that was yellow, red, blue and white, and some historians say that the mortar they used was made of gold.

They believed that Diana was the mother of God and worshipped her as such, and as Christianity became infiltrated by paganism, in 451 AD at the council of Ephesus they declared the virgin Mary to be the mother of God, hoping that they could combine their beliefs with those of the Christians, and this is where we get the Madonna from, who today is also called by some "Queen of Heaven". Remember it was because of this worship of Diana that they became upset with Paul. The theatre in Ephesus sat 25,000 people. They had large libraries and beautiful buildings. The temple of Diana was destroyed in 265 AD by the Goths and has never been rebuilt. Their candlestick was removed from its place and today there is no longer a port there, it's all filled in. God certainly removed their candlestick out of its place, as He said He would.

The work of the gospel at Ephesus was attended by wonderful people. Priscilla and Aquila were two of the first ones to work in Ephesus, and remember they also met and worked with Apollos.

Acts 18:26 *"And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."*

This was the beginning of the church in Ephesus. Paul stayed and preached there for three years, and the church there grew tremendously. When Paul left, Timothy came and pastored the church, and in his old age John also took care of the church in Ephesus. Remember that Jesus committed His mother to John, so Mary too must have lived in Ephesus. These are just some of the people connected with the church there as it grew.

Acts 19:10 *"And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."*

History tells us, and other books, that by the end of that first century there were 50 thousand believers in Ephesus alone. In Asia there were 70 million people that had accepted Jesus and were Christians. So this was a time when the gospel moved unbelievably rapidly across the world and thousands reached out and accepted Jesus as their Saviour.

Greeting/Identification

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

Unto the angel - this probably means the minister, the leader of the church, which is why the leadership has such responsibility, because they are the ones many people look to for the truth. Although we should study and discover truth for ourselves, many don't.

Write - John is told to write these things so that the churches can read them, and these letters were then read out loud in these churches, and without doubt copies would have been made of the letter, of the things Christ had to say to them as a group of people.

We can see clearly that the One speaking is Jesus.

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

Candlesticks = Churches.

Messengers = Ministers/Leaders.

Christ here is dressed differently from a priest. The golden band around His chest shows that He was not only a priest, but also a king. Christ does not take after the Levitical priesthood but after the priesthood of Melchisedec, who was a priest-king.

Genesis 14:18 *"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God."*

Hebrews 7:11 *"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?"*

The candlesticks that represent the church are candlesticks, not candles, therefore they do not have light of their own, just as the church does not have light of its own but only the light it receives from Jesus. We are to be lights, and God is waiting and willing to pour out His Holy Spirit upon us so that we might show Jesus Christ to those around us.

As Jesus walked among the candlesticks it depicts His care and concern for His people. It's good that it is Christ that walks among them and does not turn this over to man. Christ is the head of the church and He watches over it.

Condition

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

In every one of the seven churches Christ says "I know your works". This shows that Christ sees that they hate evil and that they laboured for the Lord, working for Him. Do we set time aside to labour and work for the Lord as they did? To work for the Lord takes patience, because God's timing is not always our timing, He does things on His schedule, not ours. We have to learn to wait on the Lord. Today, like then, there are often people who are claiming to be apostles of the Lord. How do you know if they are or not? Well, what they speak has to be in agreement with God's word, and unless you spend time in the word of God, how will you know if they are speaking the truth, and if you don't know then you are open to deception - by their fruits you shall know them.

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

We too must labour for the Lord, there will be times when we get tired, when we feel we can't put one foot in front of the other, but don't get weary of serving the Lord - serve Him, walk with Him, follow Him. Paul, who spent time working in that church, understood that something was going to happen in Ephesus, as he was talking to the church in Acts 20, he says savage wolves would come among them that would not spare the flock.

Acts 20:29-30 *"29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."*

This not only happened in Paul's time but in every age, over and over this happens in churches throughout the world, as the Devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

Problem

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

Here Jesus says, the worst thing is that you have left your first love. This has happened time and time again - a church is on fire, it brings people in, baptises them, and then the Devil comes in and causes something to happen which turns their attention away from what they are doing, and they start doing something else. Then someone in the church, maybe even a minister, will say, oh evangelism doesn't do any good, and they go out the back door faster than they came in the front door, no point in doing evangelism any more. The moment that happens, that church has lost its first love, and forgets what she is there for - nothing can be worse than losing that first love. The church is the bride of Christ, but if the bride has lost her love then there is nothing left in the marriage. She can say all she wants about the relationship, but if she has lost her love for her husband then it's over, it's ruined. To have lost your first love is a terrible condition.

Counsel

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

Jesus says, go back to your first works, repent from where you have fallen. It's hard sometimes to get that first love back if we have lost it, but Jesus says go back to your first works, and by doing so, we find the way to get our first love back. We must repent and do what Jesus has called us to do.

Do you remember giving your heart to Jesus and you knew that everything was right between you and the Lord, do you remember the love that filled your heart and soul? Do you remember the time when you were baptised and came up out of the water, the joy that filled your heart, that all your sins had been washed away because you were clean in Jesus Christ, the joy that filled your life. This is what He is talking about, this is what you and I must come back to, that experience, and do the first works.

Witnessing to all those around you about Jesus and what He had done for you, your first love, you couldn't keep quiet, you couldn't get enough of the word of God as He showed you new things from His word day after day, spending time in prayer talking to the Lord, and time just flew by, having a love that burns within your heart and soul, this is what God is talking about when He says do the first works. Now this does not come by feeling, it comes by getting back to the word of God, by spending

time in prayer with Him, and as you begin to do these things that first love will come back and then will come the feelings.

People, individuals, you and I, need to take a good hard look at ourselves and understand where we have fallen. There is so much commercialism and distraction in this life that most Christians today have no idea what their condition is, and that they are in need of repentance, and they can't change and they can't turn around until they wake up to what their condition really is. We need to understand from where we have fallen and come before the Lord and repent, and then do the first works. Talk to the Lord about it and He will change your life and make you different. This is what He does, and this is what the church of Ephesus needed, and today we as a church need it desperately because most of us are lukewarm, certainly not on fire.

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

Nicolaitans – who were they? Some say they were started by Nicolas who was one of the first deacons.

Acts 6:5 *"And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:"*

He was a Proselyte, which is one who has converted from one the religion to another. However we can't be sure of this, but what we do know is that the Nicolaitans believed that your spiritual condition had nothing to do with your physical condition, therefore, they believed that you could do anything you wanted to physically and that it would have no relationship to your spiritual condition, that fornication and adultery etc. had nothing to do with your spiritual condition.

This also went along very much with what was coming out of places like Alexandria and Rome, in which they were teaching Gnosticism - this took the word of God and lessened it, they took the teachings of Paul that preached Christian liberty, they took his teaching and turned it into a licence to live contrary to God's law.

Do we have this today? Yes it's called **antinomianism** - this is where you can accept Christ but this has nothing to do with how you live after that - you can accept Christ and live like the Devil but still be saved. God's word does not teach this, and that was the problem. Christ said; I hate this doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

God gave us His law and this law is ten eternal principles that are to guide and direct our lives, and by our surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives we are to live in accordance with God's law.

Matthew 5:17 *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."*

Jesus said I did not come to do away with the law but to live a perfect life in accordance with the law, that's what the word "fulfil" means, not to do away with, but to fulfil it.

Matthew 5:18 *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."*

The law of God is eternal, it's not going to change, and you and I must just put our lives in the hands of the Lord and trust Him, that He will live in us and help us to live according to His law.

Closing

Revelation 2:7 *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; ..."*

Here Jesus says, listen to what I am telling you, because it's very important that you understand what I have to say, and in this case He gives His closing before He gives the promise, and now He gives the promise.

Promise

Revelation 2:7 *"... To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."*

In every one of the seven epistles of Christ He says "I know your works", but He also says in these seven epistles "to him who overcomes". We must bring our lives into conformity with God's will, through the working of His Holy Spirit in our life, day by day growing in grace in the knowledge of the Son of God. And He says to the person that does overcome, "and I will let him eat from the tree of life".

The Tree of Life

You and I have the privilege of following Him and the privilege of eating of the tree of life today.

John 6:63 *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*

God's word, the Bible, is the word of life, this is the tree of life to you and me today. The same energy that created this world is the same energy that's contained in the Bible, and if you and I will spend time in it, it can be the tree of life to you and to me.

Revelation 22:2 *"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."*

This is what God wants to do for each one of us.

Isaiah 66:23 *"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."*

All God's people will come and gather together to eat from the tree of life.

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

This is the message from God to the church of Ephesus.

The Church of Smyrna

"Sweet Smelling Savor".

100 AD – 323 AD.

Introduction

This second church covers the period from around 100 AD – 323AD. It represents a period of time in the history of the church during which the church endured extreme persecution.

The name of this second church, Smyrna, meaning "sweet smelling savor", came from the name given to a plant, which grew about 6 feet high. The interesting thing about this plant was that the more it was crushed or beaten, the more fragrance it would release, which is very important in relation to this particular church.

The name also comes from the word Myrrh, and remember the wise men bought to the infant Christ gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. They bought Him gold because He was a King, they bought Him Frankincense because He was a priest and they bought Him Myrrh that was to anoint Him for burial because they knew that He would die. And Myrrh was used many times in the burial and embalmment of a person. So this church was to get its name from that aspect because, like the plant, it was to be beaten and crushed in order to release its fragrance.

The scriptures speak of Smyrna as a very special group of people. There is no reproof in Christ's message to the church of Smyrna. Christ has reproof for all the churches except Smyrna and Philadelphia - for these two churches there is no reproof from Christ, so this is a very special group of people at a very special time. So we need to look very carefully at this church to see the parallels between this church and the way the church should be at the end of time.

Greeting/Identification

Revelation 2:8 *"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; ..."*

Smyrna lies about 40 miles north of Ephesus on the Aegean Sea. As we learned, Ephesus had a wonderful port but is no longer there. Smyrna also had a good port, which is still there today, and ships still come there from all over the world. With the other churches that we will be looking at, there is not much left of them, but this is not the case with Smyrna. Today it is the Turkish city called Izmir.

This city was extremely loyal to the Roman emperor. Rome was everything to the city of Smyrna, they worshipped the emperor, in fact the Roman senate built a temple to the emperor Tiberius which was in Smyrna. We learned that in Ephesus they had a theatre that would seat 25,000 people, the one in Smyrna seated 20,000 people, so we see that these places were not little towns but large cities. In the middle of Smyrna was a mountain called mount Pagus, which was about 500 feet high, and on top of this was a temple. There was a row of houses that went all the way around mount Pagus and it gave the appearance of a crown, and so the city was referred to as the crown of Iona. The houses that were around this mountain and their streets were referred to as the golden streets.

What we need to understand is that Christianity was not favoured here, it was seen as a threat. We learned before that by the end of the first century there were 50,000 Christians in the city of Ephesus. In Asia minor at the end of the first century there were 7 million Christians, so Christianity was invading all parts of the Roman empire and this was seen as a threat to the empire and to its religion. So this city of Smyrna was not friendly toward Christians, and was actually doing all it could to wipe them out - this is what the Roman empire intended to do, it intended to wipe out Christianity. And every emperor from the time of Christ to 300 AD persecuted Christians, and this is why in this city the Christian people would suffer for what they believed, because the Roman empire was trying to get rid of them. And this is why the Christians that lived here did so at the peril of their lives.

Revelation 2:8 *"... These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;"*

Which was dead, and is alive - This is very important. He is telling the people who lived there with the risk of their lives being taken every day, (and this was not something they heard about or read about, that somebody was suffering persecution on the other side of the world) every day their own lives were in real danger.

So here Christ identifies Himself as the one who was dead and came back to life. He says to them; Trust Me, I can offer you life, what happens in this world and in this life is not the end. Unfortunately for many people today who don't know the Lord, this life is all there is, but for the Christian there's a whole lot more, and Jesus said; I am living proof that there's something beyond this life.

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

Jesus says; I have been here, I lived here and died here, but I rose from the dead and you can count on the fact that I can raise you to life on the last day, you and I can base our faith on what He says.

So the church in Smyrna was a group of people that understood and accepted Christ, but also knew that in accepting Him it put their lives at risk. Now, we could compromise and live, and there are a lot of people today who are willing to compromise, but that's not what these people were doing.

Condition

Revelation 2:9 *"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) ..."*

Jesus says I know your tribulation and poverty but you are rich, they may have poverty in this life but they would have assurance of eternal life, riches beyond compare.

Works – we learned before that the church of Ephesus had trouble with the Nicolaitans and their corrupted beliefs, and these beliefs came in and influenced the other churches, and the same corrupted beliefs influence us today. Many people today say that works don't have anything to do with Christianity. Well, works alone certainly won't save us. But in every one of His letters Christ says; "I know your works".

1 Peter 2:12 *"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."*

Why were these Christians spoken of as evil doers? Well it was because they would not worship the emperor, they would not go along with that, they were actually going the other way, swimming upstream, not worshiping the emperor, not worshiping other gods, and this is what those pagans considered evil. But here Paul says; let your works speak of the life that you live, people ought to know you as someone who is good, who does good things no matter what - your works ought to glorify God.

James 2:18 *"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."*

There is no such thing as following Jesus without good works, the fruits of the Spirit, and if our lives are not producing such good works then there is something wrong. Good works always, always result in tribulation, because the Devil doesn't like them, and it's the Devil that causes these tribulations, not God. The Devil does not like the witness of a Christian life, and so he brings about tribulation.

Philippians 3:10 *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"*

The person that has never been afflicted in their life has suffered the worst affliction there is, for it is tribulation, even though we don't like it and don't want it, that is necessary to change us, and to change our character. Men are like rivers, if they follow the course of least resistance they wind up crooked, therefore we must learn to suffer as Christ suffered.

James 1:2 *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;"*

How many of us do this?

James 1:3-4 *"3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*

Remember Paul and Silas were singing in prison.

Acts 16:25 *"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."*

We need to learn to have this same experience. Any time there is tribulation it always produces poverty, because the things you have are taken from you, but the scripture tells us that poverty is not a bad thing.

How are you rich? Because your Father is rich, then you are rich! Just because we may not have all the things in this world that people class as riches, if you have God in your life you have riches untold. He goes on to say, I know those who profess to believe but don't.

2 Corinthians 8:9 *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."*

Christ left Heaven and riches beyond anything that you and I can comprehend, He gave this all up and became poor so that we might become rich. We can see this clearly when we look around us, we see people who feel they have no need for God, they have all the comforts all the various entertainments etc. and they feel they are in control with no need for God. On the other hand in poor countries they flock to hear the word of God. You see poverty is not a bad thing, and we have to be willing to give it all up for something infinitely better.

Matthew 10:37-38 *"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."*

We have to be willing to give it all up for the Lord, we cannot have this world and Jesus too, we have to make a decision, Christ or the world, we can't have both.

Proverbs 13:7 *"There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches."*

We are rich in grace, in faith and patience, rich in meekness and humility, rich in courage and Christian fortitude, these are all fruits of the Spirit from God, that we can be rich in.

Revelation 2:9 *"... and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."*

Blasphemy – This has to do with the covenant God made with His people.

At the time of the Smyrna church there were basically three religions – Paganism, the Jewish religion, and Christianity. The Jewish religion joined the Pagans in persecuting the Christians, so there were people among those in the church at Smyrna who said they were Jews but they really were not. Now they were Jews physically, but they were not what the scriptures counted as Jews spiritually. You see the Jewish people had made a covenant with God, that if they followed God, obeyed His Commandments and followed Him, then He would be their God and they would be His people. They

had entered into that covenant with the Lord. So these people that professed to be Jews, He says they are not, that they are actually of the synagogue of Satan. But for the Christian; if we belong to Christ then we are Abraham's seed/offspring.

Galatians 3:29 *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

What is the promise? That you obey my voice and keep My Commandments, and I will be your God.

John 14:15 *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

John 15:10 *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."*

So for you and I as followers of the Lord, we come under that covenant, and that's what He's talking about.

Problem

Revelation 2:10 *"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: ..."*

Notice Jesus did not say that we are not going to suffer, but He said don't fear that which you are about to suffer. In John 6 when Jesus had fed the five thousand and He had crossed the sea and gone over to Capernaum, the Jewish people had followed Him and they asked Him how He got there. Jesus in the course of the conversation said; I know why you're looking for Me, because you want bread for your stomachs. And they said; Well tell us what we have to do to believe you, and He said to them; To believe in Me you must eat My flesh and drink My blood. They said; what? Eat Your flesh and drink Your blood? They didn't understand. He went on to say to them; The words I speak to you they are Spirit and they are Life, and they said; That's a very hard saying! And many of His disciples walked with Him no more, in fact so many of them left Him that He turned to the 12 and said; Will you also leave Me? And Simon Peter said; Lord, only You have the words of life, to whom else shall we go?

The problem is that today there are so many Christians that are fair weather Christians, they want to accept Christ but they don't want any hard times, no suffering or tribulation, and so they construct beliefs that are contrary to scripture, telling themselves that they won't have any of that, because they are nothing but fair weather Christians, and this particularly applies to you and I today who are living right down at the end of time. We need to understand that we are going to suffer persecution, there is no question about that, this will happen to Christians in the last days, the question is, is our faith strong enough to stay with Christ? We must be willing to step out and take a stand for the Lord.

Back then the Roman Empire didn't care who you worshiped, because they were polytheistic, they had many, many gods. What Rome was concerned about was that they had your allegiance, so they had a god called Romeadia, and once a year you would have to come and pick up some incense and drop it in the fire before this goddess, and say Romeadia and if you did that they gave you a certificate of allegiance to Rome. But the Christians were not willing to do this, so they took them to the arenas and made human torches out of them, and fed them to the lions, and that's our heritage, that's what the word Christian means, and you and I must stand for our faith and for what we believe.

Tradition tells us that Polycarp ordained the apostle John as the Bishop of the church of Smyrna. Polycarp gave his life standing before the judge, as the judge asked him if he would renounce his belief in Jesus Christ, Polycarp said these words: "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me wrong, how then can I blaspheme my King, who hath saved me?" And they burned him at the stake.

Christ in His message to Smyrna said they would have tribulation ten days. Here are just some of the martyrs for Christ during that period of time:

Polycarp - 158 AD
Justin Martyr - 165 AD
Irenaeus - 202 AD
Cyprian - 258 AD
Victorinus - 304 AD

These are just a few of the Christians who died during that period of time by the thousands, who gave their lives for what they believed.

Ten days of persecution. Now all the emperors persecuted, but the last one, Diocletian, was the worst, and for ten years from 303AD – 313AD he persecuted the church unmercifully, that's why the scripture says for ten days - a day representing a year.

Council

Revelation 2:10 *"... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."*

Christ promises a crown of life to those who are faithful to Him even at the cost of their own lives.

We are given three things. We are given the gift of eternal life, which is free. We do not deserve it, we can do nothing to earn it, it is given to us from the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ and its free.

We are given a crown and our crown is given to us based on our works.

James 1:12 *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."*

We are also given an inheritance.

Matthew 5:5 *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."*

The earth, given to us by our Father the King, and He is rich.

Closing/Promise

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

We have to listen carefully to these messages because there are great lessons in them for us today. We all face the first death, unless the Lord comes and redeems us before that time. The first death is not the worry, it's the second death that we have to be concerned about.

Revelation 20:6 *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."*

Revelation 21:8 *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

This is the one that you and I do not want to be a part of.

Revelation 20:14 *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."*

The Lord Jesus Christ redeems us from that, that's what He died for, so that there would be redemption from the second death.

1 Corinthians 15:55 *"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"*

Christ redeemed the righteous from the sting of death, we are not faced with that. In Jesus there is life, not death.

1 John 5:12 *"He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."*

If we want life, no matter who we are, it is only found in Jesus Christ, it is not found in this world. All there is in this old world is death, but in Christ there is life, and life eternal.

1 John 5:13 *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

We can have eternal life in Jesus, we may suffer persecution, we may suffer hard times or poverty, but there is life, marvellous life, in Jesus Christ.

The Church of Pergamos

"Height" or "Elevation".

324 AD – 538 AD.

Introduction

This third church covers the period from around 324 AD – 538 AD.

During this period the severe persecution which the church had endured began to subside. This had the effect of compromise slowly beginning to creep into the church, and pagan beliefs and practices began to be mixed with the truth of God's word.

The name of this second church, Pergamos, means "height" or "elevation", and came from its location. About 50 miles to the east of Smyrna is Pergamos. As you get to Pergamos which is flat, all of a sudden there is a mountain that rises thirteen hundred feet straight up, almost perpendicular, and on top of that mountain was the city of Pergamos.

In the city of Pergamos they worshiped Rome as many did, they also worshiped Greek gods, and they had a temple there for the god Zeus which they worshiped. In that temple of Zeus they also worshiped the god Escapulus, the serpent god, and they had connected with this a school that practiced and taught medicine - they had the symbol of the serpent wrapped around the pole that we see for medicine today and that's where this symbol comes from, from the god Escapulus, which has been handed down to us.

In this city was one of the greatest libraries, which held over two hundred thousand manuscripts - it rivalled the great library of Alexandria in Egypt, so much so that Ptolemy the 5th was afraid that it was going to outdo the one in Alexandria. Now at that time people used papyrus to write on, which was made from the papyrus reeds in Egypt. Alexandria decided that it would no longer export these reeds and that way it would prevent the library at Pergamos from being a rival to Alexandria. But the people in Pergamos, because they could no longer get papyrus to write on, used very thin animal skins to write on, which was called Pergamos, but as time went on it became known as parchment, one of the best writing materials that exists today. These two libraries were rivals for many years until along came

Mark Antony, who took the library at Pergamos and gave it to Cleopatra in Egypt and so the contest finally went to the library in Alexandria.

Greeting/Identification

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

Now the serpent God was worshipped in ancient Babylon, but when the Meads and Persians conquered Babylon we find that the priests of Babylon fled to Pergamos. This resulted in the pagan gods and the associated pagan beliefs which had been worshipped and practiced in Babylon being transferred to Pergamos, which continued right on through to the Romans, and the Romans then worshipped many of these same pagan gods.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 *"4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"*

We have to cast away every thought that is contrary to the Word of God.

Christ has this two-edged sword for thrusting and cutting and sometimes this is not very pleasant because it requires that we must get rid of some things - it cuts them out of us.

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

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

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

The word of God is powerful. In the Bible is contained the same energy that was used to create the world, that's why the Bible, like no other book, can change our hearts.

Condition

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

Once again God says; I know your works. He makes reference to the temple of Zeus – Satan's throne, where the Satan god was, the serpent god. The Christians at this time were faced with severe persecution, a time when Rome had vowed that she would destroy Christianity, so these people were living in the midst of this persecution and there were all kinds of things there that were going on contrary to Christianity - heathenism, paganism, everything immoral, this is why Christ says to them; you are where Satan's throne is, I know where you dwell. We read here of Antipas who was just one of the many thousands who were martyred for their faith there because they would not worship the Roman Emperor or the pagan gods.

Now when we read about Smyrna it said they would have persecution 10 days, and we saw that this covered the period in which the Emperor Diocletian persecuted the church for 10 terrible years. Well when Diocletian died in 331 AD, Constantine came to the throne. He could see that the Roman Empire

was becoming Christian, because by this time almost half of the Roman Empire was Christian in belief and he could see that there was no use in continuing the persecution because the Christians were only growing, and so he stopped the persecution.

If you can't beat them by persecution then you can try to beat them by popularity. So now with Constantine the church was in favour, no longer was there persecution. Constantine said that he had seen a cross in a vision, and he said he was going to become a Christian. We don't know that he ever did, but he took his army out and marched them through the river and told them they had all been baptised and that they were now Christians.

Also in 321 AD he signed the edict of Constantine in which he took the day of worship for the pagans, Sunday, the day of the sun, Baal worship etc. and made it the day of worship for the Christians. And now you find that many of the rites and beliefs of the pagans begin to infiltrate the church. So all of a sudden you had baptised paganism. And the church, which before would not tolerate any of this and had been persecuted for it, which had stood up and said; no we won't go along with this, it's against the Word of God; now the church just got wrapped up in the arms of paganism as she reached out and took them into the fold. And Christianity then became the state religion. When we look back we can see the cause and effect:

1. Spiritual power causes persecution.
2. Persecution causes compromise.
3. Compromise results in
4. Apostasy.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 *"3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"*

This is how you and I as Christians are to live. The Word of God is to be our sword, our weapon, not guns or bombs but the Word of God, living our lives like Jesus Christ, submitting our spirit to His as He dwells within us.

Problem

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

This is not talking about Balaam in flesh and blood, Balaam has been dead for over two thousand years, but you may remember the story of Balaam. Balak had hired him to come and curse Israel, he took him up on the mountain and they looked over the camp of Israel and he told him to curse the people, and Balaam had him offer sacrifices, and Balaam prayed, but instead of cursing them he blessed them. Balak said that's not what I paid you to do, so he took him to another place and again showed him the camp of Israel, again they offered sacrifices and again he blessed them. So Balak took him to a place where he could not see the camp and again offered the sacrifices and said; now, curse these people; but he blessed Israel a third time.

Now when Balak found he could not curse them, he told Balaam; just go down and mingle with them, invite them into your camp and let them eat with you and dance with you, let them have a good time and they will soon worship your gods and become like you.

Numbers 25:1-3 *"1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel."*

This was what the church of Pergamos was warned of, the doctrines of Balaam, they were being invited to partake of the pagan worship and all the things that were going on there. That was just what had happened to Israel back with Balaam and the same thing was now happening to the Christians in Pergamos. You and I today find ourselves in that same place, if we stand for what we believe then people accuse us of being intolerant, not sociable, and legalistic. But God says; stand, don't give up your faith, follow what the word of God says. We are to do this in a kind, gentle compassionate way, but we should not let things change us, we should not compromise, but instead we should stand by Gods Word.

The problem they had in the church at that time was also the problem they had had in Jerusalem. This was what the council of Jerusalem was all about. The fact that there were some people that were willing to say; this is where we stand; and there were other people arguing against it. You had some of the Jewish converts to Christianity that were arguing for certain things, and so they had the council of Jerusalem, and when the council was over, this is the advice that they gave to the churches back then and to Pergamos which was also involved in this:

Acts 15:28-29 *"28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."*

This was the problem they were trying to involve the people in, all of their pagan rites and sacrifices. You and I are in the world, there's nothing wrong with that, but God expects us to be witnesses while we are here, and we need to ensure that the world is not in us. God has called us out, and we must walk with the Lord in what we do, in a kind and gentle way.

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

Now in the church of Ephesus we saw this doctrine about the Nicolaitans, this had invaded the whole country. Followers of the Deacon Nicolas, who taught that what you did physically had no effect upon you spiritually (a lot of this came from Gnosticism which had come out from Alexandria Egypt and Rome). And there were people in the church there at Pergamos that were going along with this. This also involved the belief that we have already seen called Antinomianism, which takes the law of God and says the gospel of Jesus Christ frees me from the law and I do not need to be concerned about keeping it, I am under grace and not under law.

However, Jesus says I hate this, because He Himself is the embodiment of God's law, and you and I must be willing to walk in accordance to God's law, we cannot tread it under foot. God makes it clear that the law is something that you and I need to keep and follow. And since the physical had no effect upon you spiritually, then you could do anything you wanted and it did not affect your salvation, so if I just accepted Christ I could live like the Devil and still be saved. But that is not what the scripture teaches, and unless Christ comes into our heart and changes us then there's something wrong.

Let look again at the name of this church - Pergamos. It's formed from two Greek words:

"*purgos*" meaning "castle" or "tower", "exalted" or "lifted up" - the city and the temple was on a mountain that was thought to be impregnable and could not be taken.

"*gamos*" = marriage.

So we find that the name of this church meant "exalted or lifted up through marriage", so what we have here is a symbol of the union between church and state. This is where the state reached out and took the church in and they became married. Paganism has always been that way. The leader or Emperor was not only in charge of the state but also of the religion, and here the state had reached out and taken in the church and the state now is not only the political head but also the spiritual head, and this is what happened during the time of the Pergamos church. The state now looks to make religion more popular, and so you have the church infiltrated with all kinds of pagan beliefs and customs, and even to this day many, many things that are practiced by Christians have come about solely as a result of the infiltration of paganism into the church.

For example, forty days of Lent has come from the ancient pagan practice of forty days of weeping for the pagan god Tammuz - they just took a pagan custom and Christianized it into the church. What do Easter bunnies have to do with the resurrection of Christ? Well this comes from the worship of the pagan gods of fertility, and much more. Christmas, Valentines Day, on and on the list goes, and today people just accept these things as part of the Christian religion, which in reality they are not - you will not find any of these things in Scripture. You and I need to get back to the Word of God and follow what it says.

Counsel

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

Jesus says change, repent, if you don't I will fight you with the sword of my mouth, the sharp two edged sword, the Word of God. The Bible and its teachings has captured nations, it has changed entire countries, it is not just a history book or a book of literature, it is the divine Word of God, and this is what we must be willing to follow.

John 12:48 *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."*

So we will be judged by this book, the Bible. If we have opened our hearts to the Lord and followed His word then we will be in good shape because Jesus will represent us, and if Christ represents us, then we can't lose.

Closing/Promise

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

We need to make sure that we understand what God is saying to us. Right at the beginning we saw that this was the Revelation of Jesus, His message to us through John. So, when it says hear what the Spirit says to the churches, who is it taking about? Well it goes straight on to say - To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. It is Jesus that gives us the Spirit, no one else, not a third person, but Jesus, He is that Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17 *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

Now regarding the hidden manna, it says in 1 Corinthians 10:

1 Corinthians 10:3-4 *"3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."*

The manna was bread, Angels food as it was called. When the manna fell it was early in the morning. When they woke up it was on the ground and they had to gather it because when the sun came up it melted.

Exodus 16:15-21 *"15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. 16 This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. 17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. 18 And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. 19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. 20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. 21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted."*

Psalm 78:23-25 *"23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, 24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. 25 Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full."*

The word of God, the Bible is manna.

John 6:48-51 *"48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

That's a promise, if we eat of the word of God we will not die, we must learn to eat the word of God, if we have time to eat then we have time to read God's word. This is the hidden manna, the lifesaving bread of Heaven.

Matthew 4:4 *"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*

A white stone with your new name on it. Now, back then, that was the way the judges made decisions, if you were acquitted they put out a white stone if you were condemned it was a black stone, also the white stone had to do with the ancient Roman custom of awarding white stones to the victors of athletic games. The winner of a contest was awarded a white stone with his name inscribed on it. This served as his "ticket" to a special awards banquet. Jesus promises the overcomers entrance to the eternal victory celebration in heaven, the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Revelation 19:6-9 *"6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."*

You and I often don't even know our own hearts but God does, He knows us better than we know ourselves, and to those people who walk with Him and obey Him and open up their hearts to Him and accept Him, He will give a white stone with a special name on that has to do with you alone that nobody else knows only you, because that will fit your character like nothing else you have ever known.

Isaiah 62:2 *"And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name."*

So let's place our lives in His hands, let Him change us, make us different, let Him speak to our soul, that we may be a new person in Christ Jesus. This is what He wants to do for you and for me and He will bless us in a special way as we do so.

The Church of Thyatira

"Sweet Savour of Labour".

538 AD – 1798 AD.

Introduction

This fourth church covers the period from around 538 AD – 1798 AD.

Thyatira was south east from Pergamos. Now Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos were quite good sized cities numbering hundreds of thousands of people, and they had marvellous theatres and temples. But Thyatira is not like that, it sat out on the plain and most of the people that worked there were poor labourers, people that had little money and had to work hard day by day. The longest letter that Christ wrote to the churches was to this church of Thyatira, there was more said to them than anyone else, but we have less historical information on Thyatira than any of the other churches.

We know that it was not a large city, and from the excavations they have been able to do there it seems it was some kind of an outpost with stables etc. One thing we do know about it is that they developed the colour purple and we can see this from Acts 16.

Acts 16:14 *"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."*

Purple was a very hard colour to come by. Up until the time Thyatira developed this colour they were only able to get a few drops of purple from shell fish, but Thyatira developed the colour from the madder root. Most historians and theologians agree that the church in Thyatira probably had its beginnings with Lydia's witness.

Greeting/Identification

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

Two things in this verse are different. It says; These things saith the Son of God; and this is the only place in the seven churches where that phrase "the Son of God" is used, in fact that's the only place that phrase is used in the book of Revelation. Emphasising that He was the Son of God and that their worship needed to be of Him.

Now eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; this was particularly meaningful to these people because in Thyatira they had foundries where they produced brass, so they were used to seeing flames of fire as they made the brass. We learnt that this brass was a Corinthian brass which was made up of copper and gold and silver and was considered of more value than gold, and the refining of it was a very special process.

Condition

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

Jesus says He knows their works, and really their works were quite good because He said you have service, faith, and patience. You will find that these were particular attributes, these attributes are talking about what the church members had there, they always go in pairs – love and service if you have love you will have service. If you love somebody is it hard to be of help to them, no, it comes naturally, its part of it. If you love the Lord then you will want to serve Him. Also faith and patience, if you have faith then you will have patience, you trust the person and it's not hard to be patient because you believe in them, you believe that they will do what they say they will do. And these people in Thyatira had these attributes and Christ praised them for it, He said I know your works, and He comes back to this word works twice and talks about their works particularly.

Problem

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

Now this cannot be talking about Jezebel in literal flesh and blood, because at that time Jezebel had been dead for around 1,500 years, but here Christ makes an application about her. Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, who teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication (adultery), and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Now if it's not talking about Jezebel in literal flesh and blood then how could they commit sexual immorality? It goes on to say...

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

God says I gave her a period of time to repent but she did not repent.

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

Severe warning - if they did not repent of their deeds then God would cast them into a bed (some versions say sickbed) and those that commit adultery with you.

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

Christ said He would give to each one according to their works.

Now this church age began around 538 AD. The Bishop of Rome at this time was Salivarius, he was a godly man, he loved the people and served the Lord, but he refused to go along with the Emperor Justinian in his battle with the Goths, and therefore Justinian wanted to replace him, and so when they got inside the city after one of their battles, Justinian had his general Belisarius get rid of Salivarius and replaced him with Vigilius. Now maybe Justinian never thought this would happen; but when Vigilius was made Bishop, history says that the Bishop of Rome stepped to the seat of Caesar and

seized the sceptre, and all of a sudden you find that the church which had been favoured by the state, all of a sudden became the head of the state as well as the church, and this took place in 538 AD.

Now in the story of Elijah, God told him to go and see Ahab and Jezebel and tell them if they did not repent it would not rain for 3½ years. So Elijah went and told them that they must change their ways and repent (1 Kings 19) but they did not. So Elijah said:

1 Kings 17:1 *"... As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."*

And it did not rain as Elijah had said for 3½ years. Now the Bible tells us that Elijah had a nature like ours, which should be encouraging to us.

James 5:17 *"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."*

Elijah understood and followed the word of God.

Leviticus 26:1-4 *"1 Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. 2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. 3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; 4 Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."*

God says we are not to have idols and bow down to them, we are not to put them in the place of God. He says He wants us to keep His Sabbaths and reverence His sanctuary, He wants us to keep His commandments and walk in His statutes. God said if we will do this then we will have rain in season. But what was Israel doing? Just the opposite.

Ahab had come to power, and any time in history when a man has risen to power like Ahab who led God's people to turn away from the Lord, God has always had an Elijah. This is what it says about Ahab in 1 Kings 16:

1 Kings 16:30-33 *"30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. 31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. 32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."*

So he turned from the god of his fathers and all the counsel he had been given and began to worship Baal and became worse than any of the Kings that were before him, he did everything contrary to what the Lord had asked of him, so Elijah was sent to tell him it would not rain.

But here in Revelation chapter 2 it can't be talking about the literal woman Jezebel in flesh and blood, it has to be talking about something else. Let's look at the time she was given to repent.

How long did God give Ahab and Jezebel to repent? 3½ years. In Ezekiel 4 it tells us that a day in prophecy represents a year:

Ezekiel 4:6 *"And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year."*

Now in a biblical year there are 360 days (Genesis 7). So if we take 360 days and multiply this by 3½, this gives us 1,260 days, or 42 months. So 3½ prophetic years equals 1,260 literal years, following the day for a year principle.

Now if you add 1260 years to 538 AD it takes you to 1798 AD - this was the period of time that God gave spiritual Jezebel to repent - we have just stated that this cannot be talking about the literal woman Jezebel in flesh and blood, but rather it must be talking about something else.

In the texts below you will see that a woman in Bible prophecy represents a church:

Jeremiah 6:2 *"I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman."*

Ephesians 5:25 *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*

Jezebel represents a bad church, one that has turned from God's true principles. This is also a persecuting church and this church persecuted God's people ruthlessly during this period from 538 AD to 1798 AD - the period was known as the Dark Ages. The church which persecuted God's people during this period was Papal Rome. You can read about the atrocities committed by this church during the Dark Ages for yourself on many websites or by watching our videos on Daniel and Revelation.

I will kill her children with death - Literal Jezebel and her children were to utterly perish (2 Kings 9:7-9; 10-37; 10:1-28). So too it is with spiritual Jezebel and her children. Papal Rome calls herself the "mother" Church, and continually speaks of Catholics as her "children". She also speaks of the Protestant churches as her "daughters", her wayward children who will someday return home, and when they do a hearty welcome awaits them from the "mother Church of Christendom". Thus all the religious systems or Churches that separated from the Papacy but still cling to her doctrines and practices, and who commit spiritual fornication with the kings and nations by uniting with them when opportunity presents itself, are her children.

All the churches shall know - So the doom of all the offenders would be known, or manifested, to all the Churches. But when will they know? At the time when the second death is inflicted upon this great whore and her children. This will be at the end of time when people from all ages will be able to see the judgment meted out on those who refused to repent of their abominations and chose the way of death.

I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts - God would have us know by the judgment on the whore Jezebel that He has an all-seeing eye like flames of fire, that searches the reins and hearts of men. There is nothing that is not disclosed to Him, we cannot hide anything from Him. He sees what we think we hide and he knows what we think we have covered (1 Samuel 16:7, Psalms 7:9, Hebrews 4:13).

Give unto every one...according to your works - Christ will reward every one according to the works that have been, both the righteous and the wicked (Psalms 62:12). This reward He brings with Him (Matthew 16:27, Revelation 22:12).

Now the opposite to a bad corrupt church is a pure church and Christ talks about the pure church as His bride:

Ephesians 5:31-32 *"31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

In Revelation 12 we have a good woman – or a good church, but in Revelation chapter 17 we have a woman of a different nature, the scriptures describe this woman as a bad woman, and it tells of some of the things that she does and this is Jezebel, the same characteristics, and this is the Jezebel that's being talked about here in Revelation 2:20. How does she commit sexual immorality? The book of James tells us:

James 4:4 *"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."*

When we do something to lessen the teachings of God's word, when we go contrary to what the Bible says, that is spiritual adultery; we are adulterating the word of God. Secondly we are being unfaithful to the relationship, therefore, I am committing spiritual fortification. And Jezebel and Ahab were leading the people away from God's word, not keeping His Commandments, not walking with Him and following Him and this is what they were doing that was classed as immorality, and in Revelation 2 this woman Jezebel, which represents the church at that time was leading people away from God's word. And when a church says you don't have to do these things and teaches contrary to what God's word says, that is spiritual adultery, and God said that she was guilty of committing spiritual adultery.

Revelation 17:4 *"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:"*

The church had been accepted by the state, the state had opened its arms and made Christianity the religion of the state, and so the church took into itself all the beliefs and customs of the pagans and bought them into the church and baptised them and put them out as Christian rites and beliefs, and you find that the whole teaching of God's word was adulterated and changed.

This cup in her had full of abominations – things like changing the Sabbath to Sunday, the Trinity, Holy Water, Sprinkling, Mass, Christmas, Easter; all those had their origin in paganism and were taken into the church and handed to the people as a Christian rite and a Christian custom, but God says this is contrary to My word, this is not what I want My people doing. There has to be a clear line drawn between the world and Christ, you can't merge it, you can't take in Balaam and the women of Moab and mix with them and still do what God wants you to do. You just cannot take in the world and all that it has and claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ, they are not compatible, they will not fit one with the other, we have to be willing to stand on the word of God and not be moved from that point, and when we do that, then we are doing what God asks of us. This was a very, very hard time.

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

But God is merciful, long suffering, and He waited for this church to change for 1260 years, but she would not change the way in which she was going, and so we move into a period in history called the Dark Ages, also referred to as the Middle Ages. It's interesting that the term "middle ages" is used, because this was the middle church of the seven. And when it talks about casting the children into a sickbed, this was a horrible time, it was unbelievable what those poor people endured and suffered during that time in history.

The gospel had grown and expanded so fantastically that by 500 AD the scriptures had been translated into over 500 different languages and it had spread across the world. But just 100 years after this there was only one language that the scriptures were written in that was available, all the others had been crushed, and the only language in which the scriptures were available to any man or woman was Latin, and the vast majority of people could not read Latin, and so the word of God was taken from the

people and the whole world moved into the Dark Ages. One of the reasons this period of time was called the Dark Ages is because it was a time during which the word of God was supressed, it was taken from the people and chained up in churches, and so the word of God was not able to shed its light on the people - the absence of light results in darkness.

Now there were some believers that did not want to go along with the beliefs and practices of the apostate church, and so they moved out into the wilderness, into the mountains. These were people like the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Huguenots; they moved out and held on to what they believed, and the scriptures speak of that because it gives this counsel:

Counsel

Revelation 2:24-25 *"24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come."*

Here God says those of you who are willing to stand, and have not known the depths of Satan so to speak, hang on to what you have till I come - what a marvellous promise. Those people who stood up for God's word, and many gave their lives for it, He said; just hold on.

Promise

Revelation 2:26-28 *"26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star."*

Hang on, continue to stay faithful and I will give you the morning star. A wonderful promise that God would give to His people. Jesus is this morning star.

2 Peter 1:19 *"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"*

The morning star tells us that night is ending, the day is coming, about to break. When Jesus through His Spirit dwells in our heart and we ask for His guidance, we can pick up our Bible and suddenly it comes to light, things that we have never seen before become clear and we can see and understand the wonderful revelation and promises of His Word.

Revelation 22:16 *"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."*

When Jesus comes into our life there is no other like it, darkness dispels and love and light replace it. Nothing in this world compares to Jesus, He is altogether the light of this world and we can be illuminated by what He gives to us.

Speaking to the people of that time that had gone through the dark ages and faced so much He said I'm going to give you the Morning Star, and true to Gods word it begins to take place, in the fifteen hundreds. We have the Morning Star of the Reformation coming on the scene of action, all of a sudden the light begins to break, they begin to see things they had never seen before, those that had been in darkness now have hope.

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

Now you have people like Wycliffe who come along and begin to translate the Bible into the language of the people and this begins to bring back the teachings of God's word and they begin to see the beauty of His word and what it has to say.

We fear today that many of us have lost the beauty of God's word, we don't see how wonderful it is and how beautifully the truths of God's word all fit together. If we don't see this then we are missing something that is very precious and real a priceless pearl. Wycliffe once again made Gods Word available to the people, and they tried to kill him, they arrested him and were going to burn him at the stake, but he died before they got him to the stake.

Then along came John Huss, he took the writings of Wycliffe and as he began to read them he could see things like he had never seen them before, and because he was faithful and preached God's word and stood up and said this is what is right, they burned him at the stake.

His fellow companion Jerome stood up and said this is God's word and they put terrible pressure upon him, they threw him into prison and treated him horribly and put him under such adverse conditions it is hard to believe. They told him he had to recant, and in a moment of weakness he did, but then when he thought about it he said I can't do that, and he stood firm and they then gave him the same death they gave his friend, they burned him at the stake.

The morning star had risen, they had seen it and a few had caught hold of it and said yes, we are going to follow Gods Word and out of that the reformation began to take place. Along came men like Luther, who stood up and showed the errors of the church and said this is what God's word teaches, and he nailed his ninety five theses to the door of the church.

Then came Knox, a great, great preacher standing for what God's word says. Calvin teaching that God was a God of sovereignty and showing the nature of God. Then along came Zwingli and began to preach. These men were reformers, they stood no matter what and preached the word of God as the light of the reformation broke and moved across the world.

Closing

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

This church of Thyatira went through a terrible period of time, a time that was dark, a time of no light, a time in which people were treated like animals, they were even referred to as animals. A time in which the Bible was taken and chained to library walls and the people were told that they were too ignorant to read it.

Today we are not treated that way, but we too have been so invaded by so much commercialism, TV invading our home, cares of the world, that we don't have time for the Word of God. We don't spend time in it, and although it has not been taken away from us, what difference does it make if we don't pick it up and read it, if we just leave it laying there, if we don't pick it up and read it and meditate on God's word, then what difference is there?

If our life is no different than the person who doesn't know Jesus, if someone can't see by what we do that we are disciples of Jesus, if they can't see a decided difference, then there must be something wrong. Others should see that we walk with the Lord and that He is all in all in our lives. Let the light that only Christ can give break forth into our lives today.

Revelation - Chapter 3

The Church of Sardis

"That Which Remains".

1700 AD to 1798 AD.

Introduction

This fifth church covers the period from around 1700 AD to 1798 AD.

Step by step we are going through the different Churches. We started out with Ephesus, which had the problem that it had left its first love. We then looked at Smyrna that went thought a great amount of suffering and yet they had no rebuke, Christ talked about what they had done and told them to be faithful, there was no rebuke for Smyrna.

We then looked at Pergamos, a Church that finds itself elevated, and we see the world and the state coming into the Church. Then we looked at Thyatira and we found out that as the world moved into the Church, much of what she held, she lost, she faced the beginning of the reformation.

The name of this fifth church, Sardis, means "that which remains" and this is very important because of the situation of the Church at that time. From Ephesus to Smyrna along to Pergamos we have come all along the cost of the Aegean Sea. We then come to the east and a little south of Thyatira. Now we are moving a little farther east and a little father down, to Sardis. But when you come here to Sardis all of a sudden you come to a large mountain, mount Tmolus which rises 6,700 feet, and as you approach this mountain, up on the side of the mountain about 1500 feet up you find the city of Sardis. This was a Lydian city, built around 1100 BC, and it became the capital of the Lydian empire, it was an extremely wealthy city and really governed that whole part of the world at that time from Lydia.

The route up to Sardis was almost perpendicular, the only way you could get to Sardis was through a narrow passage which was easily guarded and it was considered impregnable, you could not possibly get into it. The problem is that when you think your city is impregnable then you have a tendency to be over confident, and when Cyrus and the Medes came to where Sardis was, the inhabitants saw the army down in the valley but they paid no attention to them, thinking that they were safe in their city.

However, one of Cyrus' soldiers went over that night to the edge of the mountain and studied it trying to figure out how they might get into the city, and whilst he was there he saw some Lydian soldiers talking and laughing, and while they were there, one of the soldiers dropped his helmet, which rolled a way down the embankment, he watched as the soldier came down the embankment through a pathway that they didn't know about, he retrieved his helmet then went back up.

The soldier from the army of Cyrus went back to camp, then taking some soldiers with him they followed the route of the hidden path up the embankment, got into the city and overthrew Sardis. Sardis was over confident, and so often we too can be over confident; Church members say, we have the truth, and there is a danger in being overconfident that we don't bother to study because we think we know enough.

Also most historians will tell you that it was here in Sardis that coin money was invented, so Sardis gave impetus to the world, to its wealth and direction.

Condition

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

These seven Spirits are the spirits of God and we know that the stars refer to messengers and it is only when a person has the Spirit of God that He shines, without the Spirit that person is dead, it is God's Spirit that lights up a person's life. And it is Christ that has the seven Spirits and the seven stars.

All four of the Churches that we have looked at so far when it comes to knowing their works and the condition of the Church He has commended them but this one, He condemns, He says you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Something drastic has happened; they have lost their spiritual experience with Christ and they are spiritually no longer alive.

Now the Church age around about 1700AD really lapsed back in to the other age because of several things that happened back then that bought about the condition of the Church there in Sardis. This is the period of time when several things take place that typified the Church of Sardis and what happened as far as the Church age is concerned.

As we read about the Church in Sardis God does not say a word about there being a Jezebel or a Balaam or a Nicolaitan, the reason they are not mentioned is because as far as the Church age is concerned the reformation has cleared all that out, men have stood and preached, men like Luther who had told the people that faith came through Jesus Christ and their commitment to Him, Luther preached the gospel and cleared away all the teachings of Gnosticism. Then along came Calvin, Knox and Zwingle and as the reformation went forward they continued to clear away all the false teachings, they preached the truth and errors were cleared out of the Churches.

But the reformation was tremendously hard on the Catholic Church, the reason it was of course is because Luther, Calvin, Knox and Zwingle and all these men had preached Righteousness by Faith, they had taught the people that Jesus Christ was their redeemer, their mediator, their saviour, that He saved them and not the Church. They also preached the prophecies of God's Word. Luther spoke about Revelation and said that the beast of Revelation 13 was the Papal power, and the preaching of those things pulled the people out of Catholicism by the thousands. Just through the preaching of John Calvin five hundred thousand Christians accepted the reformation; this just gives us an idea of what was happening. Many of these people that were leaving were the intelligence of the country, they were teachers and professors and businessman, these people were coming out and accepting Christ and the reformation and talking their stand. All this that had happened had shaken the Catholic Church right down to the foundations. And because of this they called what was known as the Council of Trent.

The council of Trent was formed to get the Church back on a solid foundation and to meet the problem of the Reformation. This group consisted of Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Deacons, people that were leaders in the Catholic Church, who said that if the Catholic Church was going to get on a solid foundation it must come back to the word of God and take a stand on the word of God. But there were a group of Cardinals, Archbishops etc. that said no, if the church is going to be on a solid foundation then it has to be built on the Scriptures and tradition, they have to be equal streams of truth. Well, the Council of Trent lasted for seventeen years, and this subject was talked about, argued, debated, and written about back and forth for seventeen years. You find at the end of this time that the Archbishop of Reggio stood up and gave a presentation, and he argued and said if the Church was going to stand on Scripture and Scripture alone the she will have to go back to keeping the Biblical

Sabbath, because the keeping of Sunday is based on tradition and not on the Biblical teaching of God's word, and the Council of Trent voted that it would take a stand on Scripture and tradition together.

So, the Catholic Church took that stand. However, they still had another issue to deal with because the Reformers Luther, Knox, Zwingli and others were preaching the prophecies and saying that this system, the Catholic Church was the antichrist, so, the Pope called in two men who were priests, by the names of Ribera and Alcazar, and he said I don't care what you do but get the finger off of us, and those two priests developed two different views of prophecy. Now, if you go back and look at what the reformers were preaching, this was known as the **Historical** view of prophecy, but these two priests developed two new views, one was called the **Preterist** view and the other was the **Futurist** view.

The Preterist view takes the prophecies and puts them all in the past and says they have already been fulfilled with no reference to us today, and some today still follow this view, but it didn't really catch on.

The other priest however developed what was known as the Futurist view and what he said was everything after the 4th chapter of Revelation was in the future. Now after the study of these Churches, we are going to be at the 4th chapter of Revelation, so we need to understand what this Futurist view is, because he said that everything from thereon is in the future and that the Church was going to be raptured away and so it does not have any relevance to you and I, that we don't have to be concerned about it because we are not going to be here.

This idea caught on, and it bought about a movement that was known in history as the Counter Reformation, and it stopped the growth of the Reformation. It was never God's intention that the Reformation would stop in the 1700s, it was God's intention that the Reformation was to continue on, and the scriptures make reference to that here in the Church of Sardis. The reason for looking at all this background information is so that we can understand what killed the Reformation, because when these false teachings began to be preached, people began to have doubts about what they believed and things started to change.

The two Churches that receive no praise are Sardis and Laodicea. We live today in the Laodicea church, and if the Church in Laodicea has no praise then you and I need to take a good close look at ourselves, and ask ourselves some very pointed questions about our relationship with the Lord Jesus and where we stand, because He has no praise for Laodicea, in fact He says the Church of Laodicea makes Him sick. But first let's look at the problem with Sardis.

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

You see as time passed on and these reformers died, others that came up after them did not carry the same burden for the truth that they had, which is just like us today.

The forefathers stood on the word, it was precious in their sight. Do we feel the same way about it? We need to honestly ask ourselves this question, is it a burning passion and power in our life or is it just something we do? You see the reformers preached with a passion and conviction, but the ones that came up after them did not; this is why Christ said; it's ready to die. For I have not found your works perfect before God. It's one thing to profess to be religious - the Pharisees and Scribes appeared to be religious.

Matthew 23:25-28 *"25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26 Thou blind Pharisee,*

cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

You see external religion is not worth anything - if it does not touch our heart, if it does not speak to us, to our soul, then it's strictly on the outside. It's like a white-washed tomb, it has to be real and work in our lives in a special way.

2 Timothy 3:5 *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."*

When you visit mighty Cathedrals and Churches, all they are now are just museums, and some are graveyards, but they are all dead, not following on from their forefathers, not having the change of heart and the desire to worship Christ as the Reformers before them did. Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. No longer do they stand up and say; this is what the word of God says, this is where we stand, we won't be moved, we are not going to compromise, in fact most of them are afraid to say anything.

God says; this is not what I want my people to be, and you and I need to come back. He says be watchful, and if we are not, He will come upon us as a thief. He says, be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. If it could happen back then then it can happen today. People stood so staunchly for the truth in the days of Luther, Knox, Zwingli and Calvin and all those men, but today we are willing to compromise what we believe, or even willing to go contrary to a clear thus saith the Lord, and say it's not that important. Are we watchful, are we strengthening the things that remain?

Matthew 24:4 *"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you."*

We have to be careful to watch out and make sure that nobody deceives us. Are we spending time in the word of God, or are we too busy to have worship, are we taking time in the morning and in the evening to have worship, or are we to busy? Are we spending time in prayer, are we conversing with the Lord, talking to Him, inviting Him into our lives, asking Him to change us and make us different, are we taking time just to praise Him, this we ought to be doing.

There are a few things that the Church of Sardis did, that you and I also need to be careful of today:

1. Self-righteousness - there will be no such thing as being self-righteous if you are right with the Lord.

2. Self-importance, thinking we have the truth but not acting upon it. We would have nothing if it were not for Jesus, we have nothing to offer.

3. Pride in the possession of a knowledge of truth, which we fail to practice. A knowledge of the truth is of no use if we do not practice it. Our witness is considered nothing if we are not living up to the truth that we have. We must practise what we believe. We cannot say; this is what I believe, but this is how I act - that won't work. It is only as we put them together that people will believe us, and so we have to show and live the truth that we possess. A relationship with Jesus does not promote these things. You and I can have a name but if we are not witnessing then we are dead.

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

We have to hold on to the word of God, stay in the word, repent of sins, only by doing so will we be safe, because if you and I don't watch, we will not be ready. Don't let Christ come upon us as a thief in the night, because if He comes upon us a thief then we are lost.

Counsel

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

So Christ does not say that everything in Sardis is lost, He says there are a few who have walked with Him in white and they are worthy. These were those who stood for what God's word said they stood by the word and would not let teachings that were contrary to Scripture take them away from God's word, which is why we need to make sure that we are reading it and spending time in it and as we read and ask for the Spirits guidance. God will open up His word to us, but we have to have an open heart and be willing to let the Spirit of God guide and lead us, we need to be willing to walk with Him as He leads us, we cannot say, well I understand what that says but it's so hard for me to change, and yes, it is hard for us to change unless we ask Christ by His Spirit to do it for us. It may be hard but you and I need to surrender to the Holy Spirit and let it do its work in our lives.

Remember how you received and heard, get back into the Scripture. Hold Fast in what it says and repent. If you have believed and have left the Word of God and accepted something different from what the Bible says then you have to get back and stand on the Word of God, God is calling people to do that today.

Promise

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

What a marvellous promise – to him who overcomes, and you and I by the surrendering of our lives to the Holy Spirit day by day must be changed. Clothed in white garments, I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but confess his name before my Father and before His Angels. What a privilege to have Jesus say; Father, this is My servant, they have followed Me, they obey Me, they have given their life to Me. How wonderful to have Christ confess your name before His Father. And if He confesses our name then our name is entered in the book of life, our name is written down in glory. Amen. We don't have to be in doubt about that, if we have accepted Jesus and given our heart to Him then our name is written down in glory.

Luke 10:19-20 *"19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."*

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

He who overcomes will be clothed in white garments.

Revelation 7:13-14 *"13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

White represents purity, but it's not our righteousness, it's His.

Isaiah 61:10 *"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."*

Only Christ can cloth us, this is not something that you and I have of our own, it's the garment that Christ gives us, the robe of righteousness, He puts that robe on us and covers us and our sins are seen no more, that is what Jesus does for us. But I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Lamentations 3:58 *"O LORD, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life."*

You see it's His righteousness, not ours, that counts.

Isaiah 64:6 *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."*

Our righteousness is as filthy rags, He is the one that is worthy, and you and I are counted worthy because of Him, it's His integrity that counts, He is the only one that can stand before His Father and say I pled my blood on behalf of this person.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."*

This talks about you and me and what our part is - when it comes to salvation, that is totally and completely of God, you and I can't add one thing to it in any way shape or form. When it comes to our responsibility it's very simple - submit, obey and follow Him, He is our righteousness, He is our salvation.

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

The Church of Sardis, those that had a name that were living but were spiritually dead. Let us not be found like this.

The Church of Philadelphia

The Church of "Brotherly Love".

1798 AD – 1844 AD.

Introduction

This sixth church covers the period from around 1798 AD to 1844 AD.

The name of this sixth church means "brotherly love". This Church or this city, Philadelphia, was named after Attalus Philadelphus, his brother was the king of Lydia and there was a very strong bond of loyalty and love between these two brothers, and that's the reason this city was called Philadelphia, because it was named after this man and the brotherly love between him and his brother. This is the only Church other than Smyrna for which there is no reproof - God does not say of this Church that it was doing anything wrong, He commends them, and this is what has to happen to the Church of Laodicea, they have to come back to the experience of this Church, and so it's very important that we see what is taking place here at this Church of brotherly love.

Identification

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

We have traced where these Churches are along the coast of Asia Minor, along the Aegean sea, until we got to Pergamos, and then we went East to Thyatira and then to Sardis and if you then go 28 miles further South East you come to Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. This city was strategically located, because it actually controlled a very narrow pass by which all the trade, the mail and commerce came. There were officials in Philadelphia that controlled this pass and officiated who went in and out of the city. Of all the cities that we have looked at, this one has constant problems with earthquakes; this place has been destroyed time and time again, in fact history records how these people would live in tents because they were afraid of the aftershocks that took place after these earthquakes, and that's the reason it speaks of pillars in verse 12, these huge pillars were looked on as something that was solid and could not be moved, so these pillars had great significance as far as these people were concerned, they understood what Christ was talking about when He spoke about the Church and the people being pillars.

Can you understand what Christ is saying here? The Philadelphia church understood very well what Jesus meant by saying He was the one that shutteth, and no man openeth - you see this was the pass they controlled, as we have seen.

Now what is the key of David? Does Christ have this key?

Isaiah 22:22-23 *"22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. 23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house."*

Isaiah 9:6-7 *"6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."*

Condition

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

Interesting, He says I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it, but you have a little strength. There's a reason for that, you have kept my word, and hast not denied my name. We need to look at some information about the Church age around 1800 AD to 1900 AD and remember these dates just give us an idea of when it was because they overlap one another.

Now we need to understand what is happening here with this particular Church at this time in Church history. We talked about the reformation in Sardis and how the Counter Reformation had come in and had actually bought the reformation to a stop and the influence that it had upon the world at that time. Not only was the Counter Reformation taking place and people had lost their ferver and their witness, they had lost what they had learned in the Reformation and they now as a body, as a movement were dead. They were no longer witnessing and going out and standing up for what they

believed, all that had come to an end, their Churches had become stagnant and there was now not much happening in them, the people were no longer following God.

Now at the same time this is happening something else is going on. Because many of the people through the dark ages were suppressed, they had a very rough time, they had been slaughtered, killed by the hundreds and thousands and now many of these people had forsaken religion, and you have a rise in Europe at this time in what is called intellectualism, and this begins to come to the forefront. There is a man by the name of Thomas Payne who has written a book, and in this book he talks about God, because at that time people believed in God, but he took the scriptures to task, and his book was called the Age of Reason and this book attacked the scriptures and what it had to say. This book began to get ascendancy across Europe and people gave up their belief, and France was the country that led out in this, in fact because of this book France decided to forsake religion completely and it became a Godless country.

They took the Bible, threw it in the streets and said we will no longer believe in the word of God, and they established in the place of it the Age of Reason. And as they threw out the scriptures, they threw out a lot of other things such as morality, and if you were a believer in God you were in danger, in fact they would go out and gather up people who believed in God and take them downtown in Paris and they were guillotined, they killed so many of them that blood ran down the gutters of the streets of Paris, it was a horrible time, but this is what was going on around this time of 1796.

It became so bad that the people who believed in God and were left fled the country, and with them they took the intelligencia of the country, and France suddenly realised that she would have to do something, and so she voted religion back into the country, because they had wrecked the whole country by their Godlessness. This is at the end of the 1700s. So you had religion that was not doing anything, it was basically dead, and this is the reason that it says, I know you are weak; you have little strength, because there is not many of you left. But this was the condition of the church and we need to know this as we move along because we will find certain things that are happening.

All of a sudden, because of the Lord and His moving, things start changing. When France voted back in religion it also started to come back in different parts of the world, and you find by 1804 the British Bible Society was established. And for the first time people begin to have access to the Word of God. Then in 1816 you had the American Bible Society established, and so you find that people once again start to take an interest in the Word of God as they now have access to it. At the same time with this movement of the scriptures, men began to stand up and preach, and this had an effect upon the people. This is where you find in history that foreign missions start up, individuals like Livingston going to Africa, Moffett, Miller, Judson, Carey, Wesley. These men stood up and began to preach the Word of God. Take for example the time of John Wesley - the Churches were basically dead, and they would not even accept what John Wesley preached, in fact when he went back to the home town where his father had been a minister they would not even let him preach in his father's Church, so he went out to the cemetery and stood on his father's grave and preached. Religion had died so much that there was hardly anything there.

But these men preached the word of God, and as they preached the Word it began to grow, and foreign missions began to move around the world, and because of their preaching there was a revival that moved across the face of the earth. God said; I have set before you an open door - go out, witness, tell the people, and they did just that, they went out and preached the word of God.

At this time something else begins to happen. Men like Miller, Wolfe, Kerry, etc. started to study God's Word, and as they did so they studied the prophecies and studied the book of Daniel. As they studied, they reached chapter 8 and verse 14:

Daniel 8:14 *"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."*

As they were trying to understand this verse, they continued into the 9th chapter, where they found the Angel Gabriel explaining what it meant:

Daniel 9:23-24 *"23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. 24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."*

By putting these verses together, the idea was born that Jesus was going to come back very soon. They believed that the cleansing of the sanctuary meant the cleansing of this earth by fire (we will look at this in more detail later).

So these men preached that Jesus was coming back, and that message moved across America and Europe like a revival that hadn't been seen since the days of the Reformation. This was called the Great Advent Awakening. But out of that movement came a great disappointment, because Jesus did not come back when they thought He would, so they went back to the Bible and started to study again, knowing that it was not God's word that had failed but their understanding and interpretation of it. They then found that Jesus had gone from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place in the sanctuary in Heaven, found in Daniel 7.

Daniel 7:9-10 *"9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."*

Here they see the court scene, they see the Ancient of Days coming, they see the judgment books opened.

Right at that time when the judgement is set, you find something happening, and if we don't understand this then we must study about it because it gives us great hope.

Daniel 7:13 *"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him."*

Here we see Christ coming in before His Father, as our Mediator, High Priest; and He is going to pled our case before the Father, He has moved from the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place, this is the door that He has opened, and you and I as individuals must walk through that door into the most Holy Place because that's where He ministers on our behalf, He is in the Most Holy Place with His Father, that's where we need to come to approach Him, because He is there to make intercession for us to His Father.

So this is very important when He says I open the door, and no man can shut it. If you think He is still in the Holy Place then you are missing an important part of His ministry because this is what is going on in the Most Holy Place. In other words when Christ moved out of the Holy Place into the Most Holy

Place then judgment began. Each one of us as individuals must give an answer for what we have done, fortunately we can run and seek Jesus, and He is willing to stand in our place in the judgement, standing there for you and for me.

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

This world will be judged, you and I are living in this time, this is happening now in Heaven, that was the door that was opened, and they walked through that door.

John 5:24 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*

Christ says He has the keys, He opens and no one can shut it, He also says He has the keys of life and death.

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

Paul says He has opened a door before me.

1 Corinthians 16:9 *"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me ..."*

And we can walk through that same door that Jesus has opened, we may come to Him as our mediator in Heaven, place our lives in His hands, and He will plead our case on our behalf, He will stand in our place in the judgement, so its most important that we by faith walk through that door.

Problem

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

So He said these people claimed to be Jews but were not; now when it talks about the word Jew here it is talking about someone who is a true follower of Christ. You see God enters into a covenant with us and with each of His people, and He tells us if you will obey my Commands, hear My voice, walk with Me, I will be your God and you shall be My people. Are we God's people, have we truly given our heart to the Lord.

Galatians 3:29 *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

So if you have accepted Christ and given your heart to Him then you are an Israelite, this is the true Jew, nothing to do with flesh or blood, but this has to do with those who belong to spiritual Israel, they are God's people, and all the promises that He made to Israel of old have been passed on to spiritual Israel, so you and I can receive those promises.

Romans 2:28-29 *"28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."*

So what counts is what we are inwardly, not outwardly, we have to make sure that we enter into this covenant with Him, heirs of the promise, because it says that if we enter into this covenant with the

Lord we will be a special treasure to Him, we must walk with Him in the Spirit not in the letter. In other words we have to be willing to Walk the Talk. We cannot say yes I have given my heart to Christ and then not walk with Him act like Him reflect His image. So this means more than just following a belief, while of course this is important we must be a Christian in character as well as in belief, that is part of Walking the Talk.

As a Christian we must be kind, gentle and compassionate, we must love our brothers and sisters. The people in the Church of Philadelphia were the Church of brotherly love; you and I must love one another. This is what God wants us to do because that is what He did and does each and every day, we must aim to be what God desires us to be.

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

He promised them because they were faithful, because they persevered, that He would keep them from the hour of trial. We have said before that Christians today are such fair weather Christians, they don't want to face any hard times or consider that there might be any kind of trouble at all. Now God is perfectly able to care and look after us and as it says here because they persevered and kept His Commands that He will keep them from the hour of trial and in Psalm 91 He makes this promise in verse 7.

Psalm 91:7 *"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."*

But how can we appreciate, how can we understand, how can we sympathise, how can we enter into our Lords agony and suffering and all that He went through if we have never suffered, how could we possibly understand if we never have hard times and suffering, then how would we ever appreciate what He did. You and I must be willing to enter into the suffering of our Lord, and if it requires that we must pass through trials then we need to bear it, we must try and bear it joyfully, because it only helps us understand what Jesus did for us, He suffered more that anyone of us will ever suffer. Never will we face temptation like He faced, or suffer as He did, but in His kindness and in His mercy He said I will keep you in your hour of trial, He is more than capable of caring for you and for me.

Council

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

Now as we have studied these Seven Churches there has been reference in those different Churches regarding His coming back, but when we get to Philadelphia He says He is coming quickly, in other words time is running out. We are now living in the time of the Church of Laodicea at which time He does come back, so, time is running out and He says behold I coming quickly, and we need to understand that the Lord's coming is even at the doors.

There are many things that are happening today that have never happened before in my lifetime, Tsunamis' that kill ¼ million people, earthquakes that kill ¼ million, earthquakes of magnitude 7and above just coming one after another, we now live in a world with very little morals, do we really understand when He says behold I am coming quickly, hang on hold fast don't give up, does this really have the impact on us that it should? Remember a day is like a thousand years for the Lord and a thousand years as a day.

Psalm 90:4 *"For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."*

2 Peter 3:8 *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."*

We must hang on and get ourselves ready, this is our preparation time that the Lord in His mercy had given us. We must use this time to get ourselves ready to meet Him. We must use this time to spend time with Him, to read His word and understand what He is saying so that the Word of God will grow in us and we will then be able to share His word with others. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. How very sad to have someone else wear your crown.

Think of Esau the oldest, he did not want to follow the Lord, he did not have an interest in spiritual things, and therefore Jacob took is crown. He had every right, he was the oldest son, he had the birth right, the blessings, that was all his and all he had to do was claim it, and yet he didn't, he spurned it and Jacob took his place.

Ruben the eldest son was to be the one that the blessing was to pass to, he was to be the head and yet he didn't follow the Lord and Judah took his place, someone else took his crown.

Saul, the first King, God called him and sent Samuel to anoint him, God told him never will the kingdom pass from you and your household if you will just follow and obey me, but he didn't, and David took his place. David received the promise, and Christ came from that linage when He could have come from Saul's.

Judas one of the twelve, probably the one that had the greatest natural ability of leadership, he lost his crown and Matthias took his place. Is somebody going to take your place, is somebody going to be in the kingdom in your place? It doesn't have to be, we make our own decisions and decide whether we are going to put ourselves on the Lords side and walk and follow Him, the promise is given to us.

Promise

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

He who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God - In many of the temples and buildings they would write people's names on the pillars, particular individuals who had donated a large amount of money, or if they were an Emperor or leader they would write their names on pillars in the temple. And here Jesus says: He who overcomes I make a pillar in the temple of my God. Jesus says I will write the name of My God and the City of My God, the New Jerusalem. Jesus will put this name on us and say these belong to Me, these are My people. You and I can belong to Him and have a place there if we so wish, it is a tremendous blessing that He gives to us.

So first He gives us a white stone, and on that stone is a special name that He has given just for us, which is to do with our character, but more than that He puts on us the name of the city, He puts upon us His name and says these are my people, I care for them and they belong to me, and we are to be a pillar in the temple of God. All these are promises that He gives to us as individuals. We hope that each one of us will be there to walk through the door as He opens it, and we pray that we will continue obeying Him, giving our hearts to Him, following Him day by day as He leads us into the kingdom.

Now is the time when we need to be preparing our hearts to meet God.

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

The Church of Laodicea

"Judging of the People".

1844 AD - Second Coming of Jesus.

Introduction

This sixth and final church covers the period from around 1844 AD to the second coming of Jesus, so it is the church period in which we are living today.

Here we come to the last of the seven Churches, the Church of Laodicea. And we have looked at these personal letters that Jesus wrote to each one of the Churches, in which He told them about their condition, their problems and the solutions to these problems. He then gave them promises.

As we looked at the Church of Philadelphia we see that this Church possessed what Laodicea needs, and if Laodicea can acquire what Philadelphia has then Jesus will come back. The problem is, it does not say it will. And so this last Church is a Church that should be a wakeup call to us, because what we must not do is take for granted that we will make it, because Jesus gives a very stern, stern rebuke to this Church, in fact the hardest rebuke of the seven is given to the Church of Laodicea.

Laodicea comes from two Greek words; "*lao*" meaning "people" and "*dicea*" meaning "judging", so "judging of the people". We are living in the time when the judgment is going on up in Heaven, and we will be looking at some things concerning Laodicea, we need to consider these things very carefully, because if we are facing the judgment then we need Christ to represent us, we need Him to stand in our place and interceding on our behalf, this is absolutely vital if we are going to make it into the Kingdom.

Laodicea was about forty miles South East of Philadelphia. There was a road that opened from Ephesus and Pergamos that enabled people to travel through to Syria and Arabia and those parts of the world. The road from Ephesus to Syria in the east was the most important highway in Asia. It began at the coast at Ephesus and climbed up the 8,500 foot central plateau. It followed the valley of the River Meander until it reached what was known as the Gates of Phrygia.

Now Laodicea was a very, very wealthy city, the city was named after Antiochus' wife, (she poisoned him later, it is not known why, but she did). The population of the city was largely made up of Syrians and Jews, these were people who had been bought out of Babylon, so at the time that John was writing this the population of Jews was about 75 hundred this was just counting men not women and children. Today there is not much left there, it sits out on the plains, there was very fertile farming land all around it, but all that is left there today is the ruins of a couple of theatres and a stadium and that is really all that is left of Laodicea, it has been taken away, it's candlestick has been moved out of its place.

But as stated it was a very wealthy city, wealthy enough that in 60 A.D. when it was destroyed by an earthquake and the Emperor offered to help them rebuild they refused, they said they would build it on their own, and there's a little connection here because you will find that as we look at it this Church is very, very self-sufficient, it does not need help from anybody, not even the Lord. The city was a very modern city, they had hot water piped to all the homes via aqueducts; the water was very high in mineral content, in fact 7 or 8 miles from Laodicea is Hierapolis and there is where the great source of water came from and it was so heavy in minerals that it would form formations even on the falls so that you could see it for several miles away and it looked like white statues all over.

Archaeology shows Laodicea had an aqueduct that carried water from hot mineral springs some five miles south, which would have become tepid before entering the city. The water was hard, and was virtually undrinkable, it tasted vile and you would want to spit it out of your mouth it would make you sick. The imagery of the Laodicean aqueduct suggests not that "hot" is good and "cold" is bad, but that both hot and cold water are useful, whereas lukewarm water is useless.

Also in the town of Laodicea they had a garment industry and there they would make a black cloth that came from black sheep that were there, the texture was soft and very similar to silk and it was very expensive and sought after. In Laodicea they also had a school of medicine, also a school to the god Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine. Also they had an eye salve that they sold a Fijian eye salve, and all these things that Laodicea had is what Christ makes reference to that the people would know and relate to.

Identification

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

This is the only place in Scripture where you will find that the Amen is applied to Christ. Amen is used many times in Scripture but this is the only time it is put there as a name. The meaning of the word "Amen" means "so be it", that's what it implies, and as Christ is giving the message, He is saying this is it, this is the way it is; so be it. Also when we pray we say Amen which means the prayer is finished, and Christ is telling them here that these messages to the seven Churches are finished. He is saying He is the Amen, the first and the last, the faithful and true witness, and that you and I need to listen very carefully to what He has to say.

Jesus is the beginning of the creation of God. Now there are some people that misunderstand this verse. This verse is saying Jesus is the beginning, the Creator, the One who makes things, the One who began the work of creation. There are some that will take this verse and say that Jesus is not divine, that He was the first created being, that it does not mean that He is the Creator.

John 1:3 *"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."*

People will often take this verse to say that Jesus is the first created being, but this is not what the verse means, and once again we must remember that men wrote the Bible and although it was written under the inspiration of God, man interprets it, and this is why we always need to take the whole of the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture. We know this verse cannot mean that Jesus was created, because of the many, many verses that tell us He was begotten, and that Angels and man were created - there is a big, big difference between created and begotten.

When did this Church age begin? Well this comes at a time where it's clear from what the Scriptures say that this is the Church that will exist when Jesus returns. When we study the Bible and particularly prophecy (especially the 2,300 days which is explained in our Daniel and Revelation studies) we see that it would have been around the 1900's that the Church of Laodicea started to come into existence.

We are living in an age of secularism. What a contrast to Philadelphia. We have moved into secularism, where all people seem to be concerned about these days is what they can have materialistically, who has the most things, etc. and God is far removed from the lives of most people today.

Condition

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

Jesus again says I have seen your works, I have looked at them and Laodicea is not lacking in works, there is plenty of works there, but Jesus says I wish that you were cold or hot, but you are neither.

Most translators and Bibles scholars will say that cold means that you don't know the Lord and that you are living out in the world not knowing Christ, you are cold, you are lost, no relationship with the Lord, they take hot to mean that you're on fire for the Lord and doing works, this is how they apply hot and cold. But these letters were written for the Church not people outside. It maybe that is God saying I wish you were uncomfortable, that you were uncomfortably cold or hot and that you would get out of this lukewarmness. Either way this was the problem with the Church, it was comfortable, and this is what we see in the majority of Churches today.

Whereas in third world countries where they have nothing, they will come for miles and sit all day to hear the word of God, how many of us will do that? Very few, we are comfortable, and we like it this way, this is the way we are and this is why Jesus said I wish you were uncomfortable, I wish you were cold or hot. Remember the water from the aqueduct in Laodicea, by the time it reached Laodicea it was just lukewarm and lukewarm water is not as useful as hot or cold, you don't want to drink it, and it does not clean like hot water does, hot and cold water are useful but not so lukewarm.

Matthew 7:21-23 *"21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

So just because we may go to Church and say Lord, Lord doesn't make us right with God. Here they say they have done many wonderful works in the name of Jesus, and Jesus say's – I know your works, I am aware of what you do; depart from Me you who practice lawlessness, I don't recognise you, I don't know who you are.

These to me are the most frightening words in all of Scripture; you see there has to be something more than just works. The Church today is comfortable, we have entered into an age where the Church people of today think they have to be entertained, they can't seem to come for the purpose of worship if it's not entertaining then it's not worth going. And so we have Church after Church after Church where everything is just a big show, a production because people come to be entertained and not to study the word of God. And this is what is being said to the Church of Laodicea because they are lukewarm.

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

Because we are neither cold nor hot it makes God sick, just like we don't like to drink lukewarm water, Christ cannot do with a lukewarm Church it makes Him sick. So if you and I are just comfortable and not really doing anything then we need to take a good close look at ourselves, in order that we are not vomited out of the mouth of God. Like the lukewarm water that flowed from Hierapolis down to Laodicea, if you drank it you would want to spew it out of your mouth. You see it was fine hot or really cold, but because of the salt content lukewarm would make you vomit. And this is how Christ feels because His last day Church have let the cares of this world come into their lives.

Jesus talks about this in the parable of the sower.

Mark 4:19 *"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."*

You see the world came into the Church and it choked out the word and the people became unfruitful, we have trouble witnessing and speaking about Jesus because people don't want to know, they are too caught up in their busy materialistic lives.

Colossians 2:1-2 *"1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;"*

What does he say the Church needs – love, knowledge, and most of all, to be Christ centred.

Colossians 2:6-10 *"6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

Problem

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

There is certainly something wrong with this Church because it says I am rich, I have become wealthy and have need of nothing that is their perception of themselves, they think they are in good shape, but Christ's perception is just the opposite, He says they are poor blind and naked.

Here is the problem, they are all this, they are wealthy, they have need of nothing, but their biggest problem is because of all this wealth they have become blind, spiritually blind in that they don't realise their greatest need – that of Christ. And this is the spiritual condition of the Church, spiritually they are bankrupt. And only Christ can take care of that, but the problem is you can't take care of something you don't know you need.

Each one of us needs to be on our knees asking that God will open our eyes and that we will see our need. What does Christ need to do to get our attention? Maybe it takes natural disasters, maybe it takes more than reading that we have to repent and change our ways, maybe it takes the loss of something or having a hard time, what will get our attention.

Jesus says I stand at the door and knock and if anyone will hear my voice, but our problem is not only are we blind but we are also deaf, we don't see, we don't hear, we don't know our need.

Isaiah 1:6 *"From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."*

From the top of the head to the souls of the feet nothing but bruises and sores, we're a mess, and we don't know that we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, this is what the Church of Laodicea is, and if ever there was a time in which this verse rightly fits its today.

Matthew 25:1-10 *"1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all*

those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

All ten of them slumbered and slept all ten of them not just five and when the cry came that the Bridegroom was coming they all got up and shook themselves and trimmed their lamps. Are we making sure that our vessels are full of the oil from the Holy Spirit, or are we too busy thinking that we don't need anything, increased with goods and have need of nothing, and when the Bridegroom shows up will we say, oh, not enough oil?

Go out and buy for yourselves - When it comes to this part there is nothing that anybody can do for you, no one else can save you, not your spouse or Church member, you have to go and obtain this for yourselves, and it comes without money and without price, but you have to go out and buy, and the problem here with these virgins isn't that they didn't go to buy, they went to buy, but they left it too late as verse 10 tells us.

You see this is not talking about people who don't know the Lord, this is talking about Church members who had the opportunity, but who never put the effort in thinking they would leave it until a few more signs had been fulfilled, but it was then to late, the Bridegroom came (to them like a thief in the night) and the door was shut. The door that was opened in Philadelphia is now shut in Laodicea. And although we read in verse 11 they came saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Why did He not know these five, they had done works they were waiting, but, they were not like Him in character, they had not taken time to know Him to reflect His image and therefore He did not know them.

Counsel

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

Here Christ takes care of this problem of being blind and poor and naked, He says buy of me gold that has been refined in the fire, do we know what this gold is, its not literal gold but spiritual gold. There are three things that are spiritual gold: God's word the Bible is gold and we have to spend time in the scriptures, because the other two things that are gold are dependent upon us spending time in and knowing the scriptures, we find the second part of our spiritual gold in.

Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

So, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. When we spend time in God's word and we study the prophecies and we see how we can trust God's word we develop faith and it begins to grow and become part of our lives, if we don't have faith we will not make it into the Kingdom.

Hebrews 11:6 *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

If we don't have faith we can't please God, that's very clear. God wants to be loved and trusted, and without this faith and trust we will never make it through the times ahead. The third thing that is gold is love.

Love and faith work together, and if we don't have love for the Lord, love for our brothers and sisters and the people of the world then we are in jeopardy, we have to love one another that is absolutely

required. So, the only way we can get this gold is by spending time in the word and in prayer, asking God for that love, it does not come easy and it is not a natural thing for us to have, love for our loved ones and friends maybe but not for those who may even be unkind to us, this is God's love and we must obtain it.

We must be daily drawing near to Him, works won't get us to the kingdom. Sometimes we are so caught up in numbers and how many came to the meetings, how many were baptised, etc. this then becomes works and this is part of what Laodicea is caught up in numbers, works, materialism, and God is saying you think you are rich but you are poor, spiritually poor and that's our condition.

If we are to have the gold, we must have a desire for God's word, we must have faith and love if it's going to be what it should be. This is clearly taught in 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Corinthians 13 *"1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."*

Secondly Christ supplies our need by giving us the garment of His righteousness, and people will say yes but our garments are as filthy rags, is this what Jesus is saying here, NO, He says you are worse than that, you are naked, and you need to take a good look at yourself and be ashamed that you don't even have righteousness that is like filthy rags, you're walking around naked, you don't have anything at all, you are poor, blind and naked, and He says if we don't come to Him to be covered by His righteousness then He will not be able to save us.

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

Zealous means enthusiastic, eager, fervent, keen, earnest, stop playing around, repent, change.

Be rich, have faith and love, spend time with the Lord.

Galatians 5:6 *"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."*

James 2:5 *"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"*

Revelation 19:8 *"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."*

We need to take note of this text where it says to her (the Church) was granted, that means we don't have it of ourselves, it was given to her (to us), the righteousness of Jesus that covers your life and mine.

Isaiah 61:10 *"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."*

And if we don't have this then we are running around unclothed and naked. Only His righteousness can cover our lives.

1 Corinthians 2:14 *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

Unless we have Christ in our life we will not understand these things because they are spiritually discerned and we won't understand what God is doing until we understand the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that's what opens our eyes.

Romans 3:24 *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"*

When we see the love and grace of our Lord toward us then our eyes begin to open.

Romans 5:9-11 *"9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."*

Grace is the Source – Eye Salve – When we understand grace our eyes get opened up and we can see and understand.

Blood is the Means – White Raiment – We wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb, and the blood of the Lamb makes them white.

Faith is the Method – Gold.

Promise

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

And this is the solution to the problem; Christ is offering us the solution but the problem is we don't see it. This is the problem of the Church of Laodicea, because Christ is on the outside, and that where the problem is, He needs to be in, but He's out, and He is knocking at the door asking for entrance, and He won't force Himself, we have to invite Him in, if anyone hears My voice. He is calling out, but it's up to us to open the door and let Him into our lives, to change us and make us different, to become acquainted with Him so that down at the end of time He won't say I don't know you, I've never dwelt with you, I've never had a meal with you, I don't know you. He's knocking at the door saying let me in, we need to invite Him in, we must not wait, because time is short.

There is a famous painting of Christ standing at the door knocking. When you look closely at the picture you see that there is no handle on the outside of the door. Christ will not force Himself in, only we can open the door to Him. He is patiently waiting, wanting so much to be in our lives, but the choice is ours.

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

What a wonderful promise - if we will just let Him in He will let us come to His home and sit with Him - what a marvellous opportunity to sit with Christ on His throne. Thrones in the orient were large enough for more than one person to sit on, one on the left and one on the right.

And so Jesus has written to the Churches of Asia minor and He said to them all:

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

We pray that the Church of Laodicea will hear, listen and accept His invitation, before it's too late.

Revelation - Chapter 4

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

After this - This is not a continuation of the vision from previous chapters, as we will see when coming down through verse 2. After seeing the events of the previous chapters, John now has a new vision which he introduces.

A door was opened in heaven - The first thing that must be noticed, is that the door that is being opened is not the door to heaven, but a door was opened **in** heaven. In verse 2, after the door has been opened, John sees a throne in heaven. Thus we can conclude that the door was the door to the throne room of God in heaven. But where is this door and where is the throne? We shall come to this in a moment.

Voice...of a trumpet talking with me - This first voice must be a reference to the voice that John heard in Revelation 1:10. The same voice now introduces the second vision. As the voice was like a trumpet in chapter 1 so it is here also, obviously indicating the intensity of the voice.

Which said, come up hither - The voice was inviting John to enter into vision. For we see, when the voice had spoken, John immediately enters into vision.

Things which must be hereafter - John was going to be shown what was going to transpire from then onwards. The time frame is from when the door in heaven opens onwards.

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

John says that immediately he was in the Spirit - that is, in vision. If we look at Revelation 1:10 at the start of the churches, we see the same thing.

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

A throne was set in heaven - This shows that the throne was already in place when John beheld it.

One sat on the throne - How many do we see on this throne? We need to bear this in mind as we study to see how many we see in the throne room of the Almighty in Heaven.

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

Rainbow round about the throne - Around the throne John saw a rainbow like an emerald, or green in colour. The rainbow is a symbol of a covenant, and it is to remind us that God is a covenant-keeping God.

Genesis 9:11-17 *"11 And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. 12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a*

covenant between me and the earth. 14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: 15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. 17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

We can trust in God, and His everlasting covenant, the plan of salvation. Justice in the fact that the sinner that has broken the law deserves death, but mercy in the fact that God sent His own Son to die for the sins of the world, and those that confess and forsake their sins shall obtain mercy. So the rainbow is also a symbol to remind us of God's justice but also His mercy.

This is what John sees. Now we should not expect to see God in a form because it tells us clearly in Scripture that no one has seen God, but it does give us an idea of the throne room and what takes place there. Paul told us a little about what we could expect and He had this to say...

1 Timothy 6:16 *"Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."*

So here it tells us that God dwells in light and to the mortal eye appears as light.

Psalms 104:1-2 *"1 Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. 2 Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:"*

So this is basically what you see when you step into the throne room.

Ezekiel 1:26-28 *"26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. 27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. 28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake."*

So this is what we are seeing in the throne room as far as God the Father is concerned, who appears as light, in tremendous glory.

Revelation 22:1 *"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."*

So if you have light and you have water then this makes a rainbow which is what we saw in verse three a rainbow round about the throne.

Proverbs 6:23 *"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."*

So here in God's throne room we have the law, the law of God and it says that it is light; but not only light:

Revelation 22:17 *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*

So here in the throne room of God we have light and the water of life. And these two, the light and the water make the rainbow, and that's why it says around Gods throne is a rainbow and we have the amber colour of fire round about. And any time we want to we can bathe in the gold of God's love.

The 24 Elders

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

Here we have the first mention of a special group called the "Twenty-Four Elders". They are also mentioned in chapter 5.

Revelation 5:8-9 *"8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."*

This group of 24 Elders is very mysterious yet very interesting. Who are they? What is their purpose? Are they angels or are they men?

I saw four and twenty elders sitting - These 24 elders were seated upon 24 seats, or as in the original "thrones", around God's throne. But who are these elders?

The identifying marks are as follows:

An elder is one that is a leader among God's people...

Acts 15:2-6 *"2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter."*

1 Timothy 5:17 *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."*

These 24 elders are special people; they also lead out in worship in the throne room of God.

Revelation 19:4 *"And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia 5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."*

So they lead out in worship but they also participate in the judgement, that's what they are there for...

Revelation 11:16-18 *"16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged,*

and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

These 24 elders are found through the entire book of Revelation.

- Revelation 4:4-7
- Revelation 4:8-11
- Revelation 5:8-14
- Revelation 7:11-13
- Revelation 11:16-18
- Revelation 19:4

Here is what we learn about the 24 elders:

- They are seated on 24 thrones
- They are clothed in white garments
- They wear golden crowns on their heads
- They sing a song of redemption

We believe that the 24 elders represent the Church. They are not the Church but they represent the Church. This is not a strange interpretation for we see this in the Old Testament. 1 Chronicles 24:7-19 shows us that King David appointed twenty-four priests to represent the entire priesthood. There were 24 priests and one High Priest - Hebrews 9:7, Ezekiel 8:16. And in 1 Peter 2:9 the Church is called a "royal priesthood."

1 Peter 2:9 *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;"*

The 24 elders represent this entire royal priesthood. What about the thrones, the white garments and the golden crowns? Was the Church promised these? Earlier in Revelation we saw...

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."*

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."*

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.*

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

These references to thrones, crowns and white garments fit perfectly with Revelation 4:4.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 *"13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."*

This shows that man will be rewarded for his works. Since the Church has already received salvation at the cross by believing in Christ by faith, the Church is going to be judged for her works, the things that they have done for the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:10 calls this the Judgment Seat of Christ! The mere

fact that the 24 elders have white garments and golden crowns suggests that the Judgment Seat of Christ has taken place already, suggesting that the second coming has already occurred.

This brings us to the question - are the 24 elders human beings or angels?

The Greek word for crowns in Revelation 4:4 is "*stephanos*", which is a victorious crown, in contrast to a kingly crown (diadem) which Christ wears (Revelation 19:12). No angel can wear a victor's crown for they have never gone through the battle of life on earth to earn these crowns. Another evidence that the 24 elders are human beings is found in Revelation 5:

Revelation 5:9 *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."*

This shows that the 24 elders are redeemed human beings, for they sing the new song that only the redeemed can sing.

We know these elders are not Angels because the Bible distinguishes them from the Angels and the Beasts.

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

It is highly significant that the 24 elders are first seen in Revelation. When John went in vision to heaven to see the events from then until the End Times (Revelation 4:1), he saw the 24 elders. In the other visions of heaven in Isaiah 6:2and Ezekiel 1:4-11 there was only the throne and the four living creatures. There were no 24 elders. If the 24 elders were angels then they would have been in the visions of heaven that Isaiah and Ezekiel saw. It is significant that the 24 elders are seen in the New Testament and not in the Old Testament. If the 24 elders represent the Church then this is understandable, for Israel and the Church are different.

Let's look into the question – what is an elder? Isn't it someone who is older? Angels don't age for they are all the same age. Only human beigs age, and that is because of sin, because sin causes death. An elder could be someone with wisdom but angels have always had perfect wisdom. An elder could be someone who is a ruler. Doesn't the Bible say that "we will judge angels"?

1 Corinthians 6:3 *"Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"*

Whichever way you look at it, the 24 elders cannot be angels for only men can be called elders.

So, the 24 elders are seated on thrones, wearing white garments and golden crowns. These were promised to the Church at the Judgment Seat of Christ, which is at the second coming of Christ.

2 Timothy 4:8 *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."*

1 Peter 5:4 *"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."*

• The 24 elders sing a song of redemption.

• The 24 elders focus in their interpretation to John on the white-robed multitude and the slain Lamb, Jesus Christ. Redeemed men would better understand the redemptive work of Christ than angels.

• The 24 elders are distinguished from "all the angels" (Revelation 7:11).

• The 24 elders are only seen in Revelation after John goes to heaven (Revelation 4:1-2) and are absent in the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel of heaven.

• The 24 elders are very different from angels.

• The 24 elders can't be angels for the Church will even judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).

• The 24 elders are redeemed from the earth (Revelation 5:9).

Clothed in white raiment - This we know to be the righteousness of Christ:

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

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

Crowns of gold on their heads - This is none other than the crown of life or righteousness that the Lord gives to those that have endured temptation and have fought the good fight of faith, finishing their course and have overcome.

James 1:12 *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."*

2 Timothy 4:7-8 *"7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."*

Revelation 5:9 *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"*

This shows to us that these have been redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation by the blood of the Lamb. Making them kings and priests.

So these are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and a crown of victory. They have been in warfare with sin and overcome (sin is only upon this earth). They are seen in heaven before the sequence of the seals begins and have been redeemed from among men. Does the Bible verify this?

Matthew 27:51-53 *"51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."*

So here this tells us that when Christ died many graves were opened; and many of the bodies of the saints that were dead came out of their graves after the resurrection of Christ. And Ephesians 4 tells us that when Christ ascended to heaven He lead a multitude of captives with Him.

Ephesians 4:8 *"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."*

So the 24 elders are some of those saints that were raised at Christ's resurrection and taken to heaven with Him in 31 AD.

The role of the 24 elders is explained in the following verse.

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

Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings - In Ezekiel's vision of the throne of God he describes the movements of the angelic beings, who are the messengers of God. These lightnings and *thunderings are the movements of the angels around the throne.*

Ezekiel 1:14 *"And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."*

Ezekiel 10:5 *"And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh."*

Seven lamps of burning fire – Seven in the Bible is completeness/perfection. The seven Spirits of God are His character His attributes.

Isaiah 11:2 *"And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;"*

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

Exodus 24:10 *"And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness."*

Ezekiel 1:26 *"And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it."*

This is describing the flooring before God's throne. Also in Ezekiel it says...

Ezekiel 28:14 *"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire."*

This is what the righteous will be standing on...

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

In ancient times glass was much more valuable than it is today. Here, it represents the clear, crystalline appearance of the surface on which the throne stood.

Ezekiel 1:22 *"And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above."*

Crystal - Greek "*krustallos*", a word meaning either "crystal", a colorless, transparent mineral, or "ice". What John sees is a vast shimmering expanse, gloriously reflecting the radiance about the throne.

The Four Beasts

Now let's take a look at the four beasts.

Midst of the throne...

"Perhaps, like Ezekiel's cherubim, (Ezekiel 1:22, 26) these beasts were seen under the throne as well as around it. The symbolism here is in harmony with ancient Semitic thought. Thus a sarcophagus from Byblus, from the end of the 2d millennium B.C., portrays a Phoenician king seated on a throne supported by an animal cherub." **What Were the Cherubim? W. F. Albright, The Biblical Archaeologist 1:1, Feb., 1938, pp. 1-3.**

Psalms 80:1 *"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."*

Psalms 99:1 *"The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved."*

Isaiah 37:16 *"O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth."*

Beasts - Greek "*zōa*" - "living beings". The word "*zōa*" does not indicate to what order of creatures these four belong. However, they closely resemble those of Ezekiel's vision (see Ezekiel 1:5-26), which Ezekiel calls cherubim; however, as we read on we will see they are different because those around the throne had six wings making them seraphim.

Ezekiel 10:20-22 *"20 This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims. 21 Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings. 22 And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward."*

The question must be asked, what are these living creatures that are around the throne?

Ezekiel 1:1 *"Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God."*

Ezekiel was taken off in vision by the river Chebar, and from the following verses of that chapter, more so verses 5-10, we see that it was strikingly similar to what John saw.

Ezekiel 1:5-10 *"5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. 6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. 7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. 8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. 9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. 10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."*

From Ezekiel 10:20 we see that these living creature are none other than Cherubim that are about the throne. This is not unusual, for God dwells between the Cherubim, as we saw in Psalms 99:1.

What is the work of these Cherubim? In Ezekiel 10:1 he sees that the throne is above the Cherubim (also 1:22, 26), and in verse 9 there are wheels beside the Cherubim. This shows that the throne of God has wheels and is movable; Daniel 7:9 confirms to us that the throne has wheels. So one of the duties of these Cherubim is to move the throne of God, for we are told that the form of transport that God uses is the angels.

Psalms 18:10 *"And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind."*

Psalms 68:17 *"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."*

Full of eyes - Ezekiel tells us:

Ezekiel 1:18 *"As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four."*

Ezekiel 10:12 *"And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had."*

This may be understood as a symbol of the intelligence and ceaseless vigilance of heavenly beings. Inasmuch as the symbol of eyes is plainly drawn from Ezekiel, it is possible to understand it here also in terms of Hebrew thought. Nine times in the Old Testament the Hebrew word "*ayin*", or "eye", is used in the sense of "color" or "brilliance" (Proverbs 23:31; Ezekiel 1:4,7,16, 22,27; 8:2; 10:9; Daniel 10:6). This suggests that in describing the four beasts as "full of eyes", John may mean that their appearance was one of shining brilliance.

The four different faces upon these living creatures also represent to us something about Christ. Just as the living creatures, with these characteristics, are about the throne where God dwells; so too are the tribes of Israel, with these symbols, encamped around the sanctuary where God was dwelling.

Revelation 4:7-8 *"7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."*

Lion, Calf, Man and Eagle - Here each of the four beings appears with one of the four faces that were characteristic of each of the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision (see Ezekiel 1:10; 10:14). Instead of a Calf, Ezekiel says like an Ox, so it gives it both ways in Scripture.

Six wings - The cherubim of Ezekiel's vision each had four wings (Ezekiel 1:6; 10:21), whereas the seraphim of Isaiah had six (Isaiah 6:2). Wings may be understood as indicating the speed with which God's heavenly creatures execute their errands (Deuteronomy 28:49) or protection (Matthew 23:37).

Full of eyes within - May be understood as a symbol of intelligence and ceaseless vigilance.

Rest not - Men customarily work by day and rest by night, but "he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalms 121:4). The divine power upholding the universe never relaxes.

Day and night - Night brings an intermission to most human activities, but it has no effect on the ceaseless stream of praise to God that issues forth from the beings of heaven.

Holy, holy, holy - This is also the cry of the seraphim in Isaiah's vision (see Isaiah 6:3).

Now let's look a little closer at the features of the beasts.

These living creatures are part of the Angelic host, and since they have six wings they are seraphim, and they have a very definite symbolic meaning for you and me. This symbolism was not foreign to the children of Israel; they understood this clearly because they have seen this before. As the children of Israel were going through the wilderness as they camped they erected the sanctuary and three of each of these tribes camped on each side of the sanctuary, on the East you had three tribes and the leading tribe was that of Judah, and Judah had a banner that hung in front of those three tribes, and on this banner was the picture of a lion.

To the south of the sanctuary you had the tribe of Ruben and two other tribes camped behind Ruben and on that banner was the picture of a man. To the West of the sanctuary you had the tribe of Ephraim with two more tribes behind Ephraim and on their banner was the picture of an ox. Then to the North you had the Eagle with the tribe of Dan and behind Dan two others. So these symbols were not strange to them they knew what these symbols represented, and they have great significance to us because those four living creatures also reveal to us the characteristics of Jesus.

We find the Lion of the tribe of Judah:

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

Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Then you have Ruben, that was the banner of a man, and in Philippians 2 it says:

Philippians 2:8 *"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

So Christ's humanity is pictured there. And then you have the Ox of Ephraim, and we find in Numbers 7:

Numbers 7:88 *"And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings..."*

And so the Ox represented the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. Finally we have the Eagle:

Exodus 19:4 *"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."*

Isaiah 40:31 *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."*

The Eagle was a symbol of the optimal ascendency that God envisioned for His people. So we can see that all these characteristics are the characteristics of Jesus.

It is also very interesting to note the four gospels. In the book of Matthew, you will find that Matthew speaks of Jesus as the King, (Lion) in fact if you take the genealogy in Matthew it traces it right back to King David and if you take the genealogy of Ruth it takes it right back to Adam. In the gospel of Luke this focuses on the humanity of Jesus (Man). The gospel of John speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus (Ox) – Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29). And in Mark this focuses on the divinity of Christ. There are more miracles recorded in the gospel of Mark than any of the other gospels, lifting Christ up, showing His divinity (Eagle). And this is why we have these four characteristics among those four living creatures.

Revelation 4:9-11 *"9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."*

So these four living creatures give glory and honour to God before His throne. We see them here along with the 24 Elders. And everything from this point throughout the book of Revelation takes place in this throne room, every vision that John had was from the throne room.

When this cry of worship goes out from the seraphim, the 24 elders fall down and worship God, casting their crowns upon the ground before the throne, acknowledging that their victories have been derived though the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Heavenly beings as well as men owe God thanks, for He has given them life. They exist by His pleasure. In the ultimate sense God owes His creatures nothing; they owe everything to Him. Praise God and His dear Son for they love us with an inexhaustible love.

Revelation - Chapter 5

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

Now who is sitting on the throne? God - God the Father - and in His hand He has this book written both on the inside and on the outside.

And I saw - We have started a new chapter but not a new vision. John continues on from the previous chapter, and thus this is still in the throne room of God, and he is now going to give an account of what he saw.

Right hand of him that sat on the throne - The right hand denotes power and authority:

Psalms 20:6 *"Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand."*

Psalms 18:35 *"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great."*

A book written within and on the backside - This is not like the books we have today. In John's day they used long rolls of parchment, that were written on one side and then rolled up around a long stick, with the writing on the inside. Books bound down one edge were not in great use until the second century AD. These rolls of parchment are today called scrolls. The scroll that John sees was written on the outide as well as the inside.

Sealed with seven seals - The number seven denotes completeness and thus shows that this book was perfectly sealed. Therefore no person can open it unless they have the authority to break the seals.

Leviticus 23:15 *"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:"*

Revelation 5:2-3 *"2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."*

So there was no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth (meaning those who had died), there was no one in the whole universe who was worthy to open this book that God had in His hand. You may well ask what about Mohammed, or Buddha, or Confucius, why if they are gods don't they step up to open the book? But not a soul moved, and then John says...

Revelation 5:4 *"And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon."*

These words reflect John's intense emotional reaction to the drama now unfolding before his eyes, and John weeps because in that book is contained the whole history of mankind, and John knows that if no man can open it, then there is no hope for mankind.

"Being greatly affected with the thought that no being whatever was to be found able to understand, reveal, and accomplish the divine counsels, fearing they would still remain concealed from the church.

This weeping of the apostle sprang from greatness of mind. The tenderness of the heart which he always had, appeared more clearly now he was out of his own power. The Revelation was not written without tears, neither without tears will it be understood." ***Daniel and the Revelation, by Uriah Smith, page 393.***

What is our reaction to the things in God's word that we struggle to find an answer to?

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

John is told not to weep, which suggests that John was already in tears, he is told to behold, or look for the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Now think about this - why did he say the root of David rather than the offspring of David? Why the root...because before David was, He was. You see it was the fact that it took someone more than human to open this book.

Lion of the tribe of Judah - The lion is a symbol of kingliness, as it is regarded as king of the beasts, leadership, courage, and strength. It was to the tribe of Judah that the royal linage, that is the kingship or leadership, was given.

Genesis 49:9-10 *"9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."*

Judah went by the standard or emblem of a lion. Jesus Christ was born through the linage of Judah.

Matthew 1:1-2 *"1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;"*

And it is He that has the strength/power to deal with the enemies of His people, namely Satan and all those that support him. Thus it denotes His Kingship or rulership.

Root of David - In Isaiah 11 we find the following:

Isaiah 11:10 *"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse (Jesse being the father of David - Matthew 1:6), which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."*

This was a Messianic prophecy pointing to Christ, as we see Paul applying this passage...

Romans 15:8-12 *"8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: 9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. 10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. 12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."*

The root of any plant is what gives the plant its life, sustenance, and strength. The roots of the plant come first before the rest of the plant. Thus in this symbol we have shown the pre-existence of Christ or His deity, for He was before David and was the One that gave David his power, strength and life.

But Christ was also known as the Branch.

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

Zechariah 6:12-13 *"12 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: 13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."*

Note how many beings the council of peace is between - the Father and Son - only two...

The branch comes after the roots, and we have seen that Christ is of the offspring of David.

Luke 1:32 *"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: thus showing the humanity of Christ."*

So these two symbols show the kingship and deity of Christ, fullness of authority and fullness of power.

Hath prevailed to open the book - Greek "*nikaō*", "to conquer", "to be victorious". This points directly to Christ's victory in the great controversy with Satan, which is the basis of His right to open the book. Inasmuch as no one else in the entire universe could do this (verse 3), His victory is unique. An angel could not have taken Christ's place, for the basic issue in the great controversy is the integrity of the character of God, which is expressed in His law. Neither angel nor man could have accomplished this vindication, for they themselves are subject to the law. Only Christ, the Son of God, and of whose character the law is an expression, could achieve such a vindication of the divine character.

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

John now turns to look at the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, and sees a Lamb looking as if it had been slaughtered. This he saw in the midst of the assembly around the throne of God, standing there in the midst was a lamb looking as if it had been slain - and take note throughout these studies as to how many divine beings we see...is it two or three? This is very important when it comes to the study of the Trinity doctrine.

As it had been slain - John probably sees the Lamb with His death wound still bleeding, as a lamb slain for sacrifice in the sanctuary service. The word "as" indicates that this is a symbol. John is not saying that a slaughtered lamb really stands before the throne of God in heaven. Rather, he is describing what he sees in symbolic vision. The form of the verb translated "had been slain" implies that the act of slaughter had taken place in the past, and that its results remained. Thus though Christ's death is historically in the past, its results for mankind are ever fresh and availing.

John 1:29 *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

Seven is the number of completeness / perfection.

Seven horns - This Lamb had seven horns. A horn is a symbol of power:

Deuteronomy 33:17 "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."

Thus the seven horns of the Lamb would indicate that He is perfect in strength.

Also there are other places where the number seven represents completeness or perfection:

Seventh Day Sabbath	Exodus 20:9-10
Every seventh year was a sabbatical year	Leviticus 25:4
Seven good and seven famine year in Egypt	Genesis 41
Seven lamps of the Menorah	Exodus 25:37
Seven feats of Israel	Leviticus 23
Seven Priests with seven trumpets circle Jericho seven times	Joshua 6
Daniel's seventy sevens prophecy	Daniel 9:24-27
Seven loaves fed the 4,000, seven baskets left over	Matthew 15:32-39
Seven deacons in the early church	Acts 6:5
Seven "I AM" statements in the gospel of John	John 6:5
Seven elements of the armor of God	Ephesians 6:14-18
Seven churches – Seals – Trumpets – Plagues etc.	Revelation
Seven appearances of Angels	Acts

Seventy times seven - Matthew 18:22 reiterates this still further. The Lord was not giving Peter a mathematical number of times that he should forgive another person, but rather was insisting on limitless forgiveness for a brother's sin.

Showing a symbol of His complete fullness of power, that is His omnipotence, before Christ ascended back to heaven He said...

Matthew 28:18 *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."*

Seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God - These eyes are identified as the seven Spirits of God, which is an expression used for His Holy Spirit.

In Revelation 4:5 a different symbol, "seven lamps" is used.

Eyes are a symbol of intelligence and perfect wisdom, thus with this coupled together with the number seven, it would show Christ's complete or perfect wisdom, all-knowing, that is His omniscience. Nothing is hidden from His eyes. These eyes are sent forth to all the earth.

Hebrews 4:13 *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."*

Zechariah 4:10 *"For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth."*

2 Chronicles 16:9 *"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars."*

Proverbs 15:3 *"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."*

And thus He is intimately acquainted with everything that happens, everywhere.

About this Lamb in verse six, now we find something that is very interesting, because in scripture, in the original Greek, the word for lamb is "*amnos*", but not in this case, here the word is "*arnion*" - there is only one other place in scripture where this word is used and this is where Jesus is talking to Peter, after the resurrection, at the sea of Galilee, and Peter had denied his Lord three times, and it was there that Jesus in John 21:15-17 tells Peter to feed His lambs, in verse 15, and this is the only other place that this word for lambs "*arnion*" is used. That word in Greek actually means little pet lamb - why would Jesus use such a term as little pet lamb, and standing there before the throne of God was a little pet lamb as though it had been slain - there is great symbolism there. Remember at the Passover the Jews were told to get a lamb. Let's see what the scripture has to say about this.

Exodus 12:3 *"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:"*

So they had to do this on the 10th day of the month. They would have to get a lamb and bring it back to the house, and they were to keep it there at the house. While it was at the house it would become like a pet, the children would play with it, and so when the time came that they would have to take that lamb and offer it as a sacrifice four days later on the 14th, they could not do so without any feeling, so that it would help them realise the value of the sacrifice that was being made on their behalf.

Exodus 12:6 *"And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening."*

You can almost hear the Jewish children crying; "no, don't, don't kill it!" There had to be some feeling, some emotion, they had to feel like they were giving up something valuable. And this is what John sees in the throne room – a little pet Lamb – the Son of God – bleeding as though it had been slain. This was the sacrifice that was made for you and for me.

So amidst all the elders, the four living creatures, the Angels and all the majesty, all the glory, all that's going on, in this vision of John's he sees in the middle of it all this little Lamb. And only this little lamb is worthy to open the book held by the hand of God - not another soul in the entire universe moves forward, only this little Lamb of God.

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

Jesus thus comes and takes the book from the Father's right hand, who was sitting upon the throne. This is the focal point of Revelation chapters 4 and 5, that Christ, by taking the book from the hand of God, does what no other being in the universe can do. This action is symbolic of His victory over evil.

This little Lamb comes and takes the book out of the hand of God, and this is where our salvation is, because only He, the Lamb of God, earned the right to step up to the Father and take that book from His hand, because He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He is the King, and not only is He the King, He is our Brother, He came and took upon Himself humanity and became one with us, to bear humanity throughout eternity. Nobody else has ever done that, only the Lamb. He became like one of us and paid the ransom and died, that you and I might live. Who else has done that for us? Who else can

claim to be one with God, equal with the Father, and yet willing to lay down His life so that you and I might live? The only one is the Lamb of God.

Revelation 5:8-9 *"8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"*

John declares that Christ "has taken" the book. You see when He – Jesus – stepped up and took the book out of the hand of His Father, you find that the elders and the four beasts fall down in praise, because now there is hope. This shows to us that the 24 elders, who minister in the heavenly sanctuary to aid Jesus Christ our High Priest, were redeemed from among men for this purpose. They fall down in adoration and praise, as sinners now redeemed by so great a price.

Here is the hope of the universe – we are saved only through Our Lord Jesus. However, whilst all Heaven rejoices, we are told that on the other side of the coin will be the wicked. What will they be crying out to this Lamb?

Revelation 6:15-16 *"15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:"*

Here it does not say from the wrath of the Lion, but from the wrath of the Lamb. How many people are afraid of the Lamb? The majority of the world. These people that we have just read about in Revelation 6 will run from Him because He is the only one that is worthy, He paid the price that they might be saved and they said no, and now they cannot bear to look upon Him.

The golden vials - Greek "*phialai*", "bowls" or "saucers", the dishes in which offerings were commonly presented. According to Josephus, phialai of incense were placed on the showbread in the sanctuary (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, vol. iii. 6. 6 [143]).

That the prayers of the saints are contained in golden receptacles may indicate the preciousness with which heaven regards them. The prayers of saints and their possession of "harps" and of incense dishes representing the prayers of saints, suggests that the elders represent Christ's triumphant church on earth, lifting its voice in song and prayer.

Psalms 141:2 *"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."*

Sung a new song - The song was new in the sense that it was entirely different from any sung before. This expression is common in the Old Testament.

Psalms 33:3 "Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise."

Psalms 40:3 "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."

Isaiah 42:10 "Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof."

Here it is particularly fitting, for it represents the song growing out of a unique experience, salvation through the victory of Jesus Christ. It is the "new song" of those who have a "new name".

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

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

Revelation 21:2 *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

When all things are made "new".

Revelation 21:5 *"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."*

Looking further at what singing a new song means, we will consider the 144,000.

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

They are said to sing a new song. This song is the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

Revelation 15:2-3 *"2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."*

And no one can learn it except for the 144,000. The song of Moses is recorded in the book of Exodus chapter 15, dealing with their deliverance from being boxed in by the mountains on both sides with the Egyptian armies behind, and the Red Sea in front of them. They were facing total annihilation until the Lord delivered them by opening the Red Sea and making a path to the other side. The Egyptians followed, but were drowned as the Lord closed up the sea again. So the song that they sung was a song of their experience and deliverance.

So too it is with the 144,000 at the end of time. It will appear as if these righteous ones are totally boxed in by their enemies and facing total annihilation, but God will deliver them. The reason why they sing the song of the Lamb is that they have sacrificed all of self upon the altar, there is not a piece of their lives that is not surrendered to Christ, self has been crucified. When Christ sacrificed all as the Lamb of God He was going to Calvary as a sacrifice for the human race, and thus the 144,000 have this experience of sacrificing all. So a song is a symbol of an experience gone through.

As Jesus receives the book from the Father, a song is sung by the 24 elders. Now remember that a new song denotes a new experience, and we will now look at the song to see what experience it is.

Worthy to take the book - The heavenly chorus leads out in the recognition that God has been vindicated from the accusations of Satan, through the victory of His Son. The 24 elders, representatives of the saints, who themselves were once captives of evil, appear before the on-looking universe as witnesses to the righteousness and the grace of God.

Ephesians 3:10 *"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."*

The first words of the song explain to us why Jesus is worthy to take the book and open it. This is because of His sacrifice of being slain for our sins, and shedding His blood to be able to redeem them (and us), back to God out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; also making them kings and priests.

Before this time Jesus had not been slain or shed His blood to redeem man from sin. The 24 elders had not been taken to heaven through the redemption that was now possible through the blood of Christ. Thus this is a new experience for them and hence the new song.

This now brings us to the question of what this book is.

Identity of the Book

The book seems to be closely linked to the redeeming of God's people, for the song of redemption goes forward when Christ receives the book. But Christ can only receive this book when He has made redemption sure through the sacrifice and of shedding His blood. But the most important clue is found in verse 1, with the book being written within and on the backside, and then sealed. Before we look at an example of this type of book, we need to look at the “Law of Redemption”. This deals with the redeeming or buying back of inheritances in the land of Israel.

Leviticus 25:23-27 *"23 The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. 24 And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. 25 If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. 26 And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it; 27 Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession."*

Notice how many times the word redeem/redemption is used.

If a person had sold their land because of their poverty, it was able to be redeemed or bought back by what is called a kinsman, if the person did not have enough money to do so himself. Thus the land would be restored to him through a relation of his. But if there was none to redeem the land/inheritance, it would automatically be returned at the end of the Jubilee, i.e. the end of fifty years. A good example of this is found in Jeremiah 32, it also sheds light on what the sealed book is:

Jeremiah 32:6-14 *"6 And Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 7 Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it. 8 So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. 9 And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. 10 And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances. 11 So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open: 12 And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison. 13 And I charged Baruch before them, saying, 14 Thus saith the*

LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days."

Jeremiah here was asked to buy the parcel of land as it was his right to redeem it. Notice how they recorded the transaction. There were 2 books, one that was written and left open, the other was an exact copy but rolled up and sealed. These contained the title deeds to the redeemed inheritance. Weemse, commenting on this system, says the following;

"For the manner of writing the contract, he who was to buy the ground, wrote two instruments or documents. The one to be sealed with his own signet, the other he showed unclosed, to the witnesses, that they might subscribe and bear witness of that which was written. This, the witnesses did subscribe upon the back of the enclosed (or sealed) instrument." ***Weemse, 'Judicial Law of Moses' chapter 30. Quoted by J. A. Seiss in op. cit. Vol 1 page 273.***

From this we can see that the scroll, containing the title deeds to the lost inheritance, was written within, rolled up, then sealed and written on the backside, just as the book in chapter 5 is. Undoubtedly this book in chapter 5 is the title deeds to the lost inheritance through man's rebellion.

We quote the following from "An Exposition of Revelation 5" by Austin P. Cooke, pages 13-15:

"The details concerning title-deeds and lost inheritances is very beautifully brought to view in the ancient story of Ruth in the Old Testament, one of the choicest stories in all literature. Set in the time of the Judges about 1100 B.C., this account tells of how an Israelite family, sold their inheritance because of drought and through lack of faith moved into the land of Moab, the land of the enemy. However, it turned out to be the land of death because the father and the two married sons perished. Erelong the remnant of the family, Naomi and Ruth, returned to the land of Israel and sought the lost inheritance. There they found a near relative, a kinsman, one through whom the lost inheritance could be bought back or redeemed. His name was Boaz. Boaz was from Bethlehem. He agreed to pay the debt of Elimelech and Naomi and redeem the inheritance. He also married the childless widow, Ruth, and raised up children in the name of the dead husband, who finally repossessed the inheritance. Now Boaz, in redeeming the inheritance, was also under obligation, if necessary, to avenge the death of the near of kin. The role of the kinsman/redeemer was twofold: he was a redeemer and an avenger."

"The story in the book of Ruth is a fitting representation of the history of the human race. Adam and Eve were established in Eden by the Creator. (Micah 4:8 calls it 'the first dominion'). Through disobedience they sold out their inheritance to Satan and went out to the land of enemy, the land of death. But a remnant of Adam's family have sought to return to Eden and regain the lost inheritance. They have found a new kinsman - one of their own race - through whom the inheritance can be redeemed and restored. This kinsman/redeemer like Boaz has come from Bethlehem. Jesus Christ has paid the debt of Adam's race upon Calvary's cross. By the sacrifice of His life, He has redeemed the lost inheritance. Like Boaz, he also has married the childless widow - the Christian church - it is His bride. He is her spiritual husband and through this union Christ is raising up children, 'the seed of the woman', who one day, will possess the lost inheritance - Eden restored. As kinsman/redeemer Jesus Christ will not only restore the inheritance but He will also be responsible for avenging the blood of His brethren. That will be accomplished at the second and third advents, when He destroys Satan and all who support him." ***Austin P. Cooke pages 13-15.***

Revelation 5:10 *"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."*

What a marvellous verse. This little Lamb has not only paid our sacrifice but has made us kings and priests unto His God. It does not say we might become kings and priests, it says He makes us kings and priests. How wonderful that you and I can have such a saviour. This is the very heart of salvation, the very heart of the gospel, the fact that our salvation is not dependent upon our ability; it's dependent upon the Lamb who was slain and paid the price for us, it's our acceptance of Him. What a redeemer we have. Nothing we can do makes us a child of God except accepting Christ, no more than me going out and sitting in the garage makes me a car – it's not what we do, it's what Christ has done for us and continues to do, day by day.

But how do we become priests?

Exodus 19:5-6 *"5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."*

We see that the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, who were to be a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. This was on condition of bringing forth the fruits of obedience. However, they continued to break the covenant that was made and were finally rejected as being God's chosen people.

Matthew 21:33-43 *"33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. 40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. 42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."*

1 Peter 2:9-10 *"9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."*

We see that this covenant has been transferred and now applies to the Christian church. Those that have accepted salvation through Jesus Christ now become priests and offer up spiritual sacrifices; the continual sacrifice of self, prayer, and thanksgiving, etc.

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

We cannot even imagine that number, but try to envisage when we hear them sing with all the redeemed in praise to God. Ten thousand times ten thousand is 100 million, and this number exceeds even that, it is innumerable. Thus God is vindicated before the angels who have not fully understood, since the first accusations of Satan in heaven, His action in banishing Satan and saving men.

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

All this was given to Him, to Jesus, because He was able to redeem us, and we need to take time every day to praise God, not just for what He has done for us and what He continues to do for us – we should do this – but praise to God is giving Him worship because He is worthy, because of His attributes and what He has done, for His glory, honour and power. There is nothing higher that we can give him except our worship and praise. Because He is our redeemer.

The angels of heaven, the four beasts, and the elders round about the throne are giving praise and worship to the Lamb, Jesus Christ. For it is He that is worthy to open the book because of the infinite sacrifice that He paid to do so. As Peter said under inspiration of the Holy Spirit;

1 Peter 1:18-19 *"18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"*

It is He that is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and blessing; for He is the Lamb that was slain.

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

How many beings should receive our worship? Two – God the Father and His Son, the Lamb that was slain.

Every creature - That is, every created being. The chorus swells and in response to the cries of praise from the hosts of heaven, all creation joins in adoration of the Father and the Son. Christ is victor and the character of God is vindicated before the whole universe – in heaven, and on the earth. From the standpoint of ancient cosmology, heaven, earth, under the earth and sea constitute the entire universe. All creation will finally recognize the righteousness of God.

The fact that the Lamb is adored here on the same basis as the Father implies their equality.

Philippians 2:9-11 *"9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Colossians 1:18-20 *"18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."*

Hebrews 1:2 *"2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"*

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

We need to dwell on these things, on the tremendous sacrifice of God and His Son. We need to become intimately acquainted with the Lamb of God that was slain, that we might live. So this fourfold anthem ultimately finds its fulfilment when the earth is restored to perfect harmony with the rest of the universe.

Notice that this is a twofold worship - to the Father that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb, Jesus Christ. They both receive the same worship and praise. Thus this shows their equality, that Christ is just as truly God, through His inheritance as the Son, as is the Father. They are equally divine.

Hebrews 1:1-4 *"1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."*

The reaction of worship from all is one that is not forced, it comes voluntarily from the response of what Christ has done, from His worthiness – it should be the same with us. Words cannot express the greatness and beauty of the plan of salvation, the infinite sacrifice that Christ has paid. Our worship to Him should be one of loving response for what He has done for us.

What must it be like to be there? To be and to dwell with the Father and His beloved Son.

Revelation - Chapter 6

The Seven Seals

We saw in Revelation 5 the Lamb take the book from the Father's hand, as only He had authority and could open the book and the seals. Now in Revelation 6 we will first look at the four horsemen of the apocalypse, because this is what these first four seals are. These seals cover the 6th and 7th chapter of Revelation and the first verse of the 8th chapter. We will start by looking at chapter 6 and the first verse of chapter 8.

Over the years there have been lots of discussions on these seals, but the scriptures lay it out clearly, and this is where we must look to interpret the word of God, letting scripture interpret scripture. Firstly we need to remember that there has been no break in the vision since chapter four. Thus the time frame/starting date for the breaking of the first seal is 31 AD. As soon as Christ receives the book, He wastes no time in beginning to break the seals.

The seals denote events of a religious character, and contain the history of the church from the opening of the Christian era to the second coming of Christ. There are seven seals, and we have already seen that the number seven symbolizes completeness, fullness, and perfection. We shall see this more clearly as we go through this chapter.

In this chapter Jesus starts to open the seals and these seals have some important points that we need to know about. The first four are horseman that tell us about the conditions on the earth, but the last three are not horseman and we see there is a decided change, because the last three seals deal with God's judgment upon the wicked. This same scenario of change also continues when we look at the seven trumpets and again with the seven last plagues. So in each of these, the seals, the trumpets and the plagues, they are always divided into the first four and then the last three.

The 1st Seal

The time period of the first seal, the white horse, is around 31-100 AD.

Now the Bible gives periods of time, we put these dates in because they seem to cover that period of time, but we are not to tie the times of these dates down in stone, because they overlap one another as we saw in the study on the seven churches, this is talking about a period of time.

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

Now one of the four beasts tells John to come and see what is revealed in these seals.

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

White is used over and over in the scriptures – it talks about white robes, white garments, white throne, hair, stone, clouds – white represents purity, righteousness.

Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

Revelation 19:8 *"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."*

Never in God's word is there a place where God uses white to apply to the antichrist or to anything evil. So for those who take this white horse, as some do, and apply it to the antichrist, this is totally out of harmony with the scriptures. The rider on the white horse going forth to conquer and to conquer represents the gospel, the word of God, as it first went out after Pentecost - it was pure.

A horse is a symbol of war:

Revelation 19:11 *"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."*

Throughout ancient history and the Bible, you will find that the horse was used primarily for war and processions, sometimes for hunting. So each horse that we will look at will denote a different type of warfare. As this horse is white, it denotes a warfare of righteousness or purity. The purity of the faith of the Apostolic church.

He that sat on him had a bow - In Habakkuk 3 the bow is represented as God's word.

Habakkuk 3:9 *"Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers."*

The early Christian church, with Christ at its head, went to war against the workings of the many systems of error that were in the world at that time. They were to...

2 Timothy 2:3 *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."*

Their weapon was the Word of God. For it was not against literal flesh and blood that they had to war...

Ephesians 6:12 *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

Thus the weapons of this warfare are not carnal but spiritual:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"*

The words of truth that were spoken were like sharp arrows that penetrated deep into the hearts of listeners.

The crown comes from the Greek word "*stephanos*", which means a wreathe, such as a wreathe of victory. Thus this shows that the church, under the leadership of Christ, was to be victorious.

Went forth conquering, and to conquer - Under the power of the Holy Spirit given to them at Pentecost, the early Christian church went forth conquering over its enemies, so much so that Paul exclaims that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven.

Colossians 1:23 *"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;"*

Paul is saying that in his day the gospel had been preached to everyone at that time. The gospel at this time went out with such tremendous power and victory and was accepted, that by the end of the first century there were five million Christians. So, in seventy years it had gone from 12 men to five million, that's how many had accepted Christ as their Saviour, so when it speaks about going out to conquer and to conquer, that is indeed what happened.

The 2nd Seal

The time period of the second seal, the red horse, is around 100-313/323 AD.

Revelation 6:3-4 *"3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."*

Now we have a red horse that is going to go out and take peace from the earth and kill people and he has a great sword. A sword represents war, bloodshed and violence (obviously, because of what it is used for), it is also a symbol of the state/civil power, and it also represents division.

Matthew 10:34-36 *"34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."*

So now we have another type of warfare that is to take place. Back in those days there were two types of swords, there was one type that was a short sword, which was used for hand to hand fighting close up, but they also had a long sword that was about four foot long that was used by those who rode on horses, and this is the type of sword that it talks about here. Now you will find that any time in history that the gospel has moved with great rapidity across the earth and there has been a revival and people have reached out and accepted the Lord and where there has been a great influx in Christianity, there has always been persecution. Every time this has ever happened the Devil has been there to persecute the church, and here as the church grew with such rapidity in the first century, all of a sudden Rome turned her hatred and wrath upon the church, because it looked like Christianity was going to take over and so they began to persecute the people.

As white is a symbol of purity so red is a symbol of sin and also the colour of blood.

Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

Thus the white/purity had begun to be corrupted by sinfulness and heresies. The apostles had warned the church that there would be grievous wolves coming into the flock, speaking perverse things, after their death.

Acts 20:29-31 *"29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."*

False teachers, heresy and apostasy crept into the church. There was a war against false teachings and apostasy, with those that held to the purity of the faith coming under fierce persecution. If you did not show your allegiance to the Roman Empire then you were taken to the arena and feed to the lions

that had not eaten for days. Christians were also used as human torches; this was a terrible, terrible time. This is the same time we learnt of in the study of the seven churches, this was the church of Smyrna, where they lived in fear of their lives and where this persecution intensified under the reign of Diocletian for 10 years...300-310 AD.

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

During this time period, around 100-313/323 AD, the true believers came under heavy persecution from the Roman Empire. The apostate church starts to emerge and seeks the aid of the state. Divisions came into the church as the majority of the church become sinful, heretical and political. Literal peace and spiritual peace had truly been taken away. The state was now punishing Christianity under the penalty of death. Divisions and power struggles were going on in the church. The apostate church was seeking after the state, but the faithful resisted the apostasy.

The 3rd Seal

The time period of the third seal, the black horse, is around 313-538 AD.

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

Here we have a direct contrast between the first and third horse. The first horse was white (denoting its purity/righteousness) the third black, which is the complete opposite of white and thus must denote unrighteousness/impurity, error and apostasy. You will invariably find that when Christianity advances and many reach out and accept the Lord and the Devil has persecuted, that if he finds he cannot accomplish his need by persecution then he uses something that never fails, and that is compromise, flattery, enticement, and by these things he has been able to lead many away. That's why Jesus says that each one of us needs to be careful about the cares of the world.

Luke 21:34 *"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."*

Also when the children of Israel were on their way to the Promised Land we have the story of Balaam and Balak in Numbers, where Balaam could not curse the Israelites so he devised another way to get to them:

Numbers 31:16 *"Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD."*

Balaam suggested that the Moabite women went down among the Israelites and lead them astray by sexual immorality and worship of their pagan gods, anything that he could do to get them to turn from the true God, and this he accomplished.

J.C. Woodhouse, in his book "The Apocalypse", says:

"As the stream of Christianity flowed farther from its fountain, it became more and more corrupt, and as the centuries advanced, superstition advanced with them; and…tales of purgatory, and pious frauds, and the worship of saints, relics, and images, took the place of pure and simple Christianity: till at the length, the Book of God laid aside for legendary tales, and 'tradition of men', all these corruptions were

collected into a regular system of superstition and oppression." ***J.C. Woodhouse, The Apocalypse, p. 146***

This is a good description of the church – it moved and it lost all the things that it had.

This is a danger that we face, as we get farther and farther from our forefathers who laid the pillars and foundations of our faith, they were staunch believers, they studied and agonised over the word of God, they preached it, they gave their life for it, they gave everything they had, but as it gets farther and farther from its foundation we lose the sense of urgency.

"During the years 313-538 A.D. when the apostate papal church was coming to the completion of being set up in 538 A.D. During the early years of this period, Constantine (the Roman Emperor) was supposedly converted to Christianity in order to secure unity of the empire. He made Christianity the state religion and thus made it popular; even to the point of offering a white garment and twenty pieces of gold to those pagans who would become baptized Christians." ***Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. 2, page 331***

But this was to be its downfall, for it was during this time that most of the superstitious and pagan practices entered the church. Finally most of the Christians consented to lower their standard, and a union was formed between Christianity and paganism. Sunday worship entered the church, or the chief day for the pagan worship of Mithraism which is the day of the sun/Sunday. This was instead of the seventh day Sabbath instituted by God at creation.

Genesis 2:1-3 *"1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."*

The pagans also brought in their idolatrous practices, but the church changed the names of these pagan idols into Jesus, Mary, and the worship of the saints; and still kept the idolatrous ceremonies. The doctrine of the Trinity - God says He is one, but the Trinity doctrine says He's three in one (and of course we human beings know better than God). Celibacy of the priesthood came into practice. The burning of wax tappers and candles, the doctrine of purgatory, eternal burning hell fire. The Mass was introduced, also the doctrine of original sin etc. Various forms of corrupt manuscripts were written. It was the great age of compromise as we saw under the church of Pergamos.

A pair of balances - There are three different applications that can be made for what balances represent.

1. Commerce/trade:

Jeremiah 32:9-10 *"9 And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. 10 And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances."*

2. Corrupt dealing:

Hosea 12:7 *"He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress."*

Amos 8:5 *"Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?"*

3. Judgment:

Daniel 5:27 *"TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."*

All three of these apply very well to the time frame of the black horse, as we will now go on to explain.

1. Religion was commercialised during this time period because of the lust for wealth of the apostate church. People were led to believe that they needed to pay money to obtain salvation. If you were baptized, you had to pay, if you were confirmed in the faith, you had to pay, if you were married, you had to pay, if you received forgiveness from the priest for sin, you had to pay, when you buried your loved one, you had to pay, and when masses were said, to get them out of purgatory, you had to pay. This type of commerce was a source of tremendous income for the apostate church.

2. The corrupt dealings of the apostate church included the sale of relics, that is, the bones of so-called saints. This was used to draw people into the church. There were many cathedrals that claimed to have many of these things, such as fingers of the apostles, pieces of the cross, a lock of the virgin Mary's hair, all the way through to a piece of John the Baptist's head. They were so bold in their claims - we have this record from "A Laymen's History of the Church":

"But Canterbury eclipsed them all in the splendour of its relics. Round the shrine of St. Thomas were 12 complete skeletons of canonised saints - three skulls, four arms and 300 thighs, thumbs, teeth and jawbones. Here too, was part of the Bethlehem manger and of the virgin's bed and the table of the last supper. Here was Aaron's rod that budded and more marvellous still, the actual clay out of which God had moulded Adam." ***A Laymen's History of the Church of England, pages 47-49***

There were also fraudulent promises, given to those that looked upon these things, by the church. One of these was the remission from purgatory for a lengthy period of time. People were being grossly misled.

3. Balances also represent judgment (Daniel 5:27). After many warnings and the rejection of the true knowledge of God, and His long-suffering with their apostasy; we suggest that God has weighed them in the balances and found them wanting, and because of their rejection of the true knowledge, God has rejected them.

Hosea 4:6 *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."*

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

Measure of wheat...three measures of barley for a penny - These were the staple food products for that day, with the penny being equal to a day's wages for a labourer. This means that the cost of the common food was 8-10 times above the normal price. When prices are so high, it means that there is a famine, and the prices go up due to lack of these things.

We are not dealing with a literal famine but a spiritual one. The apostate church created a spiritual famine by taking the word of God away from the people, locking it up in the Latin language which only a few could read and understand. This allowed superstition and error to creep in, which enslaved the people's minds.

Hurt not the oil and the wine - If these things were not to be hurt, it would mean they were to be preserved during this time.

Oil was used for light...

Exodus 25:6 *"Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense."*

We are regarded as the light of the world and we are to let our light shine.

Matthew 5:14-16 *"14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

A person can only shine forth the truth in their lives through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit is represented by oil.

1 Samuel 16:13 *"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward."*

Wine represents doctrine/teachings.

Isaiah 29:9-13 *"9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. 10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. 11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: 12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. 13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:"*

Matthew 15:8-9 *"8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

Intoxicating/fermented wine represents false/corrupt doctrine and thus unfermented wine represents true doctrine.

Even though there was to be a spiritual famine for the word of God, there would be a small remnant that would still possess a Holy Spirit led life and the true form of God's word. One group that was able to preserve the purity of God's word was the Waldenses of Northern Italy. They had God's word in their own native language. Salvation was still available to those that would seek after it.

The 4th Seal

The time period of the fourth seal, the pale horse, is around 538-1517 AD.

Revelation 6:7-8 *"7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."*

Now we come to the pale horse, and this text relates not only spiritually but physically. Once again we have a different coloured horse and thus a different type of warfare. The word "pale" comes from the Greek word "*chloros*", which means green or greenish. This colour is deadly as it is the colour that is the token of the approach of death. This is a good description of the time period of Papal supremacy

(when it had gained full supremacy of the stately/political power in 538 AD) until the reformation began in 1517. It was sickly and repulsive.

Death and hell - The word hell means the grave. During this time when the apostate church was supreme, there were over 5,000,000 of the true and faithful believers slaughtered. And it was during this time that the inquisition was set up. Spiritual death came from the suppression of the scriptures, and literal death came to those that opposed the apostate church.

Fourth part of the earth - It is said that the Papacy ruled a quarter of the then-known world. It goes on to say that this power would kill by the sword, by hunger, death and beasts of the earth – here is outlined how the faithful were persecuted. Whether it was by the sword, starvation, the sentence of death, or the beasts of the earth, the Papacy used all to accomplish its objective. This was repulsive in the eyes of God.

Now we come to the fifth seal, and notice that we now no longer have horsemen or one of the living creatures saying come and see, there is now a decided change in what is happening.

The horses told of events that would take place on the earth, but as we go into the 5th, 6th and 7th seals we will see the results of these events and the judgments of the wicked taking place. We see the wicked being told that they have been given this time to repent, and the events that will occur should they refuse to repent.

The 5th Seal

The time period of the fifth seal is around 1517-1798 AD.

Revelation 6:9-11 *"9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."*

Notice why they had been slain. They were slain because of their faith in God's word and because of the witness they bore in their own lives. They had sealed their faith with their blood. But why are they depicted us being under the altar? Well when it talks about the altar here it is referring to the altar of sacrifice that was out in the courtyard of the sanctuary. And when they had offered the sacrifice they took the blood and they poured it at the base of this altar.

Leviticus 4:7 *"And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."*

When applying this to the true tabernacle (the heavenly sanctuary), we find that there are only two apartments of the sanctuary in heaven. The courtyard, where this altar is located, we find to be on earth. A careful study of types and antitypes will show that the work that was carried out in the courtyard of the earthly sanctuary was a type of what Christ would accomplish here on earth. A small example of this is as follows; the sacrifice was slain in the courtyard. Christ, our sacrifice, was slain upon this earth. Thus this shows that the persons were martyred and their blood spilt, or poured out, upon this earth.

Now these saints cry out to God from here, wanting to know how long before their blood would be avenged. This is not literal souls under the alter, but like Abel's blood, was simply a witness crying out:

Genesis 4:10 *"And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."*

It is their innocent blood that has been shed that cries out for justice to be done.

The word "souls" in scripture is often referred to as "persons".

Genesis 46:18 *"18 These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls."*

Genesis 46:22 *"22 These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen."*

Acts 2:41 *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."*

Acts 27:37 *"And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls."*

1 Peter 3:20 *"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."*

These persons were slain, that is, had been slain, placing it in the past tense. This would naturally mean that these persons that were slain are those that lost their lives under the Pale Horse of the Fourth Seal, in the great persecution, during the time of Papal supremacy, in the time of the Inquisition and Saint Bartholomew Massacre where 60,000 were killed in one day. And now they cry out to God; how long before you avenge our blood. But there was a reason why God said to them that they should rest for a little while longer.

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

We too are offered these white robes; it does not matter how bad we may have been, and how dark our sins, when the Lord Jesus Christ gives us that white robe of His righteousness then we are clean and pure in the eyes of God, no matter who we are, as long as we have repented and given our heart and lives to the Lord.

John 5:28-29 "28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Revelation 19:8 "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

That fine linen represents the righteousness that Christ gives to you and to me.

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

Revelation 7:14 *"...These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

This is all of God's people clothed in white robes, pure in the righteousness of Jesus. Now in Revelation 6:11 it said that they should rest for a little while – why?

They should rest yet for a little season - You see the time of the resurrection had not come. How long will it be until they are judged? Daniel answers this question.

Daniel 8:13-14 *"13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."*

We will not go into that prophecy now, but the Angel told him that it would be for a definite period of time, and that's the reason it says:

Revelation 22:12 *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."*

In other words, God is saying that the judgement had to take place first; the judgement has to happen before you can have the resurrection, and these dear saints will sleep until the resurrection.

This also shows that those that have put to death the faithful are not being punished in hell at this time. Vengeance belongs to God, not to Satan.

Hebrews 10:30 *"For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people."*

These saints will ultimately be avenged when the wicked are destroyed in the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:15 *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

White robes were given to each of the martyrs, these dear souls that were martyred for the word of God and for the witness that they had lived by. They were regarded by the apostate church as the basest of criminals, their characters were painted the blackest of black when being burnt at the stake. Generally the victims had placed on their heads a paper mitre that had demons painted on it. This was to indicate that they were basically demons in human form. There was to be no mercy shown to them. But how then were they given white robes?

White is a symbol of overcomers.

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

Also of righteousness.

Revelation 19:8 *"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."*

How then could they be seen as such when they were seen as the basest of criminals with the blackest of characters? The Protestant Reformation dramatically changed the opinion of the world concerning the martyrs.

"But the Reformation began its work. It began to be seen that the church was the corrupt and disreputable party, and those against whom it vented its rage were good, and pure, and the true. The work went on amongst the most enlightened nations, the reputation of the church going down, and

that of the martyrs coming up, until the corruptions of the papal abominations were fully exposed, and that the huge system of iniquity stood forth before all the world in all its naked deformity, while the martyrs were vindicated from all the aspersions under which that anti-Christian church had sought to bury them. Then it was seen that they had suffered, not for being vile and criminal, but "for the word of God, and the testimony which they held." Then their praises were sung, their virtues admired, their fortitude applauded, their names honoured, and their memories cherished. White robes were thus given unto every one of them." ***Daniel and the Revelation, by Uriah Smith, page 413.***

This time of the reformation, when men like John Calvin, Martin Luther, Zwingli, all these great reformers, stood up and preached, and out of that five hundred thousand Frenchmen under the preaching of John Calvin gave their hearts to the Lord, and many of those people paid with their lives – that's what verse 6 talks about, these souls under the alter that had been slain for the word of God. The gospel spread, and the Devil turned his wrath and great fury on those that had accepted the gospel and who had given their lives to Jesus Christ.

Rest yet for a little season *- Their total vindication was to be after the martyrdom of their fellow servants and brethren. Even though the Reformation was spreading from country to country, Rome was still putting to death God's faithful people. But we also see that before the close of probation there will be death to those that do not worship the beast and his image.*

Revelation 13:15-17 *"15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."*

Now as we go into the 6th seal, let's first look at Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:29 *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"*

It says immediately after the tribulation of those days – now by "those days" it's referring to the time of persecution during the time of the reformation, and we find that this persecution subsided in the late 1700's, as the end of the time period of the fifth seal was approaching (1798). Now let's continue to read the words of Christ in Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:30 *"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

It is the time period of the 6th seal that Christ was talking about in Matthew 24. This is the very time that you and I are living in today. We are living in the time of this 6th seal, near the close of it. And it is within this time period, as it draws to a close, that we will see the coming of Jesus...

The 6th Seal

The time period of the sixth seal is around 1798 AD to the second coming of Christ.

Revelation 6:12-13 *"12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And*

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

Now Christ said immediately after the tribulation of those days, which we find comes to an end in the late 1700's, He said the sun would go dark, the moon would turn to blood and the stars would fall from Heaven.

This represents the period of time from the late 1700's to the coming of Jesus Christ, which represents the period of time in which you and I are living. And just exactly as it said would happen you have the Lisbon earthquake.

The Great Earthquake of November 1st 1755

A great earthquake - At the opening of the sixth seal there was a great earthquake. From the information that will be given below, it will be seen that this prophecy is fulfilled by the Lisbon earthquake of November 1, 1755.

"At Lisbon a sound of thunder was heard underground, and immediately afterwards a violent shock threw down the greater part of that city. In the course of about six minutes, sixty thousand persons perished. The sea first retired, and laid the bar dry; it then rolled in, rising fifty feet or more above its ordinary level." ***Sir Charles Lyell, Principles of Geology, page 495***

"The great earthquake of Nov. 1, 1755, extended over a tract of at least 4,000,000 square miles. Its effects were even extended to the waters in many places, where the shocks were not perceptible. It pervaded the greater portion of Europe, Africa, and America; but its extreme violence was exercised on the south western part of the former. In Africa, this earthquake was felt almost as severely as it had been in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed. Many houses were thrown down at Fez and Mequinez, and multitudes were buried beneath the ruins. Similar effects were realized at Morocco. Its effects were likewise felt at Tangier, at Tetuan, at Funchal in the Island of Madeira. It is probable that all Africa was shaken. At the north, it extended to Norway and Sweden. Germany, Holland, France, Great Britain, and Ireland were all more or less agitated by the same great commotion of the elements. Lisbon (Portugal), previous to the earthquake in 1755, contained 150,000 inhabitants. Mr. Barretti says that 90,000 persons were lost on that fatal day."

"In no part of the volcanic region of southern Europe has so tremendous an earthquake occurred in modern times as that which began on the 1st of November, 1755, at Lisbon. A sound of thunder was heard underground, and immediately afterward a violent shock threw down the greater part of that city. In the course of about six minutes, sixty thousand persons perished. The sea first retired, and laid the bar dry; it then rolled in, rising fifty feet above its ordinary level."

"The most extraordinary circumstances which occurred at Lisbon during the catastrophe, was the subsidence of the new quay, built entirely of marble, at an immense expense. A great concourse of people had collected there for safety, as a spot where they might be beyond the reach of falling ruins; but suddenly the quay sunk down with all the people on it, and not one of the dead bodies ever floated to the surface. A great number of boats and small vessels anchored near it, all full of people, were swallowed up as in a whirlpool. No fragments of these wrecks ever rose again to the surface, and the water in the place where the quay had stood is stated, in many accounts, to be unfathomable; but Whitehurst says he ascertained it to be one hundred fathoms."

"The great area over which this Lisbon earthquake extended is very remarkable. The movement was most violent in Spain, Portugal, and the north of Africa; but nearly the whole of Europe, and even the West Indies, felt the shock on the same day. A seaport called St. Ubes, about twenty miles south of

Lisbon, was engulfed. At Algiers and Fez in Africa, the agitation of the earth was equally violent, and at the distance of eight leagues from Morocco, a village, with the inhabitants, to the number of about eight to ten thousand persons, together with all their cattle, were swallowed up. Soon after, the earth closed again over them." ***As quoted in Daniel and the Revelation by Uriah Smith, pages 414-417***

What a massive earthquake this was, it was the greatest earthquake in area and is easily seen to be the starting date of the sixth seal. We see the same language in Revelation 16 under the seventh plague.

Revelation 16:18 *"...and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."*

Revelation 16:20 *"And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."*

Also in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 4:23-27 *"23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate."*

And again in Isaiah:

Isaiah 24:19-20 *"The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again."*

This earth will be so terribly shaken by this quake that even the islands will sink and the mountains be moved out of their places. This occurs when Christ comes the second time.

The Dark Day of May 19th 1780

There is no explanation for this:

"Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind…stands the dark day of May 19, 1780,--a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England." ***R. M. Devens, Our First Century, page 89***

The sun became black as sackcloth of hair – following the earthquake there was to be a darkening of the sun. This was in May 19, 1780. Here is another account from Webster's Unabridged Dictionary of 1884:

"Dark Day, The. May 19, 1780; so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day, extending over all New England. In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. For several days previous, the wind had been variable, but chiefly from the southwest and the northeast. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known." ***Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1884 edition, page 1604***

"The darkness was such as to occasion farmers to leave their work in the field, and retire to their dwellings. Lights became necessary to the transaction of business within doors. The darkness continued through the day." ***Gage's History of Rowley, Mass.***

"It was midnight darkness at noonday...Thousands of people who could not account for it from natural causes, were greatly terrified; and indeed, it cast a universal gloom on the earth. The frogs and night-hawks began their notes." ***Dr. Adams.***

"Candles were lighted in many houses. Birds were silent and disappeared. Fowls retired to roost. It was the general opinion that the Day of Judgment was at hand." ***Pres. Dwight, in Ct. Historical Collections***

"The dark day of Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read of with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain." ***Herschel.***

For those who think it may have been an eclipse of the sun, it would be interesting to note the following:

"...the moon was more than one hundred and fifty degrees from the sun all that day, and was 'more than forty hours' motion past her opposition." ***Great Events of the Greatest Century, page 46***

The Moon Became As Blood

This too was on May 19, 1780. Note the following quotations.

"Though at nine o'clock that night the moon rose to the full, it had not the least effect to dispel the deathlike shadows. After midnight the darkness disappeared, and the moon, when first visible, had the appearance of blood." ***The Great Controversy p. 187***

"The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as has ever been observed since the Almighty fiat gave birth to light. I could not help conceiving at the time that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in the impenetrable darkness, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet." ***Mr. Tenney, of Exeter, N. H., quoted by Mr. Gage to the "Historical Society"***

The Stars of Heaven Fell to the Earth

This event occurred on November 13, 1833.

"No language, indeed, can come up to the splendor of that magnificent display...no one who did not witness it can form an adequate conception of its glory. It seemed as if the whole starry heavens had congregated at one point near the zenith, 1833, and were simultaneously shooting forth, with the velocity of lightning, to every part of the horizon; and yet they were not exhausted—thousands swiftly followed in the tracks of thousands, as if created for the occasion." ***E.Reed, in the Christian Advocate and Journal, Dec 13, 1833***

So these stars fell as thick as snow. Some accounts read where people literally went out and laid on the ground and cried because they thought that judgment had come. These were the signs that would happen and that would mark the time that we had moved in to. So we are living in what the scriptures refer to as the Time of the End. As this 6th seal is being poured out.

"Extensive and magnificent showers of shooting stars have been known to occur at various places in modern times; but the most universal and wonderful which has ever been recorded, is that of the 13th of November, 1833, the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery

commotion. No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or with so much dread and alarm by another...During the three hours of its continuance, the day of judgment was believed to be only waiting for sunrise." ***Our First Century, page 329***

As a fig tree casteth her untimely figs - Green figs have a good hold upon the tree, thus would need a mighty wind to shake them off. But when shaken off they would not naturally fall to the ground as ripe figs would. The force needed to pluck them from the tree by a mighty wind would send the green figs in every direction. So too it was with the falling of the stars. They did not fall just in one direction or straight down, but fell in every direction.

Mark 13:24 shows that the darkening of the sun was to occur "in those days" (the days of Papal supremacy 538 - 1798) but after that tribulation (the persecution was cut short for the elect's sake in 1773). So we were to expect the dark day to be after 1773 but before 1798, and we have seen that this has been fulfilled as Christ and John the Revelator have said.

Parallels between Matthew and Revelation

Revelation 6:12-17	Matthew 24:29-30
Great earthquake	Not mentioned
Sun darkened	Sun darkened
Moon as blood	Moon unlit (occurred the same day)
Stars fall	Stars fall
Atmospheric heaven departs	Heavens powers shaken
Great earthquake	Not mentioned
Not mentioned	Sign of the Son of Man
Flight and cry of unsaved	Populace mourns
Coming of Christ	Coming of Christ

As the beginning of the time period of the 6th seal approached, just exactly as God had said, these things/signs came to pass.

Looking at these signs, we can easily conclude that God was alerting mankind to the fact that that the last days had begun and that we should be looking for and expecting His return. Since 1798 we have been living in wat the Bible calls "the time of the end".

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

As we have seen from Matthew 24:29-30, this is none other than the shaking of the powers of heaven when Christ comes the second time. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and will also be on fire.

2 Peter 3:10-12 *"10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and*

hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

Joel 3:16 *"The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."*

Hebrews 12:25-27 *"25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."*

In other words, after these signs the next momentous event is the coming of Jesus. It says the heavens are going to split right down the middle.

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

There are seven groups of the unsaved mentioned here, denoting all of the lost. Notice there is no respect of persons with God. Position, rank, title, and honour mean absolutely nothing. It will not bring salvation to them. All have slighted salvation.

They wish to be hidden in the dens and the rocks of the mountains. Why?

Revelation 6:16-17 *"16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"*

"They who never prayed to Him whose arm could bring salvation, now raise an agonizing prayer to rocks and mountains to bury them forever from the sight of Him whose presence brings to them destruction. Fain would they now avoid reaping what they have sown (Galatians 6:7) by a life of lust and sin. Fain would they now shun the fearful treasure of wrath which they have been heaping up for themselves against this day (Romans 2:5). Fain would they bury themselves and their catalogue of crimes in everlasting darkness. And so they fly to the rocks, caves, caverns, and fissures, which the broken surface of the earth now presents before them. But it is too late. They cannot conceal their guilt, nor escape the long-delayed vengeance." ***Daniel and the Revelation, by Uriah Smith, page 433***

Galatians 6:7 *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."*

Romans 2:5 *"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;"*

When all heaven and the saints were interested in their salvation, they were not. When life was offered to them, they were not interested. But now that they know they are going to reap what they have sown, they run to find safety. They have slighted salvation and are lost eternally.

Isaiah 2:17-21 *"17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. 18 And the idols he shall utterly abolish. 19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and*

for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. 20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; 21 To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

Jeremiah 8:20 *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."*

But as the wicked pray to the rocks in utter despair, the prayer of the righteous will be...

Isaiah 25:9 *"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."*

By the events that have just been examined, it is impossible to say that the saints will be secretly raptured away. The wicked flee from His presence, thus showing that they too will see Christ come.

Jesus Christ comes back at the end of the 6th seal, and this is the time in which you and I are living, the time in which we can expect the coming of the Lord. Now you may say, well people have been saying that for hundreds of years, and they have, but they have not had the signs that you and I have had. We have seen things that nobody else has seen that without question, undeniably fulfils the Word of God.

The wicked have rejected the call to stand for Christ, but now they cry, "Who shall be able to stand?"

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

At the opening of the seventh seal there was silence in Heaven for half an hour – why?

Matthew 16:27 *"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."*

Matthew 25:31 *"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:"*

This is why there is silence in Heaven; because all have left Heaven with Christ to gather together His children and take them home. What a marvellous day for those awaiting His return.

And so we see that the seven seals have all been fulfilled one after another.

Are we ready for Jesus to come? Who will be able to stand during this momentous time?

Will you? Will I?

Revelation - Chapter 7

The 144,000

In Revelation 6 we reached the 6th seal and now in the 7th chapter we have a kind of interlude that is put in between the 13th and 14th verses of the 6th chapter, because it is after verse 13 that Christ comes.

Revelation 6:13-14 *"13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."*

This helps us to know where we are in the stream of time.

We will pick up the 7th seal in our study of Revelation chapter 8.

But now here in chapter 7 we will look at the 144,000; who are they, why are they a special group, what does the scripture have to tell us about them?

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

After these things - The context for chapter seven is the sixth seal. The question was posed in verse 17 of Revelation 6; "who shall be able to stand?". And now we find this question is answered here in chapter 7. In the 6th chapter God made it clear to John what was going to happen to the wicked, and now John is told that these four Angels are holding back the winds of strife - this is the time that you and I are living in today.

Four angels standing on the four corners of the earth – We also find this expression in Isaiah 11...

Isaiah 11:12 *"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."*

It is clear that the four corners of the earth are the four points of the compass. If an object has only four corners, an expression like this would mean all encompassing, thus we are dealing with global events.

Holding the four winds of the earth - Here we are given the answer of what these angels are doing. They are holding the four winds of the earth. So when talking about the four winds we are once again speaking about global events.

Mark 13:27 *"And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."*

Matthew 24:31 *"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

God uses wind/whirlwind in Bible prophecy to represent war, violence, bloodshed, and strife coming upon the people of the earth. So the four winds represent global strife among the nations of the earth. In Jeremiah 51 it says...

Jeremiah 51:1 *"Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind;"*

And in Jeremiah 25...

Jeremiah 25:31-33 *"31 A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. 32 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. 33 And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground."*

It is interesting to note here that it says they shall not be lamented over, nor gathered, nor buried...why? Because there will be no one left on earth to do this - the righteous have gone to Heaven and all the wicked are dead, the earth is utterly void of habitation. Jeremiah 4 explains what the condition of this earth will be at that time.

Jeremiah 4:21-31 *"21 How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? 22 For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. 23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. 24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. 25 I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. 26 I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. 27 For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. 28 For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black; because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it. 29 The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein. 30 And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life. 31 For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers."*

It is interesting that that at the beginning of creation the earth was void and darkness covered the earth, and so it will be at the end of earth's history as we know it, until God makes all things new, which we will see as we go through Revelation - there is a blessed hope.

It is also interesting that verses 30-31 tie in with Revelation 17 talking of the beast power that wears scarlet that is adorned with precious jewels and gold, whose people turn against her in the end time, she has persecuted mercilessly through the ages. We will see more about this as we go through Revelation.

So we have seen that these four angels are holding back calamities that are to come upon the entire earth. The only instance that we find in the Bible dealing with a similar event is Noah and the flood, which has already happened. In Daniel it says:

Daniel 12:1 *"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to*

that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

The time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation is commonly known as the time of Jacob's trouble...

Jeremiah 30:7 "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

This deals with events on a global scale around the time of close of probation and the seven last plagues. It is this that the four angels are holding back, the destruction that Satan will be permitted to bring upon the earth.

Should not blow on the earth...sea...tree - Once again we see that this is on a global scale.

So God has been holding back those winds of strife, but we believe that you and I are living in a time when these winds are slowly being released. Things are happening today that we have never before seen in our lifetime.

Revelation 7:2-3 *"2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."*

Another angel ascending from the east - This is a different angel from the four that are holding back the four winds. The east denotes that this angel comes from, and is dispatched by, God.

Ezekiel 43:2 *"And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory."*

Matthew 24:27 *"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."*

Having the seal of the living God - This angel has the seal of the living God, which is to be placed upon God's faithful people living at the time of the end of the sixth seal, right before Jesus comes. Let's look at what this seal is.

In Isaiah 8 we see that the law of God is to be sealed amongst His people.

Isaiah 8:16 *"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples."*

Now a law is not valid unless it has a seal, and so the law of God must also have a seal. For a seal to be authentic it must contain three elements:

1. **Name**
2. **Title**
3. **Territory/Domain** that is ruled over

These are the three elements that we must look for in order to locate the seal in the law of God. These three elements are found only in the fourth Commandment of the Ten Commandments, which we find in Exodus chapter 20:

Exodus 20:8-11 *"8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy*

stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

So here we have...

1. Name - **Lord thy God**
2. Title - **Creator** (maker of heaven and earth)
3. Territory - **Heaven and earth**

So we can see that the fourth Commandment, the seventh-day Sabbath, contains the seal of the living God. But in what way is it a seal?

In Romans 4 we see that the words "sign" and "seal" are used synonymously, that is, they have the same meaning and are therefore interchangeable.

Romans 4:11 *"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:"*

In Exodus 31, God states that the Sabbath is a sign/seal to remind us that God is the creator all things, thus the Sabbath is a sign/seal of creation.

Exodus 31:17 "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."

The Sabbath is also a sign/seal to remind us that God is the One who sanctifies us.

Ezekiel 20:12 "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them."

The word "sanctify" means to make holy. Man was created holy and in the image of God. When man sinned, his holy/sanctified state was lost. Also the image of God has been destroyed in man by sin.

Thus the seal of the Sabbath also assures us that God intends on restoring the image of God in us.

How the believer receives this seal is found in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 20:20 *"And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God."*

We are told to hallow the Sabbath of God, which means we are to treat the Sabbath as being sacred, keeping it holy. It is not enough to merely believe in the Sabbath, we need to keep it holy.

Cried with a loud voice - This angel now cries out to the four angels that are holding back the winds of strife - he tells them to not hurt the earth, sea, nor the trees, that is, not to let loose the four winds until a certain time. What time?

Till we have sealed the servants of our God - The four winds of strife are to be held in check until the servants of their God had been sealed.

Those that are sealed are those that are servants of the living God. A servant is one that serves his master and does all that his master bids. Thus they are giving loving service to God and not serving sin.

John 14:15 *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

Romans 6:19-22 *"19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."*

So they are leading a sanctified life and keeping the Sabbath day holy. In Revelation 14 it says...

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

It is stated that the Father's name is written in their foreheads. This is not a contradiction with the seal, as a careful study of the scriptures will show. Name refers to character in the Bible. The law of God is a transcript of the name/character of God.

Psalms 119:172 *"My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness."*

Exodus 33:18-19 *"18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. 19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."*

Exodus 34:5-7 *"5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."*

Thus this shows that the 144,000 are leading a sanctified life and have the image/character of the Father reproduced in their lives.

In their foreheads - Behind the forehead is what is commonly known as the frontal lobes of the brain. It is scientifically proven that this part of the brain is where a person makes all their decisions. It is not a literal mark, for all to see, that is placed on the forehead. But it is a conscious freewill choice to follow all that the Lord has said in loving obedience, and not a forced compliance.

Revelation 7:4-8 *"4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."*

So these 144,000 are made up from all the tribes of the children of Israel. Now 144,000 as you know is a multiple of 12 multiplied by 1,000. Now there is a lot of reason for this in the scripture, because you will find that the armies of Israel were divided by thousands, and this represented God's people. Now does this mean that the 144,000 are just literal Jews, how are we to look at this? There are some

people that believe that this is just literal Jews, but let's see what the scripture has to say. Jesus said to the children of Israel...

Matthew 23:38 *"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."*

When they refused to accept Him and rejected Him as the Saviour and Messiah, He told them your house is left unto you desolate. And remember as He hung on the cross...

Matthew 27:51 *"... the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"*

This veil separated the Holy place from the Most Holy place, and when the veil was torn from top to bottom this opened a way into the Most Holy place, showing that the sacrifices, the offerings, the whole ceremonial system that the Jews had practised for centuries, had come to an end. The Saviour had died, the Lamb of God had been sacrificed, and that whole system was now at an end, and with the ending of that system something very dramatic happened, because up to that point the gospel, and what was done for mankind and salvation, was all contained within the Jewish nation. If you wanted to know about God you would have had to have become part of the Jewish nation, and as long as it was within the Jewish nation then it was able to be contained, but when Jesus came and died, and most of the Jewish nation rejected Him, then it was no longer contained within the Jewsish nation alone but every individual could now come and accept Him and become a child of God. There was no longer Jew and Gentile, no longer that division between the two, and all of a sudden the gospel was free to go to the whole world and this changed the whole system of things.

Now some say that 144,000 is a symbolic number, others say it is a literal number, but whether it is symbolic or literal, the 144,000 do have a symbolic meaning. One thing of great importance is the character that they possess.

Revelation 14:1-5 *"1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."*

Now many people believe that there are lost tribes of Israel, but this is not correct, there are no lost tribes, nowhere in the Bible does it talk about lost tribes of Israel. If you want to study more on this then read the book of Ezra. After they had been in captivity for many years you find in the book of Ezra that they offered a sacrifice for each one of the tribes, and they could not do that without one of the people from that tribe being present, because nowhere do they ever offer a sacrifice by proxy. So whilst they may have been carried into captivity, this does not mean that they did not exist.

Galatians 3:9 *"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."*

Galatians 3:26 *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*

So when you and I accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour we become a child of God and part of spiritual Israel, we become a spiritual descendant of Abraham, by faith in the promises that God made to Abraham of old which now also belong to us as Abraham's spiritual descendants.

Galatians 3:28 *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."*

We are all one in Christ, and Abraham's heirs according to the promise. So when it talks about the 144,000 of all the tribes of Israel, this is not talking about literal Israel, but spiritual Israel, God's people.

Romans 2:28-29 *"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."*

So when we look at the 144,000 we have to look at this in the sense of God's people. The number twelve is used many times in the Bible. The number twelve is God's kingdom number:

- Twelve tribes
- Twelve disciples
- Twenty-four elders
- Twelve gates
- Twelve foundations
- Twelve thousand furlongs

Twelve thousand from each tribe representing each type of character.

In Genesis 49 Jacob lists these characteristics:

- Judah – independent
- Issachar – complacent
- Zebulon – itchy feet
- Reuben – amorous
- Simeon – sadistic
- Gad – playboy
- Ephraim – brilliant
- Manasseh – reticent
- Benjamin – uncompromising
- Dan – critical
- Asher – fastidious
- Naphtali – impractical

These were their characteristics, the way they were. Now in Revelation 7:5-8 you will notice that this list of the sons of Jacob that make up the 12 tribes of Israel there are two that are missing, these are Dan and Ephraim, and there is a definite reason why they are missing.

Ephraim was the son of Joseph, he must have had everything he ever wanted, his father was the Prime Minister of Egypt, but as you read about Ephraim you will find that he was one of the foremost that led the children of Israel into idolatry.

Then we have Dan, and he was critical, and you and I need to take a close look at this because he will not make it into the kingdom of God because he was critical, and we need to ensure that we do not have this nature, and this is the reason these two were left out of the twelve tribes.

The list of names that we have here in Revelation 7 are the same names that will be over the gates of the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:10-12 *"10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:"*

And according to our personality/character we will go through one of these gates into the city. So here you have the 144,000 each with a different type of character/personality.

Comparison of Literal and Spiritual Israel

Literal Israel	Revelation 7
Judah	Judah
Reuben	Reuben
Gad	Gad
Asher	Asher
Naphtali	Naphtali
Manassah	Manassah
Simeon	Simeon
Issachar	Levi
Zebulun	Issachar
Benjamin	Zebulun
Ephraim	Joseph
Dan	Benjamin

The difference between the two lists is that the names of Ephraim and Dan have been left out and the names of Joseph and Levi added in.

Hosea 4:17 *"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."*

Genesis 49:17 *"Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward."*

Romans 1:28-32 *"28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."*

There will be no idolaters or backbiters/gossipers in heaven.

So this cannot be literal Israel as the two lists do not line up. But we find it to be the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel that James was addressing his letter to the twelve tribes.

James 1:1 *"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting."*

Romans 9:6-8 *"6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."*

See also Romans 11:17-24, and 2:28-29.

Before we move on we will take a closer look at the identifying marks of the 144,000.

1. In the context of chapter 6, they are those that will stand at the second coming.
2. They pass through great tribulation (such as the 7 last plagues).
3. They are part of spiritual Israel, not literal Israel.
4. They are righteous.
5. They have hungered, thirsted, felt the effects of heat, and have wept.
6. They sing the song of Moses, which is the experience of deliverance and victory over their enemies. (song = experience, see Revelation 5:9) Also the song of the Lamb, which is the experience of living a life of self-sacrifice (Revelation 14:3,15:3).
7. They gain the victory over the beast, image, his mark, and the number of his name.
8. They do not taste death, for they are redeemed from among men, that is, the living (Revelation 14:4); not from among the dead/grave (Hosea 13:14).

So we can see that the 144,000 are a group of righteous (as they have the character of the Father reproduced in their lives), living in the end time, that pass through great tribulation and the seven last plagues. They keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath and live through this time of trouble, not tasting death, and see Christ coming the second time. For they have gained the victory over their enemies.

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

After this - After John saw the 144,000, he sees a great multitude which no man could number. They are from all nations, kindreds, people, and languages, showing us that this is the redeemed of all ages (which clearly shows that these are two separate groups, as the 144,000 are numbered).

Clothed in white robes - These stand before the throne of the Father and before the Lamb, Jesus Christ, in white robes. White, as we have already seen, is the symbol of purity, righteousness, and victory. They stand before the Father and Jesus in purity and righteousness.

Palms in their hands - Palm branches are a symbol of victory and rejoicing.

John 12:13 *"Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."*

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

This statement is made by the great multitude. Salvation to our God - This statement shows the equality of the Father and Jesus, for salvation belongs to them both, and no one else.

Zechariah 6:13 *"Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."*

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

Elders - Although various scenes have intervened since the scene in Revelation 4:4. the general setting is much the same.

Worshiped God - When the statement is made "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb", the reaction was one of worship. And it is right for us, too, to give Him this praise.

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

Blessing - This is a sevenfold doxology (song of praise). Here again, as in Revelation 5:8-14, is a vision of the vindication of God and Christ. Upon the testimony of the saved, the hosts of heaven are again reminded that God is wise and righteous. They worship Him with blessing, glory, thanksgiving and honor.

Revelation 7:13-14 *"13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

What are these...arrayed in white robes...whence came they - This question posed to John is to bring his attention to a special group. It cannot be a reference to the great multitude as John knew exactly where they had come from and who they were. Thus this must be referring to the 144,000, as the list following will clearly show. John had seen the 144,000, in their mortal state, receiving the seal of God and passing through great tribulation; but as they now stand among the redeemed throng, the transition is so great, and the condition in which they now appear so different, that he does not recognize them.

All Christians must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.

Acts 14:22 *"Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.'"*

But with the 144,000 it is in a greater sense. They pass through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.

Daniel 12:1 *"At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book."*

A time of great mental anguish the time of Jacobs trouble.

Jeremiah 30:4-7 *"4 Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah. 5 "For thus says the LORD: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale? 7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it."*

They stand through the outpouring of unmingled wrath from God (in the form of the seven last plagues) upon the wicked, without a mediator. No other group has passed through a time such as this will be.

Revelation 7:16-17 *"16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

We see they have gone through hunger and thirst the sun has scorched them (see the 7 last plagues in Revelation 16). So this special group have been upon the earth whilst the wrath of God and the 7 last plagues have been poured out.

Revelation 16:9 *"And men were scorched with great heat ..."*

White robes - We know that this is given to those that are overcomers.

Revelation 3:5 *"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."*

Revelation 3:18 *"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."*

Each of them have overcome sin by the grace of God, they have obtained the victory. They would not violate one of the commandments of God, which is expressed by having the Father's name/character in their foreheads.

Revelation 14:1 *"Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads."*

Each of them have had their life washed in the blood of Christ. "The life of all flesh is in the blood".

Leviticus 17:11 *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."*

Leviticus 17:14 *"For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off."*

And thus they have washed their lives in the life of Christ and it is Christ's life that is being revealed in them, a life filled with righteousness.

Revelation 14:4 *"These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb."*

These have not been defiled with women. What is this telling us?

Revelation 17:4 *"The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication."*

This is the woman of Revelation 17:2 who has committed fornication and adultery, she is referred to as the great harlot, but the 144,000 have not been defiled by her. Now a woman in Bible prophecy represents a church.

Ephesians 5:25 *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."*

Ephesians 5:32 *"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

So they are not defiled with women. Now if your belief and your relationship with Jesus is based on the church, then you have it in the wrong place. Our relationship with Christ has to be built on the Bible and the Bible alone, and therefore it will never change, God's word never changes but if you set out to find the truth going from church to church of which there are over 300 major denominations which all say something different, you will never find it. We have to pray for the Spirit to guide and enlighten us, we have to go to God's word and study for ourselves and build our faith on the word of God not on a church. I am not saying don't go to church, but you must look at the beliefs and teachings of the church to see if they align with God's word and the Bible we must follow God and not man, we need to search the word of God ourselves. God will have His people in the end times and they will not all be under one church building, but people who have studied and prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and followed the Lamb where so ever He goeth, no matter the cost.

Now you may ask, how do we commit spiritual adultery? Well, we do it by adulterating the word of God, by teaching false beliefs contrary to what the word says, teaching things that have no Biblical foundations.

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

No guile/deceit was found in their mouth, this special group of people the 144,000 that by the grace of God He has been able to change into His likeness, His image, with no fault. But these people will not know who they are, you will not find these people come to you and say I am one of the 144,000, if they do you had better run from them, because it is impossible for you and I as human beings to see yourself as in His image, because the closer you come to Christ the more sinful you appear in your own eyes. But they will come to a place in their Christian experience that they will be as the scripture says without fault. Because by the Grace of God He has changed them and made them different. Only God can do this, we cannot change ourselves, as the scripture says:

Jeremiah 13:23 *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."*

But what we can do is daily submit to the Lord and ask Him to take our lives and make our characters like His, we can spend time in prayer, time in His word, asking for His Holy Spirit to change us into His likeness. And this process has taken place in the lives of the 144,000.

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

So we read about the 144,000, and then we read there was a great multitude that no one could number of all the nations of the earth, clothed in white, people through all ages that have been redeemed. But the 144,000 are a special group, coming out of great tribulation, and are alive to see Jesus when He comes.

Revelation 14:3 *"They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth."*

The 144,000 are redeemed from the earth, they are people just like you and I, every type of character, so we cannot say there is no chance for us. This special group sing a song that only they are able to learn because it has to do with their unique experience.

Some say that only the 144,000 go to heaven - this is not the case, as scripture shows. Paul has this to say...

Romans 5:3-4 *"3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope."*

It is necessary to our characters that we go through tribulation, we will all go through tribulation of one kind or another as a child of God because that's what it takes to develop character, and we need to understand that **the development of our character takes place here and now on earth, not later in Heaven**. We need to strive to be among the 144.000, we need to be on our knees daily asking that God will change us into His character, His likeness, that we may be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Christ is about to come but He says...

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

This is not like the Mark of the Beast that can be placed in the forehead or in the hand - God's mark/seal can be placed only in the forehead, because it involves a concious choice.

What does the seal do? What is the purpose of the seal. Firstly it shows ownership, and secondly it provides protection. Sealing is being settled into the truth so that you will not, cannot be moved from the word of God - you know it's the truth and you will follow it no matter what, even if you are the only one. And when a person does that, God is sealing that individual so that when the tribulation comes they are able to stand firm for the word of God no matter what happens.

2 Timothy 2:19 *"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."*

Settled in the truth and sealed in the word of God.

Isaiah 8:16 *"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples."*

You see the law of God is a transcript of His character, and you and I need our characters to be made into His likeness, bringing our life into harmony with the word of God.

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

Because of the victory gained through Christ against sin, and the experience of going through the great tribulation, the 144,000 are very near to God. It is their keenest desire to serve Him day and night in His temple. They are living proof of what the grace of God can do, so that down through the ceaseless ages of eternity God can point to these people and say these are the ones who so surrendered their lives to Me that I could work in their life and change them to make them like Me. Out of every personality and every type that ever lived, here they are living proof of what the grace of God can do.

Revelation 14:4 "... These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. ..."

Revelation 14:1 "... having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

And we have the privilege of so surrendering our lives to Jesus that He can do His work in us, we are so close to the end, Jesus is coming, we only have a little time left. Surrender your heart and soul to Him and let the Lord Jesus Christ work in your life and shine forth from your life in all of His glory, righteousness and love, that you and I may reflect His glory to those about us.

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

Hunger, thirst - Obviously they have suffered hunger and thirsting. This is a reference to their trials in the last days. Even though their bread and water will be sure.

Isaiah 33:16 *"He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."*

They will have enough for sustenance, when all the pastures and fruitful places are dried up.

Joel 1:18-20 *"18 How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. 19 O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. 20 The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness."*

The rivers and fountains are turned to blood.

Revelation 16:4-9 *"4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. 8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."*

There will be a time when the righteous will be brought into extreme decrees of hunger and thirst. Once in heaven they shall never hunger or thirst again.

The righteous will be shielded from its burning rays. But they will not have their sensibilities so deadened as to not feel any unpleasantness from the terrific heat. But in the heavenly Canaan they will be able to appreciate the promise of God that the sun will not light on them.

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

The Lamb in the midst of the throne - Jesus is portrayed as being closest of all to the throne of God.

He shall feed them - Greek "*poimainō*", "to shepherd".

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

Although it is usually the lamb that is shepherded, here the Lamb is revealed as the true shepherd.

John 10:11 *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."*

The thought of the present passage is probably drawn from Isaiah.

Isaiah 40:11 *"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."*

He shall lead them.

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

We find that they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Both statements show to us the close companionship that they have with Christ.

Unto living fountains of waters - They have experienced hunger but they shall be feed, thirst but this shall be quenched.

Psalms 36:8 *"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."*

What a wonderful promise. They shall be abundantly satisfied in all things.

Hosea 13:14 *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: ..."*

Death has been swallowed up and all tears will cease. Because God has promised to wipe away all tears.

Isaiah 25:8 *"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it."*

We will have gained the victory through the Lamb, and will be forever with our Lord. Even so come Lord Jesus. Amen

Revelation - Chapter 8

All through Revelation we have this theme were Jesus tells us about the redeemed and how they are sealed, settled in the truth so they cannot be moved, they are back in harmony with the Law of God, saved by the Blood of the Lamb, and He gives us this beautiful picture before He gives us the bad news, it's a theme in the book of Revelation, we never have to be afraid because He is the victor and the King of Kings.

In chapter 8 we have the Seven Trumpets, these are Gods Judgements and how they are poured out upon the earth. As we look at the 7 trumpets we are looking at God's dealing with those who did not receive the Seal of God.

Verse 1 of this chapter clearly belongs to the opening of the seven seals, namely the seventh, and thus rightly belongs to chapter 6, as we saw in the last study we had an interlude, looking at the 144,000 and the sealing of God's people. We saw that we are living in the 6th seal at the time just before Jesus comes, we read about this in Revelation 6:14-16, chapter 7 was an interlude to show us who the sealed would be and how we can become part of them.

We are now looking at chapter 8 and we are opening the last seal; we will then be into the sounding of the trumpets and those who did not receive the seal of God.

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

There was silence in heaven - Why is there silence in heaven? Chapter 7 tells us who will be able to stand when He comes, but does not give an account of His personal appearing the second time. But now we find here, in the seventh seal, the second coming of Christ.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, there is continual praise in heaven and therefore no silence. The reason why there is silence at this time is that Jesus and all the angels are on their way to earth to redeem Gods people.

Matthew 25:31 *"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:"*

Matthew 16:27 *"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."*

Mark 3:38 *"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

The entire angelic host accompanies Christ to this earth and thus there is silence in heaven.

About the space of half an hour - In prophecy, symbols extend to the second coming of Christ. This would mean that the year-day principle is still in operation and thus a day still equals a year. So how long would half an hour be?

There are 24 hours in a day, so half an hour would be 1/48 of a day. There are 360 days in a Biblical year and thus 24 hours/1 day = 360 days/1 year. Thus 1 hour = 15 days (360 ÷ 24), and ½ hour = 7½ days (15 ÷ 2). So the length of time for the silence in heaven is 7½ days. What a grand climax to the

seven seals, Christ comes to receive His own. No more tears, no more pain and suffering, neither hunger or thirst.

So the sixth seal ends with the wicked aware that Jesus is returning to earth to rescue His people, and crying for the rocks and mountains to fall on them. They, who have fought against God's truth, would rather be buried alive than see the face of the One who died to save them, the One who they refused to obey and whose followers they killed and tormented.

Revelation 6:14-17 *"14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"*

The word-picture in these verses takes place as the people see Jesus coming in the clouds. What a sad situation! Jesus loves us all so much that He came and died for us, to make a way for us to be saved. Heaven has done everything possible to help people get ready to go home with Jesus, but most people won't be ready. Why? Because they wanted their own way and continued in their own sinful habits and pleasures and refused to obey God's law. Now as they see He is really coming and He is going to put a stop to all their cruel, selfish deeds, they want to be buried alive rather than see the face of the One who loved them so much.

Many of these rulers and dictators just a short while before were getting ready to kill all of God's true people that were left. Then they were proud and boasting, making fun of those dear people who refused to disobey God, telling them how they were going to all be killed. Now these bullies are seen screaming to be buried alive — what a change.

We have looked at what the 7 seals mean, but there is more information under the 6th seal. This period goes from the late 1700s right to the time of the coming of Jesus, so it covers the very time we are living in today. When you read prophecies like Daniel and Revelation, you have to remember that they do not run in a straight-line like a story, but instead they are made up of separate word pictures, almost like pieces of a puzzle and by studying carefully we learn how the pieces go together. Each piece gives us more information about the big picture and each piece helps us to understand other pieces. We always have to remember to let the Bible show us how they go together and not guess ourselves or we can get mixed up, and we must always pray and ask Jesus to send His Holy Spirit for our guidance as we study.

And now we move into the Seven Trumpets, we are briefly introduced to the seven angels with the seven trumpets; but then it quickly moves to another part of the story.

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

Trumpets - We find in Jeremiah and Ezekiel that a trumpet is associated with, and is a symbol of, war.

Numbers 10:9 *"And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."*

Jeremiah 4:19-21 *"19 My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the*

alarm of war. 20 Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. 21 How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?"

Ezekiel 33:3-4 *"3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; 4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head."*

1 Corinthians 4:8 *"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle."*

So the trumpets are used for a sounding of war, preparing for war and also as a warning, people were to take heed. The trumpet blowing will also announce the coming of our Lord. as we find in Joel.

Joel 2:1 *"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;"*

These trumpets are an answer to the prayers of the souls under the alter in Revelation 6:10. The people that have been slain for the word of God.

Now as previously stated the 7 trumpets are the most difficult to understand. Basically there are three different views of prophecy:

The **preterist** view takes all the prophecies and puts them in the past and says they have all been fulfilled and have no meaning to you and I whatsoever.

The **futurist** view that says all the prophecies in the book of Revelation from the 4th chapter to the end are in the future, after the righteous have been taken from the earth and they have no effect on us whatsoever.

Reformers like Luther and Knox, Zwingli were preaching that the system of the Catholic Church (not the people in the system) was the antichrist. The Pope needed to try to stop this, so he called in two men who were priests, by the name of Ribera and Altazar, he said I don't care what you do but get the focus off of us. These two priests then developed two different views of prophecy.

The Jesuit Luis del Alcázar devoted himself to bring into prominence the preterist method of interpretation, and thus endeavored to show that the prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the popes ever ruled in Rome, and therefore could not apply to the Papacy.

On the other hand, the Jesuit Francisco Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the papal power by producing the futurist view, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly, not to the career of the Papacy, but to some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and is to continue in power for three and a half years.

Then there is a view that's in-between these two views, called the **historical** view, which says that many of the prophecies in scripture have been fulfilled and some (a few) are yet to be fulfilled, and this is where we stand.

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

So we are in the first compartment, the Holy Place, of the sanctuary (for more information see our video study on The Sanctuary). We know that the alter talked of here is not the alter of sacrifice that

was found in the courtyard of the earthly temple because Jesus was our ultimate sacrifice and so we do not find the alter of sacrifice in Heaven but only the alter of incense.

Here in verse 3 we see another angel that came and stood before the altar - This angel is not one of the angels that have the seven trumpets, this Angel stands before the altar of incense in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, the altar of incense that was made of gold.

Exodus 30:1-3 "1 You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. 2 A cubit shall be its length and a cubit its width—it shall be square—and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. 3 And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around."

Now, who is this angel? To find out who this angel is we need to look at what he is doing and also look back to the other prophesies.

In the last two prophecies, dealing with the seven churches and seals, we found Jesus in amongst the Candlesticks and then we found Him opening the Seals, and here again we find that it is Jesus that has come to stand at the altar, which thus gives us our time frame of each prophecy.

The Altar - Compare Exodus 30:1-10.

The Censer - Compare Leviticus 10:1.

Incense - Compare Exodus 30:34-36.

Much incense - This angel was given much incense to offer upon the altar of incense with the prayers of the saints. It was the high priest alone that was to offer the incense upon the golden altar.

Exodus 30:7-8 *"7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations."*

Exodus 30:34-38 *"34 And the Lord said to Moses: 'Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. 35 You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, and holy. 36 And you shall beat some of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. 37 But as for the incense which you*

shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the Lord. 38 Whoever makes any like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people.'"

We have one high priest in heaven, and that is Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:14 *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."*

Often in Scripture Jesus is spoken of as an Angel or the Angel of the Lord. When Jacob blessed Joseph and his sons in Genesis.

Genesis 48:15-16 *"15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, 16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."*

At the burning bush the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses.

Exodus 3:2 *"2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."*

God called to him out of the bush.

Exodus 3:4 *"And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I."*

The Angel of the Lord, the Messenger, was Jesus.

Acts 7:30-34 *"30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the LORD came unto him, 32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. 33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. 34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt."*

It was Christ who accompanied the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings, dwelling in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

1 Corinthians 10:4 *"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."*

He is also spoken of in the Old Testament as the Angel of God.

Exodus 14:19 *"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:"*

Exodus 23:20-24 *"20 Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. 22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. 23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.*

24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images."

The Angel of the Lord spoke to the people as recorded in Judges.

Judges 2:1 *"And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you."*

This was the Lord Himself. Also the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon.

Judges 6:11-24 *"11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. 14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? 15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. 16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. 17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. 18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. 19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. 20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. 22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O LORD God! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. 23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. 24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites."*

So we clearly see that the Angel offering incense, as mentioned here in verse 3 and 4 is Christ. (Only the High Priest was allowed to offer incense and act as intercessor so we clearly see that this can only be Jesus.) This in no way implies that He is a created being like heavens Angels, for in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

Colossians 2:9 *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

He is the I AM who appeared to Moses.

John 8:58 *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."*

Jesus is the commander of the Heavenly Host.

The English word "angel" comes from the Greek "*angelos*", which means "messenger". In the Old Testament, with two exceptions, the Hebrew word for "angel" is "*malak*", also meaning "messenger".

Christ acts on behalf of His Father; He is the messenger of God, and our intercessor between us and His Father.

John 6:38 *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*

So we clearly see that Christ is our Intercessor. The prayers that are placed in the golden censor of the Savior's merit are accepted by the Father. Perfumed with the fragrance of His righteousness, the incense ascends to GOD as a sweet savour.

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

We are about to start hearing about the Seven Trumpets, which is another set of word-pictures showing the events of history from another angle—this time from the main wars and battles that had some effect on God's people. It seems also that these seven trumpets all talk about forces that attacked Rome; the first four — Pagan Rome, as it was breaking up, and the last three — Papal Rome, especially as it persecuted God's people.

But first we are shown something from near the end of the 6th seal. It is put in here to give encouragement to God's dear children. Incense is special herbs or spices, that when burned make a sweet smelling perfume in the smoke. This 'angel' here shown offering incense with the prayers before God, is actually Jesus, our Saviour as we just saw and He is pleading the sweetness of His perfect life and His spilt blood before His Father. This is the 'incense' that makes our prayers able to be heard and answered by our Heavenly Father. It is **only through Jesus' sacrifice** that we can even ask for forgiveness or help. We are told this so that we can have courage that Jesus IS there pleading for us and offering the precious incense. As we confess our sins and plead the merits of Christ's atoning blood, our prayers ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are to remember that there is One who can take away sin, and who is willing and anxious to save the sinner. With His own blood He paid the penalty for all wrongdoers.

Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove. We are shown this scene from the 6th seal as encouragement, because the Seven Trumpets about to start are going to show terrible scenes of war and strife. God wants us to know that our Redeemer is on the job and we can have our prayers offered up by Him and receive help. Remember though, that the incense is only offered with our prayers, if we don't ask for what we need and want, we will not receive it. We need to take all our needs and problems to the Father through Jesus. Especially should we pray about the sin problems that we see in our lives. God does not come and snatch bad habits or sins out of our lives without our permission, but His Holy Spirit will work with us to get rid of all the sin and selfishness from our lives if we pray to the Heavenly Father, claiming only the sacrifice of Jesus for us, and asking for His Holy Spirit and the Holy angels to do this work in our lives. It is a partnership — we choose and ask, the Heavenly Powers enable us to make it happen.

There is power for each one of us to overcome all bad habits and sins in our lives. Not only to find forgiveness when they happen, but to change our hearts so they stop happening.

John 16:24 *"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."*

Notice the angel was to offer the incense with the prayers of the saints before God. This is known as the intercessory work of the high priest, for it was the altar of incense that dealt with the mediatory work of the high priest. He was to intercede for the people. Christ is our mediator.

1 Timothy 2:5 *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"*

The incense is His own righteousness that He mingles with our prayers before presenting them to the Father.

With the prayers - The picture is that of the angel adding incense to the prayers of the saints as these prayers ascend to the throne of God. The scene portrayed may be understood as symbolic of the ministration of Christ for His people.

Romans 8:34 "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

1 John 2:1 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"

Christ, as intercessor, mingles His merits with the prayers of the saints, which are thereby made acceptable with God.

So we see that people are praying, there is still mediation going on, this is not after the close of probation right at the end of time. History is following the same process as the Churches and the Seals, this is a pattern in Bible prophecy; The book of Daniel does the same, Daniel chapter 2 goes through the history of mankind, Daniel chapter 7 repeats it in another format, Daniel chapter 8 repeats it in another format, and so you have different views coming to light, repeat and enlarge. It is the same with the book of Revelation, you go through the Seven Churches, this is the position of the Church, you go through the Seven Seals this is the position of the Gospel Herald, and now we come to the Trumpets which are judgements.

In chapter 7 we saw a numbering of God's people, we had the 144,000, and the great multitude that no man could number; at the end of time you are either found wanting or you are found righteous. Now here in chapter 8 we have judgement's being poured out, but even whilst all this is going on we see that Jesus does not neglect the prayers of the saints, it is through His mediation that they are made acceptable in the eyes of God. So the incense is a symbol of the merit of Jesus added to the saints, making them acceptable in the eyes of God, a wonderful image, everything in Revelation has so much meaning. Now we see the censer being filled with fire.

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

This is a very important glimpse of an event yet future but which gets closer every day. Soon, no one knows how soon, the intercessory ministry of our High Priest in heaven, Jesus Christ, will come to its close. There is a time pointed out in various parts of the Bible when the work of Jesus is finished, He has done all that can be done to ransom the lost race. This is when He makes His solemn announcement:

Revelation 22:11 *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."*

Just before this time there will be a lot happening on earth — the 'voices, thundering's, and earthquakes' mentioned here indicate messages being sounded, upheavals and wars, terrible troubles as mankind makes their final decisions. The faithful will still be under the care of Jesus and the heavenly angels and although they will experience distress, they will not be left to the rule of the powers of darkness.

Now the scene turns to the first of the seven trumpets. "Incense" represents the mercy of God, fire symbolizes His justice.

Judgements come upon the earth, and after the final judgment, just as Jesus died on the cross and said it is finished, so time will be finished here on earth, the numbering will be over and it will be done, you will either be with the sheep or you are with the goats, depending on your decision.

Filled with fire from the altar and cast to the earth - If fire is being added to the censer, it shows that there is no more incense being offered and thus that intercession has ceased. Here we are carried forward to the end of time, it is evident from this act of the angel in filling the censer with fire and casting it to the earth, that mercy has ceased and probation is closed. This symbolic act can only refer to the time when the ministration of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary on behalf of mankind has ceased forever. For the righteous these are words of hope and comfort to us if we have accepted Christ, because we know that soon all evil will end and Christ will come to redeem His people.

We can see that this verse is talking about a future time on the earth, for Christ is still ministering in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary when we look at the sixth trumpet of Revelation 9.

Revelation 22:11 *"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God."*

Voices, thunderings - Activity around the throne of God.

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

Ezekiel 1:14 *"And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."*

Ezekiel 1:24 *"And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings."*

Ezekiel 10:5 *"And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh."*

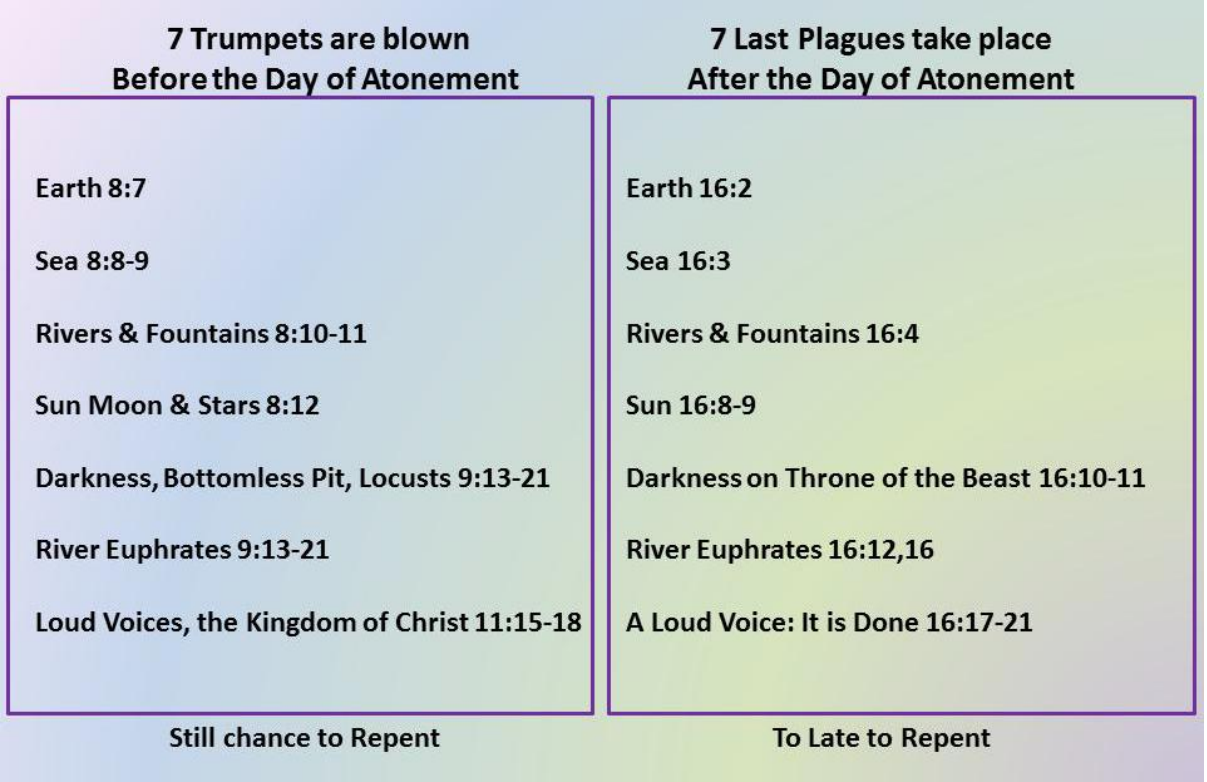
Revelation 8:6 *"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."*

What do we know for sure about the trumpets?

1. There are seven, and each one heralds something that happens here on earth.
2. Six take place before probation closes because men are still given the opportunity to repent.
3. They are a divine warning that the time for repentance is running out/a wakeup call.
4. The seven trumpets cover chapters 8, 9, and 11.
5. The first four trumpets are judgement trumpets; and the first two of the last three woes are demonic woes with the third the destruction of the wicked at Christ' second coming.

There are many interpretations of prophecy, especially in Revelation, but we believe the Bible is consistent. In Daniel you have the pattern of repeat and enlarge, you start with Daniel 2 – Daniel 7 adds more information and Daniel 8 adds more information again. The same is true in Revelation with the 7 Churches, the 7 Seals and the 7 Trumpets.

We can also see that there is a parallel between what happens at the blowing of the trumpets and the 7 last plagues (see the chart below). The 7 Trumpets are blown before the Day of Atonement, and the 7 Last Plagues take place after the Day of Atonement. In other words, when Christ comes out of the Most Holy Place in the Sanctuary then the 7 last plagues will fall. Today we are still in the anti-typical day of Atonement (for more information see our video study on The Laws & The Feasts).



Now if we take a look at the trumpets we find that the following are affected: The earth (8:7), the Sea (8:8-9), Rivers and Fountains (8:10-11), the Sun, Moon and Stars (8:12), Darkness, the Bottomless Pit, Locusts (9:13-21), the River Euphrates (9:13-21), Loud voices, the Kingdom of Christ.

We have gone through a process, and every time 1/3 is affected. Now if we look at The 7 Last Plagues we see a parallel: The First one is the earth (16:2), the Second one is the Sea (16:3), the Third one Rivers and Fountains (16:4); just like the 7 Trumpets. Then the Sun (16:8-9), then there is the darkness on the Throne of the Beast (16:10-11), then there's the River Euphrates, and then you have a Loud Voice: "it is done" (16:17-21).

On the chart above you will see that the left hand column is what happens before the close of probation as a wakeup call and the right hand column is what happens after the close of probation as the judgments are poured out on the wicked and there is no long time for repentance.

Now when it said 1/3, it is a portion that is affected, there is room for repentance, it is in the mediation time when Christ is serving in the Heavenly sanctuary in the first compartment, the Holy Place. These are very important issues, because today there is a tendency to take the Trumpets and to make them the same period, or just prior to the 7 Last Plagues.

However, as always Jesus is in control. We saw the numbering and sealing of God's people in chapter seven, in chapter six the souls of the martyred cried from under that alter How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And now here in chapter 8 we see the trumpets passing judgment on the oppressors of Gods people, Rome, this pagan apostate system.

Now when we are dealing with the trumpets like with all prophecy there are many different ways that people interpret them, but all will fit into one of these three categories: you are either a preterist, a futurist or an historicist, as we have discussed; but the Bible follows a pattern and if we follow this then we will be on the right path, interpreting the scriptures from the scriptures.

Joel 2:15-17 *"15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: 16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. 17 Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?"*

Here is a situation where the trumpet is being blown under circumstances where God's people have obviously gone astray.

Ezekiel 33:3 *"If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;"*

The trumpet here is to warn the people of impending danger.

Now some say that the Judgments retrace the periods of Christian history covered in the seven churches and the seven seals, and they say these judgments started against Jerusalem in AD 30 because Jews rejected Jesus and nailed Him to the cross, they did not listen to Him and rejected the Word of God therefore, there judgements would come upon the people. However, God still gave them a space of time, until 70 AD and then Jerusalem was destroyed - this was the judgement of God (Matthew 24).

Others say, and we would agree, that the judgements start against Rome, just as the judgments also came upon Babylon and the Pagan nations that came after them. The dividing of the 10 toes of the statue came about as a result of the first four trumpets being blown (for more information see our video studies on Daniel and Revelation).

We have seen that a Trumpet is a symbol of warning and war. These Seven Trumpets all talk about forces that affected the area of the Roman Empire, first Pagan Rome, followed by Papal Rome.

1. The Seven Churches represent the spiritual conditions of the church, not only for that time but also down through the ages (we today are now the final Laodicea Church).

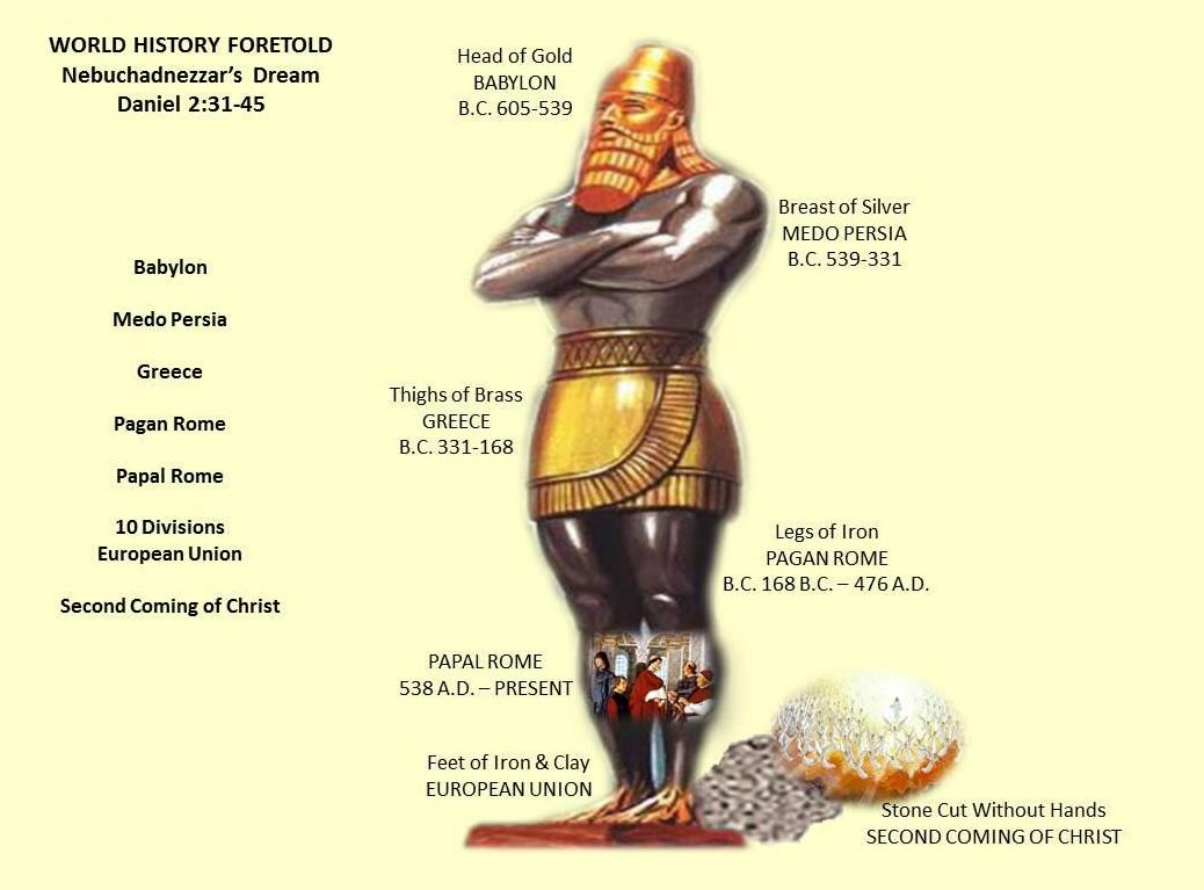
2. The Seven Seals show those who remained faithful to God who were His witnesses and who suffered terrible persecution.

3. The Seven Trumpets are the judgments upon the Pagan and Papal Roman system who have and will persecute Gods true people.

4. The Seven Last Plagues are Gods judgments on the entire wicked population, these fall just prior to Christ second coming.

The time covered by this first prophecy is from 395 to 419 AD. It is the time when the Barbarians began to come from the North and attack areas of the Roman Empire. "Hail" in this prophecy represents that they came from the cold lands of the North. Just as hail destroys the gardens, so these warriors destroyed everything in their path.

So the trumpets deal with judgements over this time period, and it is now time for Rome to be overthrown and for the divisions of the toes, as Daniel in the Bible prophesied.



So now let's take a look at each of the first four trumpets, with each one heralding something that happens here on earth.

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

Here begins the word pictures Jesus uses to describe certain wars and events that happen from John's time to the coming of Jesus. It is important to remember that these things are symbols and so they mean something more than what they seem to say.

A trumpet we saw is a symbol of warning and war. These Seven Trumpets all talk about forces that affected the area of the Roman Empire, first Pagan Rome and then Papal Rome.

You will notice that these word-pictures keep saying one-third of this and that; these judgments that fall on the oppressors of Gods people also give an opportunity for God's people to wake up and for the wicked to repent. It is also because there were three main parts to the Roman Empire after Constantine left his throne divided among his three sons. The Goths, under their leader Alaric, who called himself "the scourge of God," attacked the failing pagan Roman Empire in the West. The 'fire and blood' talked about here refers to the terrible slaughter that these savage hordes brought upon the areas they ravaged. They burned whole towns and destroyed good farming areas and left them desolate. Finally Alaric was conquered in 403 AD. But more hordes of barbarians poured down from the north to attack the Roman empire under the haughty Rhodogast, who came with his armies almost to the gates of the city of Rome itself. After this, Alaric again returned, invaded Italy in 408, and in 410 he besieged, took, and sacked Rome, and died the same year. In 412 the Goths voluntarily left Italy. The angel's trumpet message was a very clear picture of what happened, on the other hand the fall of Jerusalem is a very powerful judgement. After a long time of probation where they had rejected the

Messiah these are the consequences, God removes His protection, He allows those winds to blow, and only the righteous escaped, the wicked who had turned from God remained and were destroyed.

Revelation 8:8-9 *"8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."*

The second Angel sounds: A mountain burning with fire, what does this represent? Well a mountain represents a nation in the Bible:

Isaiah 21:2-3 *"2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."*

Isaiah 11:9 *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."*

Also Isaiah 41:15; Daniel 2:35,44-45; Ezekiel 35:2, 7-8; Zechariah 4:7. All of these have this picture of a mountain. Let's look at a verse in Jeremiah that also brings this picture to the fore:

Jeremiah 51:24 *"Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, (speaking about Babylon) saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.Here is a symbol of a mountain that is being destroyed."*

So the second Angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea. So in other words a nation was scattered amongst the nations, and a third part of the sea became blood. We find the symbol of water in Revelation 17.

Revelation 17:15 *"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."*

So bloodshed among the nations. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. Ships in the Bible are economic symbols.

Revelation 18:17-19 *"17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."*

Now we see the Vandal incursion under Genseric (our word "vandalism" is derived from the Vandals). They pirated ships and pillaged Rome, and this is the one we would favour as it keeps in continuity the division of the Roman Empire as foretold in Daniel.

We see here more attacks on a 'third-part' of the Roman Empire. The period covered by this Trumpet is from 428 to 476; and the prophecy was fulfilled in the terrible Genseric, King of the Vandals, and "Monarch of the Sea" whose ravages gave us in human language the term "Vandalism;" meaning wilful, wanton, and ignorant destruction. This time the force came from the south—from Africa, and so the prophecy says a 'burning mountain' cast into the sea. He formed a great navy with many war-ships and raided and took away slaves and treasure from the areas of the Roman Empire. In 455, just

at the time the people of Rome had risen against the Emperor Maximus, and stoned him and thrown his body into the river, Genseric arrived with his warships. He came into the city and ravaged it, taking away all the wealth he could find, including the things from the Temple at Jerusalem that had been brought there by Titus when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70. Finally the emperor of Rome decided to make himself a large navy to try and defeat Genseric's war ships.

Money was gathered with difficulty and a huge navy was built. They sailed down to Carthage, where Genseric's fleet was located, and could have conquered it, but the clever Genseric said he would surrender and asked for 5 days to 'make terms'. All he did was gather his forces and attack the Emperor's fleet. During the battle, Genseric would take large barges full of burnable material and towing them close to the Roman ships, would set them on fire and let them sail into the other ships setting them on fire also. How true the idea of a 'mountain of fire being thrown into the sea' really was. Genseric destroyed the Roman fleet and before his death saw the western part of the Roman Empire totally ruined. When you study history in the light of the Bible prophecies, you see that those who do wicked, cruel actions, have wicked, cruel happenings come back on them sooner or later.

These judgments are now coming upon the heathen and marry up with Daniel chapter 2.

Now the Third Trumpet...

Revelation 8:10-11 *"10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."*

This is the invasion of the Roman Empire by the Huns under the leadership of Attila, in the 5th century. Bible prophecy is consistent the judgement of the wicked oppressors of Gods people continue as do the divisions of Rome.

So now another terrible force is seen coming against the dying Empire of Rome. Some people get confused as this says the 'star' came from heaven, and they say this was Lucifer, but we have to remember that these word-pictures are all symbols to describe the forces who attacked Rome and brought about the prophecy that it would be divided, and would make place for the strange 'Little Horn' kingdom, the papacy, to be set up (Daniel 7). The prophecy points out that this 'scourge would be brief but dramatic, like a blazing meteorite in the sky it soon vanishes. The period covered by this trumpet was as brief as "a burning star", 451-453. By this prophecy we are directed to that dreadful scourge, the haughty Attila with his frightful Huns, who, during his reign, became the "terror of the world." Attila actually called himself the "Scourge of God", "Grandson of Nimrod, nurtured in Engedi, by the grace of God, King of the Huns, Goths, Danes, and Medes, the terror of the world." And "It is a saying worthy of the ferocious pride of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod." He "alternately insulted and invaded the East and the West, and urged the rapid downfall of the Roman Empire." The 'fountains of waters' refers to the area that he mostly attacked, which was where most of the rivers started, in the regions of the Alps, and on the portions of the empire where the rivers flow to most of Europe in all directions. It was really the area of the "fountains of waters".

Wormwood is a very bitter tasting herb. Attila was horribly cruel. Finally he demanded Honoria, the daughter of the Emperor, to be his bride. At first this was refused, but finally as his ferocious attacks came again, she was given to him. There was a huge drunken feast at the wedding and the next day when Attila did not appear from his room, his men left him alone for a while, thinking he didn't want to be disturbed. Finally when he did not answer their loud cries, they went to see what was wrong. He was found dead, as the result of an artery in his throat having burst, drowning him in his own blood.

This is what alcohol can do. Remember the other conqueror that died as a result of a drunken feast? It was Alexander the Great.

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

We continue with the divisions of the Roman Empire and the time which heralds in the little horn power as predicted in scripture (Daniel 7), we continue with the judgements on Rome.

This trumpet shows the blotting out of the Pagan Roman government. Sun, moon, and stars are here used as symbols of the ruling powers in the government — its emperor, consuls, and senators, AD 476 or 479. The 'sun' is a good symbol for the Roman Emperor as some of them had claimed to represent the sun god on earth. The Emperorship was gone from Rome and an Ostragoth king, ruled there, but some power remained in the Eastern part, Constantinople, where the imperial symbols had been taken and an Emperor still reigned. The imperial Roman power, of which either Rome or Constantinople had been the seat, whether in the West or the East, was no longer recognized in Italy, and the third part of the sun was smitten, till it emitted no longer the faintest rays. The power of the Caesars was unknown in Italy, and a Gothic king reigned over Rome. But though the third part of the sun was smitten, and the Roman imperial power was at an end in the city of the Caesars, yet the moon and the stars still shone, or glimmered, for a little longer in the western part. The consulship and the senate ['the moon and the stars'] were not abolished by king Theodoric.

Then the general of the emperor of the East, Belisarius attacked and defeated the Goths (552 AD). In the order given in the prophecy, the consulate ended and finally the senate was no more. Justinian transferred the power in Rome to the Bishop of Rome, and worked to promote the growing power of the Papacy. This fulfilled a prophecy we will study later:

Revelation 13:2 *"... and the Dragon (here meaning Pagan Rome) gave him (the Papacy) his power, and his seat (the city of Rome) and great authority."*

It is amazing how long and complicated history events are told in a few words in the prophecies.

Daniel 7:24 *"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."*

Just a quick look at how Daniel dove-tails in with Revelation — they are really one prophetic whole — although they are written centuries apart. The prophecy said that Rome would be divided into ten parts. It was not going to be conquered by another world kingdom, and that is just what happened.

But at first when the Roman Empire began to collapse, there were more than 10 'kings' attacking it, there were in fact eighteen. But during the time of the first 3 Trumpets, some disappeared, moved away, joined with other nations, or were wiped out, until only ten remained. From the northern to the southern limits of the Western Empire, these ten, as they stood in 476 AD at the extinction of the Empire, were as follows:

1. The Angles and Saxons in Britain.
2. The Franks in all Gaul (France).
3. The Alemanni in North Switzerland.
4. The Burgundians in west Switzerland and southeast Gaul.
5. The Visigoths in southwest Gaul and Spain.
6. The Suevi in that part of Spain which is now Portugal.

7. The Ostrogoths in what is now Austria.
8. The Lombards in Noricum.
9. The Heruli in Italy.
10. The Vandals in North Africa, with their capital at Carthage.

Now before Papal Rome could fully get its power, three of these nations had to be 'plucked up by the roots'. The three that were removed were the Vandals, the Ostrogoths and the Heruli, these were destroyed by 538 AD and the Papacy then ruled where the Caesars had ruled before. Bible prophecy always comes true — and fits exactly as Daniel predicted.

We have now gone through the first four trumpets and are now about to start looking at the Woes which are in chapters 9 and 11.

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

This could read; Woe, woe, woe, to all who belong to this world because of what will happen when the last three angels blow their trumpets.

In the original Greek, angel is better translated as vulture or eagle. Now that's important as we look at these three woes because a vulture or eagle in scripture means that there's an impending judgment *or disaster that's coming.*

Hosea 8:1 *"Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law."*

So here we have an impending disaster of judgment that is coming and the imagery is that of an eagle. Also:

Habakkuk 1:8 *"Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat."*

Jesus relates to this as well and it can again be translated as eagle or vulture.

Matthew 24:28 *"For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."*

We don't want to be where the eagles and vultures are gathering together, this is impending disaster. So you can see why this would be better translated vulture or eagle in the context of these three woes.

A woe is pain, calamity suffering and sorrow. Isaiah gives us an example of this.

Isaiah 3:11 *"Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him."*

And also Jeremiah, warning of the Babylonian army that was about to come upon them.

Jeremiah 4:13 *"Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled."*

Jesus uses this expression numerous times in the New Testament here He is warning the Scribes and Pharisees that if they continue as they are great judgments will come upon them.

Matthew 23:13-16 *"13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. 14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. 16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!"*

And regarding the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matthew 24:19 *"And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!"*

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

A Woe is something that hits mankind and has dire consequences. The woe is repeated three times because of the three judgments yet to come at the blowing of the three remaining trumpets. Each of these is designated a "woe".

So now we come to the 5th Trumpet which is the first of the Woes. You will note that as time progresses, the severity in each set of seven ‘final’ end-time judgments keeps escalating. We will see that a woe is something that hits mankind and has dire consequences. Some people like to apply the woes to God’s people, but we will see clearly as we go into chapter 9 that this is not the case the woe’s apply to the people that are being lost, not the saved.

We know what the last woe is for sure because the last Woe is the coming of Christ and the destruction of the wicked. This is judgement on those that have either been deceived or allowed themselves to

be deceived because they rejected the light, or, just rejected God directly. So three woes are going to hit the inhabitants of the earth and the woes deprive them of Salvation.

Now you don't find an expression of the 2nd woe being passed until you get towards the end of Revelation 11:14. Here we find the end of the 2nd woe...behold the 3rd woe is coming quickly and there is no expression of the 3rd woe being passed because the 3rd woe is the 2nd coming of Jesus and there is no more time after the 2nd coming. The sealing of the door, the leading out of Lot and his family, the getting out of Jerusalem and that's it finished. So the same in Revelation, the third woe at Christ's Second coming, all the wicked die, with no second chance.

So these next three woes associated with the next three trumpets imply in an unprecedented increase in the demonic attack on truth. Nevertheless, God is in control. So during these next Three Trumpets God is going to give us a glimpse of what is to happen here on this earth.

So this last verse in Revelation 8:13 is letting us know that however bad the first four trumpet-scourges were, the last three are going to be much worse.

Revelation - Chapter 9

The last three trumpets are also called the 'three woes'. Why? Because they were even more terrible than the four before them and also they were different because a new religion is here introduced into the world, a religion of darkness, almost the exact opposite to the teachings of Jesus. The ravages of these warriors of Islam were to be seen in the 'woes', the last three trumpets.

The western part of the former Roman Empire had been brought down in the first four trumpets. There is no emperor on the throne in the city of Rome any more. Instead the Bishop of Rome sits on the throne and rules over both the church and the government. So now the 5th and 6th trumpets bring attacks on the eastern part, where there is still a Roman Emperor ruling. By the end of the 6th trumpet, the eastern Roman Empire is destroyed completely also. The word 'WOE' or 'WO' here, is a cry of sorrow. The evil ways of men bring suffering and misery on themselves and others. Only in loving and obeying Jesus is real joy to be found.

Revelation 9:1-2 *"1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."*

If you look back at the 1st chapter of Revelation, you will see there that Jesus had seven 'stars' in His hand and we learned that these were messengers to the churches. Here we see a fallen star, a religious messenger, but a fallen or false one. He has a key to turn something loose on the earth. This is a key of circumstances, long wars in other areas of the world allowed the development of this dark power. Here we see him open up a pit and smoke comes out so thick that the sun and air is made dark. Now remember these are all symbols so what does it all mean?

This is telling us about when the religion of Mohamedism which was invented by the man that claimed to be a prophet. His name was Mohamed, and he dictated sayings that later, after he died were gathered together into a new 'bible' called the Koran. The 'Bottomless Pit' here can mean the dark and evil elements of the world, or, any wild and desolate area. Mohamedism poured upon the world from the desert lands of North Africa. Just as the gospel of Jesus is well described as light to the world, this religion is well described as darkness. Jesus taught us to seek peace and love our enemies, this darkness teaches men that war and killing their enemies is the highest and best thing they can do for their god.

Christianity was never to be forced on people, God can only accept willing service, but Mohamed taught that all should be forced to obey his religion or they should be killed. These people were taught that to die in battle while forcing people to worship Mohamed or 'Allah' as they called their god, was the best thing they could ever do. They were told that they then go straight to a wonderful place where they would have all kinds of beautiful women, wine to drink and fancy food to eat forever. So they were happy to make war and didn't mind getting killed fighting for their 'faith'. This 'smoke' made it almost impossible for people taught like this to see the light of Jesus' gospel or breathe the pure air of Bible truth. Jesus longs to have these people who are blinded by the 'smoke' to come to Him and be saved.

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

Here we see 2 more symbols that make us think of the deserts; the locusts that would come out of the deserts at certain times and eat up all the crops; and the scorpion, a nasty, poisonous creature like a long-tailed spider with a sting, that would strike with the sting in his tail and it would really hurt.

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

'Green things' here means God's true people, who were not attacked by this power but 'those that had not God's seal' referred to Papal Rome. Remember, by now they no longer had God's 'Seal', His true Sabbath. The had set up and were enforcing a false sabbath.

Revelation 9:5-6 *"5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."*

This power tormented the Eastern Roman empire but did not manage to destroy it completely, so the verse says 'they should not kill them'. Notice the five months; this is prophetic time so a day equals a real year. This means 150 years this force would be coming out of the deserts and striking the eastern part of the former Roman Empire. This time started in July 27th, 1299, so the one hundred and fifty years reach to 1449. Mohammedans of course, started long before that but this five months was when they had 'a king over them.' The tormenting power of these raiders made life a burden for the eastern empire, who were getting attacked by them, they would rather have been conquered by them and thus stop the torment.

Revelation 9:7-10 *"7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months."*

Here we have a description of what these desert warriors were like. It talks about their battle horses. The Arabian Desert horses were amazing animals. They were raised by their owners in the tents right along with the family and were treated with gentleness so they were very highly trained. At a word or touch from their master they would run like the wind into battle, or flee away across the sand. The 'Crowns of Gold' were the yellow turbans these men wore. They had long hair either braided up or loose and the 'teeth of lions' meant their fierceness in battle. Again it talks about 'many horses running to battle'; The Arab warrior on their swift horses did not march in rows or ranks like Greek or Roman soldiers, they swarmed down onto their enemies on their swift horses almost as quickly as if they were flying. Before the blood soaked into the ground they were gone again — galloping like the wind. What was this about their 'tails'?

Isaiah 9:15 *"The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail."*

The teachings of their prophets indeed had a sting in them!

Revelation 9:11-12 *"11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. 12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter."*

The rise of Mohamed was in 606 AD and for a long time after his death, there was no central king over them. Each tribe had its own ruler; but in July 27th, 1299, Othman became king and what we call the 'Ottoman Empire' was set up. We know that the five months begins at this time because the prophecy says 'they have a king'. The 'names' given here are symbolic as both of them mean 'destroyer', and signify the destructive attacks of this power. This 'woe' ends in 1449 and the second 'woe' starts.

Revelation 9:13-16 *"13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."*

Now we see this same dark fanatical religious power but this time coming from the 'river Euphates', which referred to the area of the country of Turkey. The 'four angels' refer to the four great sultanies — Bagdad, Damascus, Iconium, and Aleppo—of which at that time the Mohammedan power was composed. Notice this amazing time period—an hour, a day, a month, and a year—when it is all added together it reaches from the end of the Fifth Trumpet, July 27, 1449; all the way to, August 11, 1840. Then this period of an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, would end. For this length of time, and to this date, the power of the Ottoman Empire was to continue. Did this empire loose its power at that time? Yes, it did. On the 11th of August 1840, on board a ship, the Turkish leader signed a paper that took away the independence and power of the Turkish Sultan forever. Where was Turkish supremacy after Aug. 11, 1840?—It was gone. Who now held the power?—The four great Powers of Europe. Up until that time, they had continued to attack that eastern part of the Roman Empire until the last remains of it were gone and the modern nations ruled. This amazing prophecy was pointed out and written up in the newspapers by Josiah Litch before August 11,1840 and when it really happened on time, many people, even former atheists and sceptics, believed that God's Word was true and that prophecy could be interpreted correctly by using the rule that a prophetic day equalled a literal year.

Revelation 9:17-19 *"17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt."*

What is this? Fire-breathing horses? Here again we are looking at symbolism—at this time gunpowder and guns were used for the first time against the people in Eastern Europe. When the pistols were held close to the horses as the rode to the attack, it looked like fire and brimstone came from the mouths of the horses. This is also the time that knights in armor weren't much use any more as the armor would not stop the bullets. Notice here that it now says the third part of men were killed, where before they were only tormented. This power brought the Eastern Roman Empire finally to its political end. In this woe we see the forces of Islam again attacking suddenly without warning but now with explosives.

Breastplates of fire, jacinth and brimstone - These three colors, red, yellow and blue, were the ones these Turkish warriors wore.

And again we see the amazing warhorses of these desert people, even their horses were trained to attack and be fierce. They also made great cannons and using their power, managed to overthrow Constantinople where the eastern Roman Emperor had for so long held his throne. And what was all this about their 'mouths' and their ''tails'? Again the Bible can be used to interpret itself:

Isaiah 9:15 *"The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail."*

This is talking about their religious leaders and the men who claim to be their teachers and prophets in their mosques. These are the ones who direct the battles and give the violent ideas to their warriors to carry out.

Revelation 9:20-21 *"20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."*

Sadly, the Roman ecclesiastic power did not learn its lesson from these woes. If we have hard times or when trouble comes into our lives, it is good to see if there are some lessons that we need to learn.

Revelation - Chapter 10

Chapter 10 is a kind of interlude, just as we found with the seven seals – we read the first six seals, and then Revelation chapter 7 gave us a kind of interlude, it was as if it was answering the question posed at the end of chapter 6 – the great day of God's wrath has come and who will be able to stand? Revelation chapter 7 answered that question, as we learned about the 144,000, the seal of God and the different things that would take place that would allow God's people to stand for the second coming. In the same way, as we are reading through the trumpets, we find that Revelation chapters 10 and 11 form an interlude in the seven trumpets.

Revelation 10:1-2 *"1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: 2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth."*

Clothed with a cloud - Greek "*periballō*", "to throw about", "to envelop", "to clothe". We find that this mighty angel is clothed with a cloud. When looking through scripture we find that clouds are associated with Deity. Note the following:

Exodus 13:21 *"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; ..."*

Exodus 19:9 *"And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, ..."*

Daniel 7:13 *"... one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him."*

Now as we've seen, the word "angel" means a messenger, it doesn't always mean a literal created being with wings. Sometimes clearly it does mean a literal angel, but many times, even in the old testament, you'll notice that it will refer to the "Angel of the Lord", and the commentators, the ones who transcribed the words, will take the liberty of capitalizing the word "Angel" because they know that this is no ordinary angel - this messenger is the Lord Himself. We can know when it speaks of Jesus because we find instances in the Bible where people will bow down to worship this angel and there's no problem, whereas in other places where it is just an ordinary angel, if someone would bow down to worship, the scriptures are clear that the angel immediately says "don't do that, I'm not worthy of worship". And so this angel that we're reading about here is none other than Jesus.

Chapters 10-11 are sort of "between woes", they happen as the 6th trumpet is ending and the 7th is starting. We know it is very important because look who it is that appears here — we see clouds and a rainbow, and a face like the sun. Who is this? It is Jesus; appearing just like in Revelation 1 and Daniel 10. Setting His right foot on the sea, and His left upon the dry land, shows the part which He is acting in the closing scenes of the great controversy with Satan. This position denotes His supreme power and authority over the whole earth. He has a "little book" and it is open.

So, a book — or prophecy — that was once sealed has become opened or unsealed.

The message symbolized by this angel (Jesus) unsealed the book to permit the study of its message. What book could it be? There seems only one answer, for as far as it is recorded, the only part of scripture that was closed or sealed was a portion of the book of Daniel.

He was told, "seal the book" until "the time of the end".

Daniel 12:4 *"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."*

Time of the end - The "end" of what? This does not mean the end of time, but rather the end of the wonderful time prophecies found in Daniel where he speaks of the 2300 days/years and the 1260 days/years. The 1260 days/years ended in 1798 AD, and the 2300 days/years ended in 1844 AD (see the chart below).

Daniel 8:14 *"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."*

So do we see something happening in history that has to do with the book of Daniel around this time? Yes, we do. Towards the end of the 1700s, many people all over the world began to study that very book and they began to understand the time prophecies contained in it. And the Holy Spirit led them to preach and write about the soon coming of Jesus and His judgment of the earth. This movement is known as the "Great Advent Awakening" which began in the late 1700s and continued until around the mid-1800s.

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

Hosea 11:10 *"They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west."*

Hear the "roar" of the Lion of Judah - it is announcing something important.

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

Now this is a very curious verse, because for the most part the book of Revelation is a revealing of what was previously sealed. We just saw that in Daniel which was sealed, and now we get to Revelation and we see that it's revealed. But yet as John is about to write some specifics of what is going to happen during this time period that he is being shown, God says; do not write.

It is obvious that John understood those things that were uttered for he was about to write them down. But before he could, a voice from heaven told him to seal up the things that the thunders uttered and do not write them. Evidently, just as Daniel was told (Daniel 12:4) that his words were sealed until the time of the end, John also was told that what the seven thunders uttered were to be sealed. It would be vain to speculate to any great length upon the seven thunders, in hope of gaining a definite knowledge of what they uttered as the scriptures say they were not written.

We must not try and second guess the directions given to John concerning them, we must leave them where he left them, sealed up, unwritten, and consequently to us unknown.

We will not speculate on this, God in His wisdom has withheld them from our understanding; the Bible does not reveal what they are.

John is now bidden to "seal up" the revelation that had come to him, just like Daniel long before:

Daniel 12:4 *"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."*

Paul also, in vision, had heard something similar:

2 Corinthians 12:4 *"How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."*

Now in the message that the angel has in this open book in his hand, notice what it says:

Revelation 10:5-6 *"5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:"*

Here you can see that this sounds very much like the first angels message.

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

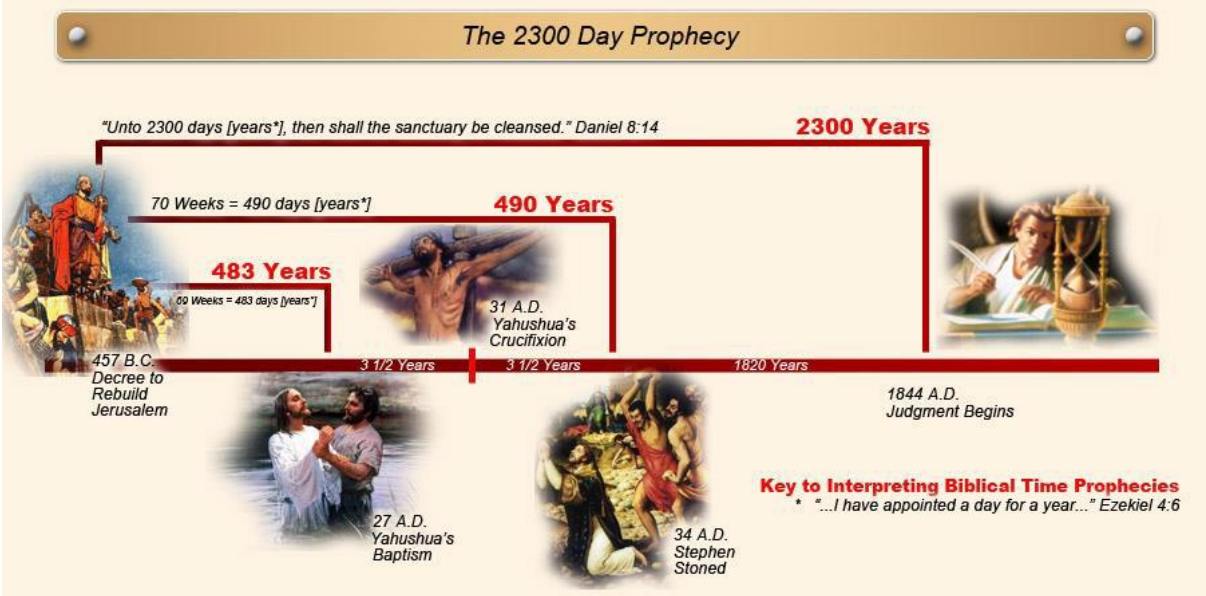
Time no longer - Greek "*chronos ouketi estai*", "time no more shall be".

What is this "time no longer"? Is it literal time, that is, time as calculated by the world today when the world ends and eternity starts, or is it referring to probationary time, the day when salvation's door closes forever? We find that the answer is none of the above mentioned. The reasons for this are as follows.

It cannot be literal time, as in the end of the world, for at the close of the proclamation of this message, the command is given that "thou must prophesy again", verse 11. Thus it cannot be the end of the world, but that we are in the time of the end, and so it's speaking here specifically of prophetic time.

In other words, at this time, after 1798, this would be the end of prophetic time. The Angels message brings us to the year 1844. So after 1844 there would never be another time prophecy given. It very specifically says here that there would be time no longer, in other words there would be no more prophetic time, so anyone that says they can set a date for Jesus return, you can reference Revelation 10 and explain to them that after 1844 there would be no more time setting, no more dates that are given in prophecy.

To study this subject further, see our study on The 2300 Days and 70 Weeks Prophecies of Daniel that will explain all of this.



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

Now when is the sounding of the 7th angel? We haven't looked at the 7th trumpet yet, but if we just jump ahead to Revelation 11, we see some very specific events that surround the sounding of that 7th trumpet.

Revelation 11:15-18 "15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

The seventh trumpet is the second coming of Jesus. God's wrath has come, He is about to reward His people. And so when it says in Revelation 10 that the mystery of God would be finished, just prior to the blowing of the seventh trumpet, what it's talking about is something that will happen just prior to the second coming of Christ.

First let's just review what we've learned so far. The interlude that we find in Revelation 10 begins in the time of the end, or 1798. There's a declaration that time would be no longer – 1844 – the last time-based prophecy. And it will continue until the sounding of the 7th trumpet, or the Second Coming.

In verses 5-6 we see Jesus, making a legal announcement; He holds up his one hand to heaven, like we do in a court of law, and he "swares" by Him who liveth for ever and ever and Who is the Creator. Then He says "time shall be no longer". What "time"?

Time for this earth? No, this earth lasted past 1844.

Probation "time"? No, we still have probation time today, although it is soon going to end.

Time no longer means the prophetic time in the time prophecies, which should precede the advent of our Lord.

The Mystery of God

Now what would continue? It says the mystery of God would be finished. So we need to understand what the mystery of God is. What is it that God is waiting to finish before that trumpet can blow?

We find some clues in 1 Timothy chapter 3:

1 Timothy 3:16 *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."*

Well part of the mystery of God is the gospel, the very fact that Jesus would come to earth, would live among us as one of us, would overcome sin and ascend to heaven to intercede on our behalf. That's part of the mystery but, there is another clue here – it says that God was manifested in the flesh.

Romans 8:3 *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:"*

Here in Romans it explains that it wasn't just any kind of flesh, it was the same kind of flesh that you and I have, that of a sinful nature. Now that doesn't make Jesus a sinner, not by any means, it just means that he had to battle sin with the same equipment, the same flesh, that you and I have to battle with. But the scripture is clear that He never sinned, not once, and we can praise God for that.

Now that's a mystery, we could spend weeks studying just this aspect of the gospel alone, it's a mystery, it's hard to understand. But there's an even greater mystery that goes beyond that. And that is that not only did He do it in the flesh, and overcame sin for our benefit, but now He wants to come and live in you – that makes the mystery even deeper.

Colossians 1:27 *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

We can't explain it – the very fact that through salvation, through justification and sanctification, that Christ can live and dwell in each one of us. What a mystery! This mystery needs to be finished, so the work that Jesus started in each one of us can be completed, and we are told that He is faithful and just to complete it. And so this mystery would be finished before the blowing of the 7th trumpet.

Romans 8:18 *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*

God is going to perfect His people – that's a mystery!

1 John 3:1-3 *"1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."*

So it's a mystery what we shall be, it has not yet been revealed.

And so this interlude in chapter 10 is exactly the same as the interlude in chapter 7. In chapter 7 we learned about the sealing of God's people, the perfecting of the saints, and the 144,000 that would stand – this is the same interlude that we're reading about here in Revelation 10.

There's a message that began in 1798, that swelled in 1844, and that will meet its completion before the sounding of the 7th angel – what is it? It's the hope of glory; it's Christ in each one of us, perfected to His glory. Now this is not by works, it's not by might; it's by His Spirit that these things are accomplished. As long as we're walking in faith with God, He promises that He will finish the work that He started in each one of us.

So to clarify, there are several mysteries in the Bible. One is the Mystery of Iniquity. Who can explain the fact that Satan, living in a perfect environment, with a perfect God, in a very loving and gracious environment, would choose to rebel against God – the Bible says that's a mystery. We can't explain it. God responds with another mystery, the mystery of God, or Godliness – the fact that Jesus a perfect being, in a perfect environment, would choose to come down and save you and I.

Those mysteries will meet their completion before the end of this world. The mystery of iniquity will work its work until all who choose to follow that realm will be fully enveloped in Satan's wicked ways. Likewise the mystery of God will be completed by that fact that all who choose to serve Him and to

give their lives over to Him, He will complete that work that He started in them, and it will meet its completion. And just before that 7th trumpet blows there will only be two groups – those who serve God with all their heart, mind and soul, and those who have abandoned the faith altogether. That is what is referenced to here in the mystery of God that will be completed before the blowing of the 7th trumpet.

Revelation 10:8-9 *"8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.*

So John is instructed to take that little book, the book of Daniel, and to eat it. Now this symbolism is nothing new in the Bible, often God's word is described as bread, or other edible things, here it's Honey.

Jeremiah 15:16 *"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts."*

Psalm 119:103 *"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*

The Great Disappointment

So John is told to take the little book and eat it, be He's told the sweetness will not last because once he swallows it, it will become bitter. So there would be a great disappointment that would come upon John for eating those words, for digesting the word of God, for understanding the prophecies in the book of Daniel.

How many of us have eaten a meal that we've enjoyed thoroughly and then hours later wished we had never eaten it at all? Something happened in the stomach that wasn't good! Maybe some food poisoning or something of that nature. We've all had that experience. Here John is told to eat something that tastes so good, the understanding so great, but yet in the proclamation of that message a great disappointment would come.

In the 1800's missionaries started to go out and proclaim the coming of Jesus, they proclaimed that it would be on a specific date in 1844. People often now look at this time period and say that it turned out to be false because in 1844 this didn't happen, how could God be behind a message like that?

Well here in Revelation 10 we're given some clues. You see it was part of God's plan that this message was to go to the world and that it would weed out and shake out those who weren't truly behind it. And those who were truly searching for truth after the great disappointment would revisit the scriptures, they would throw out everything that didn't have a solid foundation in the scriptures and start over.

Let's explain it this way. John is told to take and eat. There's another place in the Bible where Jesus says the exact same words, on the eve of a very great disappointment. It's found at the last supper. Now the disciples who were there took and ate, and to them it was a very beautiful experience, they were embracing something that they didn't understand until sometime later. Not too long after they had taken and eaten, they themselves experienced a great disappointment. They had the event of Jesus coming all confused, they thought that He was going to free them from the Roman rule, that they were going to reign on earth with Him, and that everything was going to be glorious.

But only 24 hours after they had eaten this meal, they watched their Saviour being crucified on a Roman cross, meeting a death that was so despised by the people of that day that they were ashamed.

What had happened? Well, they had misunderstood the words of Jesus; they had misapplied the prophecies of the Old Testament. In the same way those searching Gods word back in the 1800's had had the math correct, but they had the event wrong.

Now once the disciples had this great disappointment, there was a sort of a shaking. Those who were not following Jesus for the right reasons left, they abandoned Christ, Judas committed suicide, the whole thing had to be reformed, and so in the book of Acts, in the first couple of chapters, you see God rebuilding this New Testament church, making and moulding it into something very beautiful - the apostolic gospel that went out and shook the world. But had there not been a disappointment, the changes that needed to take place in those that were with Jesus that night may never have taken place.

In the same way, the movement from 1798 up to 1844 shook out a lot of people that were in it for the wrong reasons. When that disappointment happened in 1844, people had sold their farms, their land, and their houses, everything that they owned, because they believed wholeheartedly that Christ was coming. They had studied the prophecies a hundred times, they had checked and re-checked and said; this is right.

The problem is they had the wrong event. Instead of Jesus coming in 1844, they didn't understand that in 1844 the work of Judgment was going to begin. And for that reason, when 1844 came and went many people left the faith, many people just abandoned it altogether. There was a shaking that happened during that time, but there were a few people who stayed faithful and said; we know this prophecy is right, we know the word of God is true; it was our understanding that was wrong.

And so they humbly met and prayed, and would have all-night prayer sessions, they said; let's throw out everything we've ever known and let's make sure that everything we believe comes from the scriptures alone. All the traditions about death and hell etc. were thrown out and they started over. And what began to be born, in parallel to that New Testament church, was something that would prophetically shake the world. This group of people consisted of all denominations, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian etc. all searching Gods word as the books were opened, at the beginning of the time of the end.

From those who wanted to follow God alone a movement was born. Just a short time after this disappointment that we see in Revelation 10 there would be a part of the finishing of the mystery of God. God had started this remnant of believers that had come out of a great disappointment, much the same as the New Testament church started right after its great disappointment. A group of sincere believers in God who would not listen to the traditions of men but instead go by the Word of God alone.

Revelation 10:10-11 *"10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. 11 And he said unto me,* ***Thou must prophesy again*** *before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."*

So John is told he must prophecy again. Now if someone tells you to do something again, isn't it reasonable to conclude that you had been doing it before that? So eating the book is the same as prophesying. In other words this movement that swelled up to the great disappointment would have to prophesy again. So John was told that this message must go out, and in Revelation 11 we're given a clue as to what the message was to be about:

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

The train of thought at the end of chapter 10 continues here in chapter 11. So John has a bitter experience, he's told to prophesy again, and then he's given a reed. Now in Bible prophecy, when we see measuring, it symbolises a judgement – the measuring is to see whether something is true, whether it meets the required standard – it's a judgement. And this clue tells us that the message that John was to proclaim to the whole world is about judgment – the hour of His judgment has come. Now John is told to measure the temple, not the heathens out in the courtyard, not those out in the world, he's told to measure the temple. Now where in the Bible does it tell us that judgment begins?

1 Peter 4:17 *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"*

So judgment begins at the temple, at the house of God.

Now let's review everything we've learned in this study.

There's a little book open in the hand of the angel, and we know that this little book is the book of Daniel, and we know this because we saw that the angel in Revelation 10 is the same as the one in Daniel – in Daniel he was above the waters, in Revelation he has one foot in the water and one foot on the land, which denotes His supreme power and authority over the whole earth.

The book is open in the angel's hand. Daniel said it would be sealed until the time of the end. So that fact that the book is open would mean that this interlude in Revelation 10 had to begin in 1798 because that's the start of the time of the end and when the book would be opened.

We know that it's a global message, because the angel has one foot on the sea and one foot on the land. The message will go to every nation, language and people.

When the book is opened, a message follows that time is no longer, which is a fulfilment of the longest time prophecy in the Bible, the 2,300 days, ending in 1844. There would be no more prophetic time after that date.

The eating or understanding of the book was to be a bittersweet experience, ending in a great disappointment. We know that this happened in 1844, fulfilling the prophecy that time should be no longer.

Like Daniel we often use the expression, "he likes it so much that he just eats it up". Well, back in the 1800's as God's people got into the prophecies of Daniel they just "ate it up". They loved it; it was like honey to them. Why? Because they really believed that this prophecy was meaning that Jesus was coming back to earth in October of 1844. Those who love Jesus, and really belong to Him with their whole hearts, are longing to see Him come back and take them home to heaven with Him. But the prophecy says something happened after they 'ate up' that sweet message from Jesus.

Their "belly was bitter". What an amazing way to describe exactly what happened to God's people at that time.

Then the message seemed to go out like wildfire. The very words of the parable of Jesus were used:

1 Peter 4:17 *"Matthew 25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold,* ***the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him****."*

The message went everywhere in the power of the Holy Spirit. As the day grew close, the believers prayed and searched their hearts to make sure they had put away every sin and made right every wrong deed to their families and neighbours. With solemn joy they gathered to await the coming of Jesus. The hours were spent in quietness and prayer.

But the bitter belly came, they were disappointed, the time passed and Jesus did not appear. Most of the people then laughed at their former belief and went away, never again would these join with true believers. But the prophecy had a clue in it — "**Thou must prophecy again**". This message is also for us today. Jesus is coming soon and we must be ready to meet Him in peace. We must be the bearers of this prophecy telling people of Christ soon return. Those who do not choose to repent and obey will perish with the disloyal. There is no second chance no second trial. The gospel that is to be preached to all nations, kindred, tongues, and peoples presents the truth in clear lines, showing that obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life.

Christ imparts His righteousness to those who consent to let Him take away their sins. Jesus longs to have us come home to be with Him; how sad He must feel when most people would rather have the silly pleasures of the world, than have Him, who loves us so much.

At the right time, God raised up a remnant from all denominations to preach the Gospel in its fullness to the whole world, they preached the Three Angels Messages and it is this all-important message that God wants proclaimed to the entire world today.

Revelation 14:6-11 *"6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."*

All who truly follow the Lord must be part of Gods remnant, a people giving out this final message to the world today. This is Gods final message and it must go to all peoples on the face of the earth.

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

Revelation - Chapter 11

The Two Witnesses

Here we will be looking at the two witnesses, found in the 11th chapter of Revelation, and we hope that as we look at these you will be able to put it all together, because we're still into what the scripture describes as the trumpets.

The two witnesses witness in sackcloth – this is strange, that they're in sackcloth, but we'll look at that and see what it has to say.

The 11th chapter brings a section to a close. One of the principles in understanding Bible prophecy is that God repeats and enlarges, so for instance, one section was through the seven churches, another section was the seven seals and we conclude with the seven trumpets. In chapter twelve we set the foundation for another section that talks about what will be happening right down at the close of time.

But here we are still dealing with the trumpets, and in the last study we looked at God's people and the commission that God has for them, and what you and I are to do as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

The 11th chapter picks up on the conflict that's going on between God and Satan, between God's people and Satan's people, and the conflict that develops there, that's what we are going to be looking at in the 11th chapter. And the 11th chapter, like the 10th, is a kind of interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets, that's where it fits.

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

John was given a measuring rod (measuring in prophecy refers to judgment) and he is told to go and measure the temple, the altar and the people that worship there. Notice that it's talking about God's people, what does this mean? Everybody that has ever claimed to belong to God has his name written in the Book of Life. But not all these people will go to heaven. Why not? Well, take Cain and Abel, they both claimed to belong to God. Abel was faithful and obedient; but Cain was disobedient, became a murderer and never repented. When Cain's name was looked at in the Book of Life, unconfessed sin was there and Cain's name was blotted out and his sins remained in the book of sin. He won't be in heaven. So on and on the process goes, judging the dead by the records of their life and whether or not they had unconfessed and unforsaken sins in their record. This grand judgment is taking place, and has been going on for some time. The Lord says, Measure the temple and the worshipers thereof.

Remember when you are walking the streets about your business, God is measuring you; when you are doing your household duties, when you are talking to others, God is measuring you. Remember that your words and actions are being recorded in the books of heaven.

On the basis of Zechariah's symbol of the man with a measuring line who measured Jerusalem as an assurance that the city would be rebuilt.

Zechariah 2:2 *"Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof."*

It may be suggested that the measuring of the temple and worshipers here is also a promise of restoration and preservation. Between the sixth and seventh seals is a parenthetical assurance that in spite of the terrors that attend the second coming of Christ, God has a people who will stand (see Revelation 7; Revelation 6:17). Similarly, the present parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets may also be intended as a reassurance that in the midst of the horrors attendant on the blowing of the trumpets, God's temple, that is, the plan of redemption portrayed there and His true worshippers are secure.

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

So here he says; measure the altar, measure the people, measure the temple, but leave out the court because it has been given to the Gentiles, when it refers to the Gentiles it's basically talking about people who are against God, who are contrary to the Lord, so this is why he says; Don't worry about the court, leave it out, he's making a statement here about what is to take place. This means that in this special judgment that happens before Jesus can come back for His people, the world, which is meant by the court, the Gentiles are not looked at. These are people who never even claimed to belong to God at all — they were just not interested. They are lost and will be judged later.

A little background on the court: In the temple of Herod, which John had known well, there was an inner court divided into the Court of the Women, the Court of Israel, and the Court of the Priests. Beyond these was a great outer court, the Court of the Gentiles, a barrier, a "middle wall of partition":

Ephesians 2:14 *"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."*

In other words there was a division, the outer and inner courts, no Gentile was allowed to pass the barrier on pain of death. In view of the fact that the court mentioned here is "given unto the Gentiles," it would appear that John has this great outer court particularly in mind. The court has been regarded as representing this earth in contrast with "the temple of God" in heaven.

So he's telling us clearly that He has given a time to the Gentiles, and as you study God's word you find that there was also a time that was given to the Jewish people, which we read of in Daniel.

Daniel 9:24 *"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."*

That was the time He gave to the Jewish people. But at the same time He has given a time to the Gentiles. And at the same time He has come to the place where you and I are living today, and we are living in what the Bible calls "the time of the end", that's where we are today.

The court of the temple in Jerusalem was where the Gentiles could come and go as they pleased, but they couldn't go further than that, you had to be part of Israel to go in beyond that point. You see, there comes a day when there will be a dividing line drawn clearly, and probation will close. And in these trumpets John can see to the end of time down at the end and he's trying to tell them; This is what is taking place, and here are God's people, they are being sealed, and here are those that are against God. That's what he's dealing with when it says:

Revelation 22:11 *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he which is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he which is holy, let him be holy still."*

And then what happens? Probation has closed and Christ comes.

Revelation 22:12 *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."*

So that's what happens, when that line is finally drawn. And God in His mercy and in His love, in His longsuffering, is slow to draw that line. But when it finally is drawn, that will be the end and He is going to come.

Revelation 7:3 *"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, not the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."*

He said don't hurt my people, hold back until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. He's talking here to those four angels that are holding back the winds of strife, and he's saying; Don't let go, hang on until we have God's people sealed.

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

In Bible prophecy a day represents one year:

Numbers 14:34 *"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year ..."*

Ezekiel 4:6 *"... I have appointed thee each day for a year."*

Here we have two witnesses, and this verse relates to the time of the Papal persecution upon God's church, the holy city shall they tread under foot, during their 1260 year reign. Now the Bible continues on to discuss the suffering of God's Word during the same time period that they would be prophesying in sackcloth.

So we see the 'Two Witnesses' are 'prophesying for 1260 day/years dressed in sackcloth'. These Two Witnesses represent the Holy Scriptures, the Old and the New Testaments. They are in 'sackcloth'. Why? Sackcloth is something people would wear when they were very sad or in mourning, and we see again the 1260-year period mentioned. The message of God's Holy Word is said to be sad and hidden at this time as millions of true believers died for their faith. Even to be caught with a Bible meant death. But the Bible still 'prophesied', it still had 'power'. Whenever people would got hold of the Bible and read it, or, even if they were given just a few verses written out by hand, they found the saving power of Jesus in it. It was the Bible that gave these people courage to live and die for Jesus' truth and it will do the same thing for us today.

This 1,260 years was going to be a terrible time – this was the time in history referred to as the "Dark Ages". People were denied the word of God. By 500 AD the Bible had been translated into 500 other languages. And then it just seemed that all of a sudden the curtain closed, and in a matter of 100 years there was only one translation remaining, and that was in Latin, and if you couldn't read Latin – sorry! And the people that could didn't have access to the word of God. So the Bible was basically taken away from people, and this became a time of darkness.

People that loved the Lord, loved the word of God, and desired to know the word of God, had taken it and produced hand-written copies of it so that they could keep it – those people found themselves having to flee from persecution. They were hunted, and so they had to flee to different places, and they went up into the mountains where they could worship as they pleased. You can walk through those very mountains and see where they lived. They lived there and tried to worship God, but even in those far out places they were still sought, and very many of them were killed – killed for their faith.

In fact, during that period of time, for about a thousand years, it's hard to describe how bad it was. The people were told that they were too ignorant to read the word of God. The Bible was taken from them, chained to library walls. Even if you had a Bible on you, you were subject to being put to death. In fact the Waldensian people, in order to spread the Word of God took little pages of the Bible and sewed them into their clothing, and if they found someone who was interested in the Bible they would undo their clothing, take out the Bible pages and read the word of God to them. It was horrible during that period of time.

John Wycliffe (1380 AD) was known as the Morning Star of the Reformation. He decided that he would translate the Bible into English for the people. He had to spend most of his life on the run, because they were seeking him to kill him. In fact when they finally arrested him, he died before they could burn him at the stake.

So when it says the two witnesses would be in sackcloth, this was a very hard period of time if you believed in God's word.

John Huss and Jerome – these men tried to serve the Lord, because they followed the writings of Wycliffe. John Huss was burned at the stake. His partner Jerome was taken and locked away in prison, and was kept in chains until the flesh on his body literally rotted, and he was finally burned at the stake.

Out of this period of time, in which these great men suffered so much, came Martin Luther, who nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church at Wittenburg. And you find that things begin to change, and along came other men like John Calvin and Zwingli, and these men stood up and preached the word of God. And then finally the princes of Europe stood up and said; We are not going to do this any longer, we are going to follow the Bible and the dictates of our conscience; and the persecution began to drop off.

And then you reach 1798.

"In 1798, he (Berthier) ... made his entrance into Rome, ABOLISHED THE PAPAL GOVERNMENT and established a secular one." ***The Encyclopaedia Americana, 1941 Edition***

And the time of persecution came to an end. It stopped. But then something happened, because the scripture says: The Word of God became suppressed and God's people were martyred as the Papal persecution fell upon God's church. The holy city shall they tread under foot, during their 1260 year reign. So during this time of persecution they will be prophesying in sackcloth.

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

So it tells us that these two witnesses are two olive trees and two lampstands, standing before the God of the earth. Let's take a closer look at this.

Zechariah 4:2-3 *"2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: 3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof."*

So here are the two witnesses, it's talking about the olive trees and the lamp stands, so you have these two here.

Zechariah 4:4 *"So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord?"*

Now notice carefully the answer, because the angel tells him something very definite here.

Zechariah 4:5-6 *"5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. 6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."*

In other words, what he's telling them is that the authority is the word of God, and that what takes place is not by might or by power, but by the word of God, by God's Spirit, this is how it happens.

What is the Purpose of the Olive Trees and Lampstands?

It's vital that we understand this, because if we understand the purpose we'll see what is taking place here.

Zechariah 4:11-12 *"11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side? 12 And I answered him again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?"*

This is the picture – you have the two olive trees, the pipes run from them to the lampstands and the oil flows to the lampstands.

Now notice very carefully.

Zechariah 4:14 *"Then said he, These are the two anointed ones [hayitshaar], that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."*

Now he's talking about the two witnesses, he said these are the two anointed ones. Now the original Hebrew of this verse sheds some very important light on this.

The Hebrew word "*hayitshaar*" means to produce light. So these are the two that produce light, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.

Now we should be able to put this together. We have oil, and oil is used throughout the scriptures, it's used for anointing, for instance when Samuel anointed David – so the oil is a type/symbol of the Holy Spirit. Also remember that on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples as tongues of fire. So it has both here.

Zechariah 4:6 *"... Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."*

So if you have oil and you have fire, what will you get? You're going to get light! That's what you had in the sanctuary, with the seven golden candlesticks, which the oil was placed in, and it produced light.

So he is saying that these two anointed ones, that produce light, they are my witnesses.

Psalm 119:105 *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path."*

Psalm 119:130 *"Thy entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple."*

It's always amazing that when the word of God is being explained, particularly the question of salvation, that something can be seen happening in the eyes of some people – the light comes on – they see and understand – this is what it's talking about – the light that shines and illuminates

darkness. That's why it says that God's word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path – it gives light and understanding, the word of God opens up and people can see things they've never understood before.

Zechariah 4:6 *"... This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."*

In other words, the light shone through the power of the Holy Spirit. It tells us that when it comes to God's word:

2 Peter 1:21 *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

So the Holy Spirit is the one who gave to them the words of scripture. So when you and I read it, we see, we understand, it begins to open up, and it opens up more and more every day, we will never come to the place where we know it all, we will always be seeing new things that we never saw or understood before. That's because God's word is revealed by the Holy Spirit, who enables us to understand it, the deeper we want to go the deeper He will take us.

So the two witnesses that it's talking about here are the Old and New Testaments – God's word is the one that brings light. So the two witnesses that produce light are the word of God.

The very same energy that God used in creating the world is in the Bible. And so when you and I read it, it's not like any other book. When we read it, there's a power there that you don't find in any other place, a power that is capable of changing our hearts and mind – it is the two witnesses that God is talking about here.

Jesus said, concerning His word:

John 12:48 *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."*

You see this is the witness, the Old and New Testaments, and he says this is what will judge us.

Now people may ask; what about someone who doesn't know? Well, you and I are judged by what we know. For us to know what God's word says, and not to follow it – that's wrong, but to the person who hasn't come that far yet, God understands that, and the person will be judged on that basis. But you and I must also be willing to be taught, and to learn, and to spend time in God's word.

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

So it makes it very clear that you don't want to hurt/harm these two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments.

Fire proceeds out of their mouth - Even though there are two witnesses they only have one mouth. The Old and New Testaments speak with only one mouth; they speak as one entire book. This is reminiscent of Elijah's judgment on the messengers of Ahaziah:

2 Kings 1:10 *"And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty."*

To those that wish to oppose, corrupt or pervert its testimony or even hinder its way will find their end in total destruction by the lake of fire. This the Bible bears witness/testimony of:

Deuteronomy 4:2 *"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."*

Revelation 20:15 *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Revelation 22:18-19 *"18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

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

Now there are many people that want to take this prophecy and say that those two witnesses represented Moses and Elijah. And the reason they say this is because Moses is the one who in Egypt turned the water into blood, and it was Elijah who prayed that it would not rain, and it didn't rain on the earth for three and a half years. And they take this and try to make this application to it.

For anything to be confirmed, for anything to be ratified, for anything to be established, it has to be done in the presence of two witnesses. Scripture will not accept, and God will not accept, the witness of one person. You must have two to substantiate it. So when it comes to this, he's asking for two witnesses, in other words the same power that Moses and Elijah used to establish what they did, that same power is to attend these two witnesses. It is not saying that Moses and Elijah are going to come back in person, that's not what it's talking about. It's saying that these two witnesses will have the same authority and power that the prophets of old had, like Moses and Elijah.

Did Moses and Elijah have any power of their own? No, they were human beings just like you and I, they had no more power than you and I have. But they did have the word of God. And they spoke whatever God instructed them to say, all they spoke was based on the word of God – that was the authority they used – the word of God.

Notice here in this verse that it says that it rain not in the days of their prophecy now often the Bible speaks of the early and latter rain in regards to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and during those years of persecution there was no rain (Holy Spirit) falling:

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

Now we come to an amazing story in prophecy; we see the 2 witnesses ‘finishing' their testimony in sackcloth, for that is what the words in Greek really tell us. So we know that something happened to the Bible near the end of those 1260 years that ended in 1798. Did something happen then? Yes, it says a ‘Beast' comes out of the bottomless pit. The bottomless pit refers to the wickedness and spiritual darkness of this world, so out of this wicked world comes a new ‘Beast'; a new ruling power. In 1793, the power of Atheism, calling itself ‘Communism' arose mainly in France and they passed a law outlawing the Bible. The Roman power had kept the Bible from the common people, but now this

new power declared that the Bible was to be destroyed forever. 'It was 'killed'; in other words, it was to have no political influence at all. Let's look at this in a little more detail.

Finishing their testimony in sackcloth - This cannot be the end of the scriptures' testimony per se, as the Word of God liveth and abideth forever (1 Peter 1:23), so it must be a reference to the end of the period of their prophesying in sackcloth, which occurred around 1798 AD.

The beast - Greek "*thērion*", "the wild beast". Thus far John has mentioned no "beast" (*thērion*); (the "four beasts" of Revelation 4:6 are in heaven so not earthly). Yet the expression "the beast" seems to imply that the reader will understand which beast this is. Two interpretations of this symbol have been set forth.

As the Two Testaments or Witnesses are finishing their prophesying in sackcloth, a beast makes war against them, overcomes them and finally kills them.

The identifying marks for this beast are as follows:

1) This was to be a nation/kingdom as a beast is representative of such (Daniel 7:17,23).

2) This nation would be a new manifestation of something which had existed before - from the bottomless pit or "*abussos*" in the Greek, verse 7.

Bottomless pit is used 7 times in the book of Revelation, and as this book is a book of symbols it must be a symbolic term.

* It is used 3 times in chapter 9 to describe the source and inspiration of the symbolic locusts that are inspired by Satan to bring woe to the inhabitants of the earth under the fifth trumpet.

* Used once in Revelation 17:8 to describe the location or condition from which a beast emerges, after it, "is not", i.e. non-existent, or dead. It is a place of death - the grave.

* Used 2 times in chapter 20 to describe the prison house of Satan during the millennium, when the earth is turned into a world-wide graveyard, or a place of death.

In Romans 10:7 the word "deep" (Greek "*abussos*") is used to describe the grave or place of death. And as we have studied before, Satan's movements are described as emerging from beneath whereas the things of God from above, see also James 3:15-17.

Thus, the nation to rise from the pit would be a new manifestation of something which had existed before. The resurrection of that which was:

3) It would rise around 1798 AD at the end of the 1,260-year period during which the witnesses prophesied in sackcloth, verses 3 and 7.

4) It would attack the Bible - Revelation's two witnesses, verse 7.

5) It would manifest a disbelief in the true God - like Egypt, verse 8.

6) It would manifest great immorality - like Sodom, verse 8.

7) It would be located where Christ, in the person of His saints, suffered terribly, verse 8.

8) It was part of spiritual Babylon - that great city, verse 8.

9) It would be involved in a great political upheaval - great earthquake, verse 13.

We will now see how this prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfilment in the history of France:

1) France is a nation.

2) France manifested the same God defying spirit that was seen in the kingdom of Egypt (Exodus 5:2), the king of the south. This then is a resurrection of the God-defying spirit of atheism direct from a satanic origin.

3) The French Revolution occurred around in the late 1700s as the 1,260-year period of Papal supremacy was coming to an end.

4) France attacked the Bible. The French Convention dressed an ass...loaded it with the symbols of Christianity and tied the Old and New Testaments to its tail. It was then led in mock procession...The crowd piled books of devotion into heaps and burned them to ashes, amid blasphemous shouts...A prostitute was enthroned as "Goddess of Reason".

5)*"France stands apart in the world's history as the single state which, by the decree of her Legislative Assembly, pronounced there was no God."* ***Blackwood's Magazine, Nov, 1870***

"On November 26, 1793, the Convention, of which 17 bishops and some clergy were members, decreed the abolition of all religion." ***The Age of Revolution, W.H. Hutton, pg. 156***

This is an echo of Pharaoh's disbelief in God:

Exodus 5:2 *"And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."*

Notice though, that this atheistic condition was produced by Papalism; In the sixteenth century the Reformation, presenting an open Bible to the people, had sought admission to all the countries of Europe. Some nations welcomed it with gladness, as a messenger of Heaven. In other lands the papacy succeeded to a great extent in preventing its entrance; and the light of Bible knowledge, with its elevating influences, was almost wholly excluded. In one country, though the light found entrance, it was not comprehended by the darkness. For centuries, truth and error struggled for the mastery. At last the evil triumphed, and the truth of Heaven was thrust out.

John 3:19 *"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."*

The nation was left to reap the results of the course which she had chosen. The restraint of God's Spirit was removed from a people that had despised the gift of His grace. Evil was permitted to come to maturity. And the entire world saw the fruit of wilful rejection of the light.

The war against the Bible, carried forward for so many centuries in France, culminated in the scenes of the Revolution. That terrible out breaking was but the legitimate result of Rome's suppression of the Scriptures. It presented the most striking illustration which the world has ever witnessed of the working out of the papal policy; an illustration of the results to which for more than a thousand years the teaching of the Roman Church had been tending.

6) In the Revolution the institution of marriage was made a mockery and great immorality took place. Just like the licentious Sodom (Genesis 13:13; 19:4-11, Jude 7).

7) In France Christ had been crucified in the person of His witness in events such as the papal inspired St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Notice how the Scriptures show how Christ can be crucified again:

Matthew 25:40 *"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

Saul, the Jewish Pharisee, terribly persecuted the early church. When Jesus confronted him on the road to Damascus He introduced Himself by saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 26:14).

So we can see that whatever is done to Christ's followers He accepts as being done to Himself. Christ was "crucified" in the person of His witnesses in the nation of France. This specification of the prophecy was also fulfilled by France in the scenes of the Revolution. Jesus Christ was declared to be an impostor, and the rallying cry of the French infidels was, "Crush the Wretch," meaning Christ. Heaven-daring blasphemy and abominable wickedness went hand in hand, and the basest of men, the most abandoned monsters of cruelty and vice, were most highly exalted. In all this, supreme homage was paid to Satan; while Christ, in His characteristics of truth, purity, and unselfish love, was crucified.

"It is an appalling fact that France, in the long period when it was dominated by the papacy, was guilty of slaughtering millions of Christians." ***Wylie, The History of Protestantism, Vol. 3, pgs. 329-347, Vol. 2, pgs. 140-145, 557-562***

"Under papal leadership, France slew Albigenses, brave Huguenots and other Protestants. The St. Bartholomew Massacre Aug 24-5, 1572, is the most dreadful example. And what was Rome's reaction to this? When the news of the massacre reached Rome, the exultation among the clergy knew no bounds...A medal was struck to commemorate the massacre..." ***The Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Henry White, chapter 14, paragraph 34***

France was part of spiritual Babylon. France had been the first of the ten nations, into which the Roman Empire divided, to support the papacy. France was known as the eldest daughter of the church.

Revelation is a book of two cities:

1. Jerusalem - representing the church of God
2. Babylon - representing false religion

There are only three cities that are called "great" in Scripture:

1. Gibeon - once, Joshua 10:2.
2. Nineveh - 4 times, Jonah 1:2; 3:2, 3, 11.
3. Babylon - 10 times, Daniel 4:30, Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 16, 18-19, 21.

The great city of this text is said to have the spirit of Sodom & Egypt. It cannot therefore refer to Jerusalem. It undoubtedly refers to Babylon the Great, the apostate system of religion centered in the Papacy.

The witnesses were not to lay dead in the city in general but "in the street of the great city." "The street" must refer to some part but not the whole of spiritual Babylon, thus showing that France has been an effective part for the Papacy.

The French Revolution was a political upheaval that changed the world and the effects remain with us even today.

The bottomless pit - The term for "bottomless pit" comes from the Greek word "*abussos*", which means deep, bottomless and profound. As we have seen the bottomless pit refers to the wickedness and spiritual darkness of this world, so this is the same bottomless pit that we learned about in our study on Revelation 9, where it talks about the star falling from heaven and being given the key to a

bottomless pit. In the Greek it is also applied to the original state of the earth in Genesis 1:2, where the earth was "without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." A good description of this is found in Jeremiah 4:

Jeremiah 4:24-27 *"24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. 25 I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. 26 I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger. 27 For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end."*

These verses clearly refer to the end of time after the second coming of Christ, but we are looking only at the description of the earth not the time frame. The description given is one of a desolate wasteland, thus these apostate leaders have the key to open the desolate wasteland, as in Revelation 9.

Shall overcome them and kill them - That is, attempt to destroy the Word of God. A reference to the manner in which France made war on religion.

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

What city is here shown to us? The Bible says 3 things; Sodom, Egypt, and where Jesus was crucified. But these are symbols here; Sodom meant the wicked and dirty way they lived when they also ruled to have no proper marriage anymore, Egypt was where Pharaoh declared he 'knew not God', and France now declared the same thing; and Jesus was crucified symbolically, when His people were slain in France in the St. Bartholomew's Massacre years before. The city? It was Paris, France. There happened the most terrible events; they are known as the 'Reign of Terror'. People were killed by having their heads chopped off by a machine called a Guillotine. So many people were killed that blood flowed down the streets and colored the waters of the river red. When people refuse the Bible and the authority of God's holy Law, it doesn't take long until terrible things happen. Why? Because when we refuse to obey God, Satan forces us to do his will, there is no other choice. January 21, 1793.

"The world for the first time heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, assuming the right to govern one of the finest European nations, uplift their voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, renounced unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity." ***Life of Napoleon, Volume 1, Chapter 1, by Sir Walter Scott***

They turned against religion.

"But did France 'make war' on the Bible? She did; and in 1793 a decree passed on the French assembly forbidding the Bible and under that decree Bibles were gathered and burned, end every possible mark of contempt heaped upon them, and all the institutions of the Bible abolished. Baptism and Communion were abolished. The being of God was denied;" ***Midnight Cry, p. 47, George Storrs***

You see the two witnesses were thrown out, thrown in the street, they were gathered up and burned, in France.

"and death pronounced to be an eternal sleep. The Goddess of Reason was set up, in the person of a vile woman, and publicly worshipped." ***Midnight Cry, p. 47, George Storrs***

They turned against the Bible, they burned it in piles, and they took a woman, put her on a cart, and paraded her through the streets of Paris, and worshipped her as the Goddess of Reason. And so you

find that this beast that rose out of the bottomless pit turned on the word of God and killed the two witnesses.

It's very important that you understand that when it says "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt", it's not talking about the literal cities of Sodom and Egypt, rather it's making an application spiritually, and likewise to the place where Christ was crucified – it's being used in a symbolic form. So what does it mean?

You remember that the children of Israel were in Egypt, and Moses went in and told Pharaoh; let my people go.

Exodus 5:2 *"And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."*

So you find that Egypt basically represented atheism, they went against God. Pharaoh said; I don't know the LORD, who is he? And he wouldn't let Israel go.

Sodom, you remember, was destroyed because of its terrible morals, because it had lost its morality, and it was destroyed for that reason.

You see when France passed the decree to get rid of the Bible, and they threw the Bible out, they lost anything by which they could have a standard, and the morals in France dropped clear to the bottom. It's impossible to describe how horrible it was during that period of time, when the whole country lost its morals. That's the reason the Bible refers to it as Sodom.

The Reign of Terror

When France gave up the Bible, and threw it out, if you believed in God, they would take you and Guillotine you – you could not believe in God and live. And they did that to all the religions, it didn't matter whether you were Protestant or Catholic, you were guillotined for believing in the Bible and God. People died by the untold thousands – so many that blood ran down the gutters of the streets of Paris, from the number of people that they Guillotined.

Matthew 25:40 *"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

That's why it says "and where also our Lord was crucified", because Jesus says when you did it to these people, you did it to me.

"The gospel of peace which France had rejected was to be only too surely rooted out, and terrible would be the results. On the 21st of January, 1793, two hundred and fifty eight years from the very day that fully committed France to the persecution of the Reformers, another procession with a far different purpose passed through the streets of Paris." ***The Great Controversy, p. 230, Ellen G. White***

258 years after France had played its part in persecuting the Reformers, the king of France was beheaded.

"Again the king was the chief figure; again there was tumult and shooting; again there was heard the cry for more victims; again there was the black scaffolds; and again the scenes of the day were closed by horrid executions; Louis XVI, struggling hand to hand with his jailers and executioners, was dragged forward to the block, and there held down by main force till the axe had fallen, and his dissevered head rolled on the scaffold." ***Wylie, b. 13, ch. 21***

This was the time of the reign of terror that took place.

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

The Bible was ruled out of France and it was to lay there for three and a half days/years.

The other nations saw the terrible events that happened when France by a decree of her government passed a law doing away with the Bible and all religion and belief in God. For exactly 3½ years, as the prophecy says, this went on. Wicked people celebrated, but soon terror took the place of merry-making. No one knew when his head would be the next to come off. Exactly 3½ years later, that same government passed a law putting the Bible and belief in God back in their rightful place. All thinking people who saw the events that had happened were made fearful of ever doing such a wicked thing again. After this time the Bible was held in greater reverence (at least by the Protestant nations), than ever before.

People and kindreds - other nations. These would observe the war on the Bible that was taking place in France.

Their dead bodies three days and a half - In harmony with the principle of prophetic interpretation, one day in Bible prophecy equals one year, thus we have a time period of three and a half years in which the Bible was to be put to death. The Papacy suppressed and obscured the Bible but France killed it.

"The world for the first time heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity." ***Sir Walter Scott, Life of Napoleon, vol. 1, ch. 17***

"Bibles were gathered and burned in the streets and "With blasphemous boldness almost beyond belief, one of the priests of the new order said: 'God, if You exist, avenge Your injured name. I bid You defiance! You remain silent; You dare not launch Your thunders. Who after this will believe in Your existence?' ***Lacretelle, History, Vol. II, p309; in Sir Archibald Alison, History of Europe, Vol. I, ch. 10***

"In 1793, the decree passed the French Assembly suppressing the Bible. Just three years after, a resolution was introduced into the Assembly going to supersede the decree, and giving toleration to the Scriptures. That resolution lay on the table six months, when it was taken up, and passed without a dissenting vote....on the 17th of June 1797." ***George Stoffs, Midnight Cry, Vol. 4, Nos 5-6, 47***

Thus making 3½ years just as the Bible predicted.

Not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves:

"The language of this verse describes the feelings of other nations besides the one committing the outrage on the witnesses. They would see what war infidel France had made on the Bible, but would not be led nationally to engage in the wicked work, nor suffer the murdered witnesses to be buried, or put out of sight among themselves, though they lay dead three days and a half, that is, three years and a half, in France. No; this very attempt on the part of France served to arouse Christians everywhere to put forth new exertions in behalf of the Bible..." ***Daniel and the Revelation by Uriah Smith, pg. 502***

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

When France took the stand and established the "age of reason", other nations wrote to them, congratulating them, and said how wonderful and brilliant they were, while their whole morals were falling to the floor and they were losing their whole nation at the same time. So other nations were ready to jump on the bandwagon instead of standing up for what is right and what is truth. But it goes on to say that...

"France stands apart in the world's history as the single state which, by the decree of her Legislative Assembly, pronounced there was no God, and of which the entire population of the capital, and a vast majority elsewhere, women as well as men, danced and sang with joy in accepting the announcement." ***Blackwood's Magazine, Nov, 1870***

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

After three and a half days/years the two witnesses stood on their feet. In other words, the two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments that France had thrown out were going to come back. That is, at the end of the period during which the witnesses' bodies lie unburied and exposed to public view.

As we have seen already, the decree that went forth to completely suppress the Scriptures was overturned just three and a half years later. The guilty conscience which had tormented the wicked returned "and great fear fell upon them".

Spirit of life - That is, the Spirit that is life. The Greek phrase here employed is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew "*ruach chayyim*", "breath of life" (Genesis 6:17; 7:15). The Hebrews virtually equated breath with life. Consequently, to say that the breath of life entered into a man was to say that he received life (Genesis 2:7).

From God - God, the Giver of all life, raises His faithful witnesses.

Stood upon their feet - Compare 2 Kings 13:21; Ezekiel 37:10.

Great fear fell - A guilty conscience, which had tormented the wicked during the time of the prophecy of the two witnesses once more, asserts itself. Those who had rejoiced over the death of the witnesses now stand aghast as they behold the miracle of the resurrection of these witnesses.

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

Voice from heaven - The speaker is not identified, but presumably this is God.

Come up hither - Not only are the witnesses resurrected by God; they are bidden to enter heaven. Thus while "their enemies" behold "them" they are completely vindicated from the outrages they had suffered, and the truth of the prophecy they had faithfully proclaimed for 1,260 days is demonstrated to all. The voice of God Himself has welcomed them to heaven, before the very eyes of those who had sought to destroy them.

This exaltation of the witnesses has been understood as symbolizing the remarkable popularity that the Scriptures have enjoyed since the early 19th century. Soon after the French Revolution various national Bible societies were established. Particularly notable among these were the British and Foreign Bible Society, founded in 1804, and the American Bible Society, organized in 1816. These societies, with others, have circulated Scripture portions in more than 1,500 languages. Thus in the last century and a half, the Bible, rather than being relegated to oblivion as a spiritual guide, has come to enjoy its widest circulation.

Ascended up to heaven - As Jesus bade His disciples farewell, a cloud "received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). So also the two witnesses are carried to heaven in a cloud. The figure fittingly describes the exaltation of the Scriptures in the period following their suppression in France.

Looking at Daniel 4:22 we gain an understanding of the expression: "Thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven". Here the expression signifies great exaltation. Have the Scriptures attained to such a state of exaltation as here indicated, since France made war upon them? Indeed they have.

"Shortly after, the British Bible Society was organized (1804); then followed the American Bible Society (1817); and these, with their almost innumerable auxiliaries, are scattering the Bible everywhere." ***Uriah Smith, Daniel and the Revelation, pg. 536***

Since that period, the Bible has been translated into hundreds of languages and scattered in the hundreds of millions world-wide.

The Bible has risen to be respected by almost every one, whether saint or sinner. No other book approaches it in cheapness or number of copies sold. The world has never seen any other book, which approaches the Bible in these respects. It is exalted as above all price and, besides the Son Himself, it is the most invaluable blessing of God to man.

Yes, the Scriptures may truly be said to be exalted "to heaven in a cloud," a cloud being an emblem of heavenly elevation.

After the French Revolution the Bible not only rose to its feet, but it arose to new heights of worldwide distribution. Revelation's two witnesses have indeed "ascended up to heaven".

2 Peter 1:19 *"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."*

The prophetic word is certain. Now notice what happens.

After 3½ years had passed they decided they could handle it no more, things were so bad they could not take it anymore, and therefore this is what happened.

On November 26th 1793 – they voted to do away with religion. It says the two witnesses, the Old and the New Testaments, would lie dead in the street for 3½ days / years (each day represents a year). Now see the amazing accuracy of this book. At the end of 3 years France was in shambles, things were so bad that the Assembly decided that they had better institute religion again, but for some reason, and there is no accountable reason for this, they tabled it. They tabled it and it lay there for 6 months. The scriptures said 3½ years, it didn't say 3 years, it said 3½ years, and it lay there on the table for 6 months and at the end of the 6 months they voted it in.

November 26th 1793 – they voted to do away with religion.

3½ years later, June 17th 1797, they voted religion back in.

It says that after that, after it had been brought back into France, all of a sudden these two witnesses received life. All of a sudden the word of God came to life. You have the British Bible Society being formed, followed by the American Bible Society.

- British Bible Society 1804
- 1804 American Bible Society 1816

All around the world the word of God starts to come back to life. Exactly as the Bible said it would, it came back to life. The word of God stood.

At this same time, many missionaries are carrying the word of God all over the earth:

- Judson goes to Burma
- Carey goes to India
- Morrison goes to China
- Moffat and Livingston go to Africa

At the same time, you have coming out of this "age of reason" the writings of Thomas Paine, you have teachings such as the Theory of Evolution, also new morality – all these things are springing up at the same time, and these are in opposition to one another, and will remain that way until Jesus comes. And many of the things that you and I face today are because of those teachings. Unfortunately our education systems are full of Evolution, and students are taught it and come out not believing in God. And yet this is a conflict that is happening because of that time – that's when you had Darwin and other men teaching things contrary to the word of God.

So you and I need to be clear where we are concerning the word of God, we need to study it, be settled and unmovable in it.

Matthew 24:14 *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."*

This is what is taking place, this is the time that we are living in. And that's why it talks about the two witnesses, it's to help you and I understand where we are in the stream of time, because it's right after this that the 7th trumpet is sounded, in which God sets up His kingdom.

That will then bring the whole part of the trumpets to a close. The Bible will then begin to pick up a new scenario, dealing in a very specific way right down here at the end of time. But now let's look at verse 13...

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

What about the Earthquake? And the "tenth part of the city fell"? Well, France was a "tenth" part of Europe and the "earthquake", a symbolic one, referred to the terrible French Revolution. Like a real earthquake, it shook people up. "and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand". France made war, in her revolution of 1789-98 and onward, on all titles of nobility. It is said, by those who have examined the French records, that actually there were seven thousand hereditary titles of men, abolished in that revolution.

Same hour - That is, almost immediately after the ascension of the witnesses.

A great earthquake - The symbol of an earthquake is used repeatedly in Scripture to portray the turmoil and upheaval that characterize the world immediately preceding the second advent (Mark 13:8; Revelation 16:18) Applying the prophecy to France, commentators see in the earthquake a picture of the upheaval that shook the nation toward the close of the 18th century.

"It was an earthquake in the political world." ***Burke***

"The minds of men were shaken as by the yawning of the ground during the fury of an earthquake." ***Alison***

"It destroyed the landmarks of the world in which generations of men had passed their lives." ***Cambridge Modern History***

The cause of this great upheaval/Revolution in France was the following; Rome secured the flight of the Protestants out of France, but the Protestants carried with them the intelligence, the arts, the industry and the order. Flourishing manufacturing cities fell into decay; fertile districts returned to their native wildness; intellectual dullness and moral declension succeeded a period of unwonted progress. The wealthy oppressed the poor and the poor hated the rich. The courts of justice were corrupt and the middle to lower classes were heavily taxed to support a system of corruption on the part of the government and the clergy, which the both were flourishing in their wealth.

But what Rome had purposed, holding the masses in a blind submission to her dogmas, only served for creating a mass of infidels and revolutionists. Romanism was despised as priest craft and the clergy as a party to their oppression. As masses lived in hunger priests and rulers basked in wealth and opulence. The outworking of all the above was the revolution.

"At the opening of the Revolution, by a concession of the king, the people were granted a representation exceeding that of the nobles and the clergy combined. Thus the balance of power was in their hands; but they were not prepared to use it with wisdom and moderation. Eager to redress the wrongs they had suffered, they determined to undertake the reconstruction of society. An outraged populace, whose minds were filled with bitter and long-treasured memories of wrong, resolved to revolutionize the state of misery that had grown unbearable and to avenge themselves upon those whom they regarded as the authors of their sufferings. The oppressed wrought out the lesson they had learned under tyranny and became the oppressors of those who had oppressed them....The example of persecution which the clergy of France had exhibited for so many ages, was now retorted upon them with signal vigor. The scaffolds ran red with the blood of the priests. The galleys and the prisons, once crowded with Huguenots, were now filled with their persecutors. Chained to the bench and toiling at the oar, the Roman Catholic clergy experienced all those woes which their church had so freely inflicted on the gentle heretics. The shootings, the drownings, the roastings of the Roman Catholic loyalists, both priest and nobles…had all their prototypes [or models] in the babarities of another age practiced under the direction of the Pope and French Papists." ***E.B. Elliot, Horae Apocalypticae, Vol. 3, p321-322***

"The French Revolution slew as many priests and Papists under Louis XVI as the priests and papists slew Protestants under Louis XIV. Simpson and other good and great writers have truly and justly considered that the latter slaughter was a righteous retribution for the former murders. This event sent an awful shock through the whole empire...."They rose en masse, 'Down with these monsters who have...villainously imposed upon our credulity'...Baruel, in his 'History of the Revolution' says, '138 bishops and 64,000 curates were driven from their sees or parishes; all the clergy, all the religious...forced from their retreats...300 priests slain in one day in one city; all the other pastors who remained faithful to their God, were either sacrificed or banished...such is the spectacle exhibited to the world by the French Revolution." ***Allen, The Apocalypse, pgs. 113-115***

This was a most momentous upheaval that not only effected France but the whole world.

"The time of the eighteenth--century French Revolution when the 1260 years of the Papal era were closing, was a turning point in the history of the modern world. It brought forth forces that made a permanent change in the thoughts and actions of mankind." ***Alison, History of Europe (1789-1815), Vol. 1, pgs. 47-49***

The French Revolution was one of the momentous events in the history, not only of France, but of Europe and even the whole world.

The tenth part of the city fell - A tenth part of Babylon the Great/the Papal Roman power fell. France is one of the ten horns that arose out of the divided Western Roman Empire and gave its allegiance to the papal power. Now she falls in a political and religious upheaval.

Tenth part - This is not the final earthquake, for only a fraction of the city falls at this time (Revelation 16:18). This earthquake signifies a temporary judgment that frightens into submission some of those who have gloried in the death of the witnesses. Some apply the expression "tenth part of the city" to the entire nation of France on the basis that France was one of the "ten kings" to arise from the fallen Roman Empire (Daniel 7:24). Others identify the city as papal Rome and France as one of its ten divisions.

Slain of men seven thousand - Greek "*onomata anthrōpōn*", literally, "names of men". Some take the word "onomata", "names", here in the sense of "persons" (see Acts 3:16). Others apply "*onomata*" to titles, offices or orders that were suppressed during the French Revolution. Because of this great upheaval it is said that there were seven thousand men slain, or names of men. Seven is a symbol of completeness thus there is a complete slaying of the names of men, undoubtedly the titles of men.

Notice this quote:

"Hereditary nobility is forever abolished: in consequence the titles of prince, duke, count, marquis, viscount, vidame, baron, knight, messive, ecuyler, noble and all other similar titles shall neither be taken by any one whomsoever nor given to anybody." **Sir Robert Anderson, Constitution and Selected Documents pg.33**

Remnant were affrighted:

"Their God-dishonouring and Heaven-defying work filled France with such scenes of blood, carnage, and horror, as made even the infidels themselves tremble, and stand aghast; and the 'remnant' that escaped the horrors of that hour 'gave glory to God' - not willingly, but the God of heaven caused this 'wrath of man to praise him' by causing all the world to see that those who make war on heaven make graves for themselves; thus glory redounded to God by the very means that the wicked men employed to tarnish that glory." ***Daniel and the Revelation by Uriah Smith, Page 504, 505***

One thing that should be noted here, at the end of our study, is that the French Revolution has been identified as the birthplace of the modern communist movement:

"The connection between the absolutist revolution of the eighteenth century and the Marxist movement of the next century presses for recognition...[It] is the direct offspring and her... A RELIGION OF ATHEISM, which is the mainspring of the Communist Power...Marxism has succeeded in coupling scientific ideas with the greatest political hopes that man has ever entertained, the absolute hopes that animated the French Revolution." ***The Dignity of Man, R. W. Davenport, p163-9***

The God of heaven - This title occurs frequently in Daniel (see Daniel 2:18-19, 37, 44, cf. Ezra 5:11-12; 6:9; 7:12).

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

The second woe was the judgments under the sixth trumpet. The third woe is the events portrayed under the seventh trumpet (verse 15-19), the second coming of Jesus. We will see that this final woe takes us from the commencement of the judgment in 1844 through to the second coming of Christ and the end of the 1000 years.

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

When the seventh angel sounded; this marked the beginning of the third woe. We need to remember that under the seventh angel the mystery of God is to be finished, the gospel is to be concluded, salvation is to come to its end, probation will close and God's wrath will be poured out in the form of the seven last plagues.

These great voices were probably those of the heavenly hosts. (Revelation 5:11-12) Similarly, in the seventh plague a great voice is heard from the temple in heaven. (Revelation 16:17)

The Kingdoms of this world are become - Textual evidence attests the reading "kingdom". Christ receives the kingdom a short time prior to His return to this earth. (see Daniel 7:14) At the time of His coming all earthly opposition is crushed. The kingdoms of this world have been usurped by Satan, he claims them as his very own which is illustrated by the offering of them to Christ, "all these things will I give thee" (Matthew 4:8-9).

In some of the parables of Jesus we see more about this. In one He says He goes away to receive a kingdom (Luke 19:12), in another He goes into the Marriage (Matthew 25:1- 13), in another the King (Heavenly Father) makes a marriage for His Son (Matthew 22:1-14). Did you know that most of Jesus' parables are also prophecies? They give us clues to understand the prophets. As we read this Woe, it sounds like Jesus is reigning through the whole thing, but this is a process that is happening now. The books are opened; the lives of all the people who have ever claimed to belong to God in the past are examined.

They are not there in person, but their records are all there in detail and the angels are the eye-witnesses. For those who claimed belief in the Redeemer and remained faithful, Jesus represents them before the Father. Those who did not remain faithful or who claimed to be God's people while following their own ways have no one to represent them. They are blotted out of the Book of Life. We are living in the time of the 7th Trumpet, when Jesus is receiving His kingdom. Soon the process will be finished and He'll come to take His people home.

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 show to us that Christ receives His kingdom in the heavenly judgment which began in 1844 and comes to its completion at the close of probation (the finishing of the mystery of God, the work of the gospel and the offer of salvation), when He has completed the work of making up His subjects for that kingdom. For, remember that Christ said, "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21), thus Christ's kingdom is not complete until His subjects are made up which will be when the mystery of God is finished.

His Christ - that is, His Anointed (see Psalms 2:2). The hosts of heaven who themselves have not received salvation through Christ refer to Him as "his [God's] Christ", Christ the One anointed for the work of redemption, God's only begotten Son.

Christ comes back the second time as King of kings and Lord of lords to reign forever and ever (Revelation 19:16), it is then that He begins to reign for ever and ever throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. But we must not forget the physical establishment of that kingdom is upon this earth at the end of the 1000 years (Revelation 20:7, 9; 21:1-2), and so Christ ultimately will reign for ever and ever at this time. A kingdom that will destroy all others, fill the whole earth and that which is without end (Daniel 2:34-35, 44; 7:14, 27; Luke 1:33).

Revelation 11:16-17 *"16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."*

The Elders are happy that this "Time" has finally come. Why are they so happy about this? Because this is the time that Jesus is in the process of receiving His Kingdom.

We looked at the four and twenty elders when we studied Revelation 4. Now we see them fall on their faces because this reign will bring an end to sin and its originator, Satan, but will also commence the full restoration of this earth. For 6000 years they have seen the destructive and heart wrenching effects of sin and, therefore, what rejoicing it will bring to the heavenly inhabitants to know and see the kingdoms of this world become Christ's forever.

God takes to Himself His great power and crushes out the rebellion of this earth and the reign of Satan. Christ is established upon the throne and reigns supreme throughout eternity.

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

The Nations were angry - The Greek word used here for nation is "*ethnos*", which also carries with it the meaning of Gentile and heathen as translated elsewhere in the New Testament. Compare Psalms 2:1. Such will be the condition of the nations prior to the coming of Christ. They will band together to oppose the work and people of Christ. So why are the nations of the unsaved/heathen angry?

We see that this "woe" contains something that makes the nations angry; what would do that? In the first two "woes" we see the forces of Islam striking suddenly without warning and in the 2nd woe they had explosives and were led by their "heads and their tails" (see chapter 9).

These verses show us; the dead are being judged—the saints and prophets are honored by their names being kept in the Book of Life as part of Jesus' Kingdom. Think of the hundreds of thousands of people tortured to death and massacred in the Dark Ages. They are placed in the list to receive their reward — eternal life with Jesus. But what about those who killed them? What about those haughty church leaders who pretended to be God's agents? This is when the hidden things of darkness are made plain. Evil men have done many horrible deeds and they thought because the people who knew about it were all killed, that nobody could find out what they had really done.

But this Woe is the time when ALL the records are opened on those who have pretended to be Christians and their wicked deeds are all written there, all those that have turned from God and implemented terrible persecution and cruelty on Gods people the ‘watcher and the Holy One' who wrote on Belshazzar's wall knows who they are. And it is all coming out in the Investigative Judgment. Indeed it is a Woe on all who have done evil, while professing to belong to God. Nothing is overlooked; not even one little child who loved Jesus and was killed by wicked people is forgotten. All the true and faithful will receive reward and all the false will be blotted from the Book of Life.

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

And the Temple of God was opened in Heaven' and there was seen the "Ark of His Testament". What is this?

It's in regards to the true Sabbath and the three Angels messages (Revelation 14). As the Judgment goes to the living, these things will be preached with a "Loud Cry". At that time people will choose to obey God and be sealed for His kingdom or they will obey man's laws and honour Rome and accept the Mark of the Beast, and so be blotted out of the Book of Life.

The temple - There is opened before John a view of God's heavenly temple, with "the ark of his testament" the focal point of the vision. Now, in the typical sanctuary, which was a "copy of the true one" (Hebrews 9:24) in heaven, the ark was in the Most Holy place, which was the center of the service of the Day of Atonement as a typical day of judgment. It is in connection with the beginning of the seventh trumpet that John sees the temple in heaven and very particularly "the ark of his testament". This indicates that the second and last division of Christ's heavenly ministry answering to the typical Day of Atonement has opened. Other scriptures reveal that this final phase of Christ's work began in 1844 (see Daniel 8:14). Accordingly, this places the beginning of the seventh trumpet in that year.

Ark of his testament - The ark in the typical sanctuary was the depository of the Ten Commandments, God's immutable moral law for all men in all ages. No believer in God in Jewish times could think of the ark without becoming immediately conscious of the Ten Commandments. John's vision of the ark above argues eloquently that in earth's last hours God's great moral law is to be central in the thinking and in the lives of all who seek to serve God in spirit and in truth (see comments on Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

Lightnings, and voices, and thunderings - The loud preaching of a warning message from God. As under the seventh plague (Revelation 16:18).

Earthquake - A great time of war and persecution just before Jesus' return. As under the seventh plague (Revelation 16:18, 19, Revelation 11:13).

Great Hail - The final of the 7 last plagues (Revelation 16:21).

This is natures last upheaval, under the 7th and final plague, announcing the close of this earth's history.

So you see that this Woe leads to the end of the Roman power forever and the Second Coming of Jesus to gather His children home. Do you see why this is such an important time?

Soon — we don't know how soon — all the dead, the living and righteous, will be judged. Let us all choose to be faithful so that each of us may be found in Jesus' Kingdom.

Revelation - Chapter 12

The War In Heaven

Chapter 12 begins a new section in the book of Revelation, which gives an overview of the conflict between Christ and Satan, and focuses on the end time events and the coming of Christ.

The chapter is basically divided into three parts:

Part 1 – verses 1 to 6
Part 2 – verses 7 to 12
Part 3 – verses 13 – 17

Let's start by looking at part 1 of this chapter.

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

In Bible prophecy a woman represents a church - a pure woman represents a pure, faithful church, and an impure woman represents an impure, unfaithful and apostate church.

So the woman being described in these verses represents God's church, His faithful people.

Isaiah 62:5 *"For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."*

Jeremiah 6:2 *"I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman."*

2 Corinthians 11:2 *"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."*

Ephesians 5:25 *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*

So the woman represents God's church, and this woman is clothed with the sun, the moon is under her feet, and she has a garland of 12 stars on her head. Note this woman is clothed with the heavenly bodies that God created to give light to the earth (Genesis 1:14-17), and just as God said of His believers that they are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14) this is in striking contrast to the woman of chapter 17, who is clothed and adorned with earthly things, who has corrupted her purity and has become a harlot.

The moon under her feet represents a symbol of permanency.

Psalm 89:37 *"It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven."*

A permanent or sure foundation is only found in Jesus, He is the Church's foundation.

1 Corinthians 3:10-11 *"10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*

But as the moon is a reflector of the light of the Sun, which is the glory of the righteousness of Christ who is the embodiment of the Gospel, so too is the Old Testament a reflector of the Gospel of Christ and His righteousness through types and shadows (John 5:39, 46-47; Luke 24:27, 44). All their hopes and longings were wrapped up in the Messiah to come as prefigured by the Sacrificial system and Old Testament scriptures.

Notice that the 12 stars constitute the crown. A crown denotes rulership and organization. With the Old Testament Church you had the 12 tribes of Israel, also the 12 Judges, the Old Testament priesthood consisted of 24 courses or 2 x 12 (1 Chronicles 24:1-18). The New Testament Church was led by the 12 Apostles and the final remnant Church, the Church that will be translated symbolized by the number 144,000 which is a multiple of 12.

Also we have already seen in chapter 1 that the seven stars were symbolic of the leaders of the Church. This woman of chapter 12 represents the Church of God of all ages, in both the Old and New Testament.

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

With child - The church is presented at the time the Messiah is about to be born. Some see a reference to Isaiah 7:14.

Isaiah 7:14 *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*

For the figure of a travailing woman see Isaiah 26:17; 66:7-8.

Travailing in birth, pained to be delivered - The sorrow and bitter anguish in the hour of trial (Jeremiah 4:31; 6:22-24). But it also carries the idea of joy after the painful ordeal (John 16:20-21).

Here we have a representation of God's people awaiting and longing the coming of the Messiah. This is seen in the instance with Simeon and Anna, when Christ was brought to the temple to be dedicated:

Luke 2:25 *"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him."*

Luke 2:38 *"And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."*

But this woman is not the only character here.

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

John tells us that all of a sudden a great red dragon appears. This dragon is in conflict with the woman, (the church) it doesn't like the woman and basically wants to do away with her.

We also see that this dragon tried to devour/destroy Christ at His birth. It was Satan, working through pagan Rome, who tried to destroy Christ:

Matthew 2:16 *"Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men."*

So we see that the dragon is not only Satan but also the earthly powers that he works through. The dragon is described as "red" probably because of the fact that in all his connection with the church of

God he has appeared in the role of persecutor and destroyer. It has been his studied purpose to destroy the children of the Most High.

Note that when Satan is referred to as a serpent it is used in reference to his cunning, deception and lies. When Satan is referred to as a dragon it is in reference to the exercising of his persecuting powers.

Seven Heads - Notice that the crowns are upon the heads thus showing that the heads are ruling at this period of time. But Revelation 17:9-10 shows that these heads are consecutive, therefore we can see in chapter 12 that one of the heads is Pagan Rome.

Seven heads appear also on the beast John saw rising from the sea...

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

Revelation 17:3 *"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."*

Here in Revelation 17:3 we see a woman (the church) sitting on this beast.

The heads in Revelation 17:9-10 are identified as "seven mountains" and "seven kings."

Revelation 17:9-10 *"9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. 10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."*

It seems reasonable to conclude that the seven heads of the dragon represents political powers that have championed the cause of the dragon, and through which the dragon has exercised his persecuting power.

The beast here is none other than Satan himself as verse 9 shows us.

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

Here is an interesting symbol showing that Satan took one third of the angels of heaven and cast them down with himself when he fell into sin. Satan was just waiting for Jesus to come to earth so he could try and devour Him.

Notice that the Bible refers to Satan as the dragon. Over and over again as we go through Revelation it will refer to this dragon, so we need to be aware that the dragon is Satan, and he isn't happy with the woman (the church).

For a description of the seven-headed serpent in ancient mythology see Isaiah 27:

Isaiah 27:1 *"In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."*

This dragon has 7 heads and 10 horns. Those 10 horns are mentioned time and time again in scripture. They're mentioned in the 7th chapter of Daniel, the beast there had 10 horns. The one we will study in Revelation 13 has10 horns, and the one in Revelation 17. Those 10 horns have meaning, particularly in the last days, and we will look at this in more detail as we go through our studies as they're very

important. The 7 heads on this dragon represent the different nations down through time that have been in opposition to God's people.

In Daniel it says about this beast:

Daniel 7:7 *"... it was diverse [different] from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns."*

So these 10 horns are the same, they're identical all the way through from Daniel into Revelation.

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

So the dragon's tail drew a third of the stars of heaven, in our study of the trumpets it describes that their tails had stings, so the tail in scripture represents the power he had with which he drew a third of the stars to the earth. The tail represents lies in Bible prophecy and it was with lies against God that Satan deceived a third of the angels.

Isaiah 9:15 *"The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail."*

We see here that the woman is pregnant and about ready to give birth, and the dragon is there ready to devour the child as soon as it's born. This represents the efforts of Satan to destroy the infant Jesus. One needs only to recall the attitude of Herod as he listened to the message from the wise men, and subsequently all the baby boys under two were killed.

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

So it tells us that she gave birth to a male child, and then it gives characteristics of that child. It is no doubt that this man child/seed of the woman is Christ.

Galatians 3:16 *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."*

Here is the fulfilment of a 4,000 year prophecy.

Genesis 3:15 *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."*

But we also see the ultimate destruction of His enemies at His second coming, as Christ is to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

Psalms 2:7-9 *"7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."*

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

It brings to mind the shepherd's rod which had a double function. The crook on one end served to help and guide the sheep, while the heavy ferrule on the other end, a metal cap or ring to strengthen

the rod, made it also a weapon of assault. This was used for the protection of the flock, to repel and kill wild animals that would scatter and destroy it.

Caught up to God and His throne - Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus was caught up to the Father and His throne.

Acts 1:3 *"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:"*

Acts 1:9 *"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."*

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

Now there has only been one child that has ever been born that was to rule all nations with a rod of iron and was caught up to God and to His throne, and that child was Jesus Christ, the only child that has ever been born to fulfil that prophecy.

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

So this woman, whom the dragon is persecuting, has fled into the wilderness, and it says that she would remain there for 1,260 days. Now we've looked at this time period several times already. We found out in Ezekiel...

Ezekiel 4:6 *"I have appointed thee each day for a year."*

In Bible prophecy a day represents a literal year. So the woman was going to flee into the wilderness for 1,260 years - the period of Papal persecution.

This ends the first section of Revelation 12. Now the scene completely changes.

Revelation 12:7 *"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,"*

Michael - Also known as Michael the Archangel, simply meaning the chief of the angels who is like God. It is clear, as we harmonize scripture, that this is a reference to Christ.

The name Michael in Hebrew means "one who is like God". He is also referred to as the Archangel in Jude.

Jude 1:9 *"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."*

However, the Thayer definition for the word Archangel in Jude 9 is: "archangel, or chief of the angels". Michael is NOT a created angel but is the one in charge of and the head of all the angels. It simply means, arch or chief of the angels, and Michael - one who is like God.

In Jude 9 there is a dispute over the resurrection of Moses, for we know that Moses was resurrected as he was present at the mount of transfiguration:

Matthew 17:2-3 *"2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him."*

It is of interest to see that it is Michael the Archangel that is there contending for the body.

This teaching is often attributed to a specific Church but this teaching was known to exist a hundred years before this Church ever existed. Note the following Bible Commentary and the dates for this particular theologian.

"Daniel 10:13 - but, lo, Michael one of the chief Princes, came to help me; called in the New Testament an Archangel, the Prince of angels, the Head of all principality and power; and is no other than Christ the Son of God, an uncreated Angel; who is "one" or "the first of the chief Princes" (x), superior to angels, in nature, name, and office; he came to "help" Gabriel, not as a fellow creature, but as the Lord of hosts; not as a fellow soldier, but as General of the armies in heaven and earth, as superior to him in wisdom and strength; and he helped him by giving him fresh counsels, orders, and instructions, which he following succeeded: ***John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. Dr. John Gill (1690-1771)***

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"*

Now we find in John 5 that it is the voice of Christ that brings about the resurrection.

John 5:28-29 *"28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

Jesus is also the express image of the Father's person:

Hebrews 1:3 *"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:"*

This shows us that Christ, who is like God, because He is His Son is the chief of the heavenly host.

Daniel 12:1 *"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."*

There are more verses to show comparisons, but we think it enough thus far to prove that Michael is none other than Christ.

So we see that there is a very real conflict taking place here between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels.

When Satan is represented as a dragon it represents him as a persecutor and destroyer as this symbol is used with this association.

Revelation 12:8-9 *"8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

They did not prevail, no place was found for them and they were cast out to the earth.

This tells us clearly that the third parts of the stars that Satan drew out with his tail in verse 4 are angels; they were cast out with him to this earth. Now this should tell us something. Next time we are

faced with something that we don't understand or why there seems to be such opposition, remember that the devil and his angels are very real, and they oppose strongly anything that is of God.

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

So the devil and his angels are cast out of heaven, the accuser of the brethren is cast out, and it says that now salvation has come.

There is great rejoicing in the courts of heaven over the casting down of Satan and his host. The true character of Satan was shown at the cross. He was shown to be a liar and murderer where the opposite was revealed about Christ. Deliverance and victory come through the cross.

Salvation - Greek "sōtēria", meaning "deliverance", "preservation", "salvation", here perhaps "victory". The Greek has the article, hence we should read "the victory".

And strength - Greek "dunamis" meaning "power", "might", "strength". The reference here is doubtless to the display of power in the overthrow of the dragon. But also in the light of the cross we find that there is power in the cross of Christ to bring salvation to the believer.

1 Corinthians 1:18 *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*

The kingdom of our God - Satan had contended that he was the rightful ruler of this world (Matthew 4:8-9; Job 1:6-7) seeing that Adam and Eve bowed to his sophistry thus giving him their allegiance. But Satan's failure to bring Christ under his control, as he tried to get Him to sin, assured the kingdom for Christ.

Power of his Christ - Greek "exousia" meaning "authority" (Matthew 28:18). Christ has all authority and the cross established it. Satan had questioned the authority/supremacy of Christ, but the cross has put away any questioning.

Satan was the accuser of the brethren in Old Testament days:

Job 1:8-12 *"8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? 9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. 11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. 12 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord."*

Zechariah 3:1 *"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him."*

Day and night Satan persecutes and accuses, whenever the opportunity presents itself.

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

To Overcome - The mind of the prophet is absorbed in contemplation of those who have been accused by the instigator of evil. He thinks of how they have suffered, and the indignities to which they have

been exposed. He remembers how amid hardships they overcame, not in their own strength, but “by the blood of the Lamb”.

By the blood - Literally “because of the blood” or “on the basis of the blood”. The saints overcame because of the victory of Calvary.

Romans 5:9 *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*

We can overcome Satan through the blood of Christ, because of His shed blood on Calvary.

It washes/cleanses us from sin:

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

1 John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

It justifies the believer and makes our spiritual garments white:

Romans 3:25 *"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"*

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

It makes us nigh unto God, buys/redeems us back from sin:

Ephesians 1:7 *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"*

Ephesians 2:13 *"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."*

Colossians 1:14 *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"*

It makes us perfect to do His will:

Hebrews 13:20-21 *"20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

And by our own personal witness for Christ and the gospel we can overcome him:

Romans 10:9-10 *"9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

By the word - Literally, “on account of the word” or “on the basis of the word”.

Their testimony - That is, their personal witness concerning Jesus and the gospel.

Loved not their lives - What fidelity! Men, Women and children that would die rather than disobey God.

The people who love and serve God will upset and anger the devil, he has been cast out to the earth and he knows that he has lost the battle.

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

Now up until the time of the death of Christ, Satan had access to other worlds, he had access to the loyal angels, and you can read about this in the book of Job, where you find that the sons of God came before the Lord and Satan came as representative of this earth. But with the death of Jesus, and that's what this is talking about, then his access to the other worlds and to the angels ended. And when that took place he had great wrath because he knew without doubt that when Christ died on the cross that the victory was won and that he had lost and he knew that it was over. And so it says Satan has great wrath because he knows that he has only a short time, and basically what Satan is saying now is; Take no prisoners! In other words he's after any individual he can get, and if he can kill them then how much happier he is, because he wants to take no prisoners, because he's lost the war.

You see the war that took place in heaven was not so physical as it was verbal, and you find this over and over in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 16:3 *"... out of the mouth of the dragon ..."*

Revelation 1:16 *"... and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword ..."*

Revelation 12:10 *"... accused them before our God ..."*

So it's out of the mouth, by persuasion. If you can persuade someone to do something then you've gained a great victory, and that's where the battle is fought, it's by words, persuasion. If Satan can do anything to persuade you to follow him and not follow God then he's won the battle. It doesn't matter if you go to church every day, if Satan can persuade you not to commit your life to Jesus Christ and not surrender to Him then he's won the battle.

You see it's that which counts. We have to be willing to listen to what the Lord says, and to follow His counsel, to be persuaded by His word, the Bible, know what it says is true, and follow it, obey it – that's what it takes to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Christ speaking about Satan said:

Luke 10:18 *"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."*

Satan was cast out to this earth, and he is very unhappy about that.

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

Now this is talking about God's people. Basically this has to be the story of each one of us, that we overcome the dragon, the devil. And how do we overcome Satan? By the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony and not loving our lives to the death. We have to be fully committed to Jesus Christ, we can't permit anything to come between us and him. Jesus said anyone that loves father, mother, brother, sister, husband or wife more than Me is not worthy of Me. We have to commit our lives totally and completely to Him. And we can then overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

Have you ever considered what the blood of Christ does for you?

Ephesians 1:7 *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"*

It's through the blood of Christ that we have redemption. We don't have redemption through our efforts, or from anyone else. And there's no one else that offers us redemption through themselves. Buddha doesn't offer it, Confucius doesn't offer it, Mohammed doesn't offer it. They don't offer us redemption because they did not die for us. Jesus Christ died for us, He was the only one worthy to do so and we have redemption by the blood of the Lamb, and we need to always be aware of that.

So Christ's blood gives us redemption.

Revelation 1:5 *"... Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"*

People may say; I've done too many bad things for Christ to love and forgive me, but the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse anything, there's nothing that it can't cleanse. It doesn't matter how dark the sin may be, if we are truly sorry and repent it can be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. And you and I need to come to Jesus and let Him wash us from our sins in His own blood, make us white, make us pure, make us clean, in His blood, the blood of the Lamb.

1 John 1:7 *"... and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

It doesn't say from some sins, it says from all sin. In other words there isn't any sin that Christ can't cleanse. This is different than what anyone else offers. All others tell you that you have to do this and that in order to make it into the kingdom. If you go and blow yourself up for Mohammed then he'll give you a special place in his kingdom. Christ doesn't say that. Christ says come to Me and I will cleanse you from all sin, it's a free gift of love that only He can offer us.

Hebrews 13:20-21 *"20 ... through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will ..."*

This says that God has entered into a covenant with us, in which God says; I will be your God and you My people. And He says; if you enter into that covenant with Me, through the blood of My Son Jesus Christ I will make you complete in every good work to do My will.

Change in the human heart does not take place by our strength and our power, it takes place by the word of Jesus in our lives, it has to work in us and change us and make us different. We can't change our own nature, we can't change what we are, only the Holy Spirit can do that. And so we have to let the Spirit of Christ into our lives, give ourselves to him, and let Him do His work in our life.

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

That simply means that we need, every day, to take time to come to Him and let Him do His work of cleansing our soul, to keep my robe white, to keep it clean. This is what the blood of Jesus Christ will do for you and me. God does not love us based on our actions, He loves us just exactly the way we are. God does not say; I'll wash you and then love you. No, the scriptures say that God loves us and then washes us. So if we come to him, he will take us and wash us and make us clean. No matter what we've done, no matter who we are. We have that promise that God gives to you and to me.

Ephesians 2:13 *"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."*

Sometimes we may feel to unworthy to come before the Lord. Sometimes we may feel that we would rather go and hide somewhere, and that we wouldn't even attempt to come before God and speak to

Him and pray to Him. But we can be thankful that this verse gives us the assurance that by the blood of Jesus Christ we have been brought near to God, that we can come before Him, the Majesty and Ruler of the universe, because of the blood of Jesus Christ, because of what Jesus has done for us. Jesus has been made the way, and has brought us near to God thorough his blood. These are wonderful promises that He gives to you and me.

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

Now that the dragon has been cast out of heaven and he can't go back and is confined to this earth, it says that he turned his wrath on the woman, which is the church. So if you think that very quickly Satan isn't real, you ought to try preaching the gospel, try witnessing for Christ and you will discover that Satan is very, very real.

So the dragon persecuted the woman, and tried to do away with her. We read in history that the pagan Roman Empire turned its wrath on the church. Up until this time Rome had ruled, it had contained the Jewish nation, it had them confined so that they could not do anything. But now Jesus came, and He died, and all of a sudden salvation was not contained within the Jewish nation, but was free to every man, woman and child, no matter whether they were Jew or Greek. It was open to slaves, and to anyone who wanted to accept it, and it spread like wildfire across the Roman Empire, and all of a sudden paganism became threatened. And so they decided that the best thing they could do was to wipe it out, so they set out to get rid of it, and the devil turned his wrath upon the church.

Rome didn't care who you worshipped, they were polytheistic, they had lots and lots of gods, you could worship any god you wanted. They didn't care if you worshipped Jesus Christ. What they cared about was that in your worship you worshipped Rome. They had their own goddess. And to make sure that people's allegiance was given to Rome, once a year all were required to come in before the magistrate, to take a little incense and simply drop that incense into the fire before this pagan goddess and say; "Rome", in an act of worship to that goddess. Then they gave you a certificate and you could go and worship as you pleased.

But the Christians would not do this. You see their allegiance was to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they did not love their lives unto the death, they were willing to make the supreme sacrifice, that they might have the right to worship the Lord. And so these Christians were gathered up, and they were taken into arenas filled with people. And the people in those arenas turned their thumbs down on the Christians. And lions, which hadn't been fed in a long time, were turned loose in those arenas, and children, mothers and fathers became food for lions. They gave their lives for what they believed. And you can still go to Rome today, and you can visit and walk in the catacombs below the city, and you can see where they died there by the thousands. There are rooms in these catacombs that are totally full of human skulls of the people who died, who lost their lives for the Lord Jesus Christ. They made the supreme sacrifice because their commitment was to Jesus Christ and they did not love their lives unto the death.

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

Now this period of time is the same as the one in verse 6 the 1,260 days/years. And it says that the woman fled into the wilderness.

Two wings - These wings are used for fleeing into the wilderness from the wrath of the dragon. This figure is also used for the deliverance of the children of Israel from Pharaoh, when God lead and carried them out.

Exodus 19:4 *"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."*

Deuteronomy 32:11 *"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:"*

Here we have depicted God caring for His Church.

The wilderness - A desert, solitary place of waste. Thus a place of seclusion or obscurity was where the Church fled, away from civilization and the public gaze. There were a number of places but the most famous is that of the Waldensian valleys amid the Cottian Alps, 30 miles west of Turin in northern Italy.

This was to be for 1260 prophetic days and thus 1260 years, as verse 14 is parallel to verse 6. This period is mentioned 7 times in scripture, twice in chapter 12, once in chapter 13 where it is known as 42 months, twice in chapter 11, once each in Daniel 7:25; 12:7, with each instance referring to the same period. This is a reference to the Papal supremacy of 538-1798 A.D. Notice the following:

"In the year 532, Justinian issued an edict declaring his intention 'to unite all men in one faith'. Whether they were Jews, Gentiles, or Christians, all who did not within three months profess and embrace the Catholic faith, were by the edict 'declared infamous, and as such excluded from all employments both civil and military; rendered incapable of leaving anything by will; and all their estates confiscated, whether real or personal'. As a result of this cruel edict, great numbers were driven from their habitations with their wives and children, stripped and naked. Others betook themselves to flight, carrying with them what they could conceal, for their support and maintenance; but they were plundered of what little they had, and many of them inhumanly massacred'." ***Quotes from History of the Popes, John II, par.2. by Bower. As found in Ecclesiastical Empire, chap. XII, par. 41. by Alonzo T. Jones.***

In 533 A.D. Emperor Justinian, who ruled from Constantinople in the east, decreed that the Bishop of Rome was the Universal Bishop over the entire Church. (Today the Pope remains the universal bishop over the Roman Catholic Church by reason of this decree) But the Catholics were suffering a violent persecution from the Arian Vandals of northern Africa. They were intolerant of the Catholics and termed them heretics. Thus unless they could be removed the Papacy could not rise to the power of Justinian's decree. Justinian sent his ablest General Belisarius to North Africa and totally wiped the Vandals from the face of the earth in the year 534 A.D.

This only left the Arian tribe of the Ostrogoths, who had the throne of Italy and were restraining the power of the Papacy. They too were defeated by Belisarius in the year 538 A.D., leaving not enough of them to have their heritage remain. Justinian's decree could take effect now as the opposition had been removed.

By 538 A.D. the Church of Rome had full supremacy. The longer time went on the less safe it was to live or mingle in populated areas where one could easily be recognized as or found out to be a so called heretic. To teach contrary to or stand up against the Papal Power could very easily and most likely result in the death of the so called offender. The only safety was in the mountainous regions and places of obscurity to where God's Church fled.

Nourished and feed - The Waldenses were fed and nourished on the truths of God's Word, spiritual milk, spiritual meat and spiritual bread (1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-13, John 6:51-52, 63). They had the Bible in their own tongue translated from the uncorrupted manuscripts of Lucian, the famous scholar of Syria in post-apostolic times.

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

He cast out of his mouth a flood of persecution, hoping that the church would be carried away by it. But she fled into the wilderness, and was there from 538 AD to 1798 AD. And the devil cast out of his mouth, through pagan Rome and Papal Rome, such a flood of persecution that he thought the woman would be wiped out, wiped off the face of the earth, carried away by the flood. Those people had to flee; they had to move out into the mountains, in order to have the freedom to worship as they believed that they should. The Bible was taken away from them.

Serpent cast out - Notice that here it is said that the flood came out of the mouth of the serpent but in verse 16 it is out of the dragon. Remember that when serpent is used it is a reference to cunning, deception and lies. It was through lies and deceit that the campaigns/crusades were waged against God's people in the wilderness regions, the false promises of pardon and paradise all of which were coming from the Papal Church's mouth. Satan sought to destroy the Christian church by the inundation of false doctrines as well as by persecution.

Water as a flood - This is derived from the Old Testament where the River Euphrates is described as a flood (Joshua 24:2-3, 14-15). The same is found in Jeremiah 46:2-3. In Psalms 74:13 and Ezekiel 29:3 a dragon is identified as a water animal so this could possibly symbolize water as a symbol of destruction also.

According to Genesis 15:8 the Euphrates was the appointed boundary between ancient Israel and Babylon. When the snows of Mt. Ararat melted, the Euphrates often overflowed into the appointed territory of Israel. Thus the prophets used this to illustrate the invasion of Israel by her enemies from the north.

Here we can say that it is used to show the rising up or overflowing of the Church's enemies with the intent to destroy her. Some crusades are as follows:

— Against the Celtic Christians in Britain.
— Against the non-Catholic Christians of Thrace in 538 A.D.
— Against the Ostrogoths in Italy in 538 A.D.
— Against the Waldenses in Northern Italy on many occasion.
— Against the Albigenses in south and western France.
— In Ireland by Henry II of England with the support of the Papacy.
— Against the Lollards in England, the followers of John Wycliff.
— Against Spanish Protestants at the time of the Spanish Inquisition.
— Against the Hussites, the followers of John Huss in Bohemia.
— Against German Protestants at the time of the reformation.
— Against Swiss Protestants by Catholic Authorities.
— Against Dutch Protestants by Phillip II of Spain.
— Against English Protestants by the Spanish Armada.
— Against French Protestants called Hugenots in the St. Bartholemew massacre.
— Etc., all of which the Church of Rome had their hand in.

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

It says the earth helped the woman, it swallowed up the flood. Certain events began to take place. Individuals began to stand up and say that is was not right, the abuse that Papal Rome placed upon them. People like Huss, Jerome and Wycliffe, who gave their lives, who burned at the stake, for the word of their testimony.

Out of this movement that started across Europe came other individuals like Martin Luther in 1517, who translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into German, and gave the people a chance to read the Bible in their own language and to understand what it says. People for a thousand years had not had access to the word of God, they had not been able to read it, and all of a sudden it's made available to them, in their own language, they took it and read it and poured over the scriptures. They became so knowledgeable regarding the word of God that priests could not dispute what they had to say – they knew the word of God better than the priests did.

Out of that movement rose other people, like John Knox in 1560, who was a great reformer. You may not realise it but through men like John Knox and John Calvin we got our Bible, these are the men who gave us much of what we have in our Bible today. They are the ones who translated it and put it into the language of the people. This eventually became known as the Geneva Bible. It was the Bible of the reformers, it was the Bible they preached from, and out of that Geneva Bible came much of the King James Bible. Those men were great preachers of righteousness.

That's one way the earth helped the woman. The other way was the discovery of north America. The pilgrims went there to escape persecution. They wanted to go somewhere where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, according to what the word of God says. And as those first pilgrims got on the boat, ready to cross the ocean to North America, their pastor John Robinson met with them as they were ready to leave, and they took a commitment from him, and they said:

"We promise and covenant with God and one with another, to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from His written word." ***Pastor John Robinson***

John Robinson said to them; before you go, I want you to commit your life that you will follow the word of God, and whatever you learn that's truth. If only Christians today would do the same thing as was done by those pilgrims. If only they would say; Yes, I will follow God's word and keep it. This was the promise those pilgrims made, and that's why the gospel spread in north America.

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

Dragon was wroth - Or "was enraged". He was not successful in his attempt to carry the woman away in the flood of persecution. Thus he turns his special attention against the remnant of the woman's seed.

Remnant - Greek "*loipoi*" meaning "remaining ones", from the Geeek "*leipo*" meaning "to leave", "to leave behind". That which remains, or the residue, and therefore it is the last of her offspring but small or in a minority. In saying this it must be identical to the first or original Church.

Let us look at some identifying marks:

1. It will be a minority, remnant.
2. We also see that it arises after the 1260 years of Papal supremacy, thus after 1798 AD.

3. First arises in America, the earth that helped the woman.
4. Apostolic in nature, similar teaching and belief of the apostles.
5. It incurs the wroth of the dragon, unpopular.
6. Keeps the Commandments of God including the fourth.
7. Has the testimony of Jesus Christ which is the Spirit of Prophecy or the Gift of Prophecy manifest through a prophet or prophets (Revelation 19:10; 22:9).
8. Being the last it must be expecting the Second Coming of Christ.
9. The Gospel is to be preached in all the world (Matthew 24:14, Revelation 14:6), thus it must be a worldwide movement.
10. This Gospel is outlined in Revelation 14:6-12.

— Everlasting Gospel - Jesus Christ and Him crucified (High priestly ministry in heavenly sanctuary).
— Fear God - Victory over sin, righteousness by faith (Job 1:1; Proverbs 8:13; 16:6).
— Give glory to Him - Health and temperance, Christian standards (1 Corinthians 10:31).
— Judgment has come and is in progress.
— Worship Him - Christ the Creator of Heaven and Earth and the Sabbath.
— Expose who and what is Babylon and her teachings.
— Identify who the beast and his image are. — Expose the mark and worship of the beast.

This standard is revealed in the character of the 144,000, the number that represents the living final remnant of God's people. Those who fail to permit God to produce within them the character essential for translation will be shaken out of the Church. Only those who are classed by God as over comers will comprise the final remnant. The majority of the final remnant will comprise of those who are now in Babylon but who ultimately will come out of Babylon. In the final call of God to His people, in Revelation 18:1-4, He calls out of Babylon, all those who still belong to Christ.

There will finally, be one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16).

Those who keep the Commandments - That the remnant is thus identified and indicates that the Commandments of God will be especially controverted in this struggle between the dragon and church.

They will also keep the Testimony of Jesus Christ - Or “witness of Jesus Christ”. In the Greek this phrase may be understood either as the “testimony” (or “witness”) Christians bear concerning Jesus, or as the “testimony” (or “witness”) that originates with Jesus and is revealed to His church through the prophets. A comparison with Revelation 19:10 clearly favors the latter interpretation. There the “testimony of Jesus” is defined as the “spirit of prophecy,” meaning that Jesus is witnessing to the church through prophecy.

So right down at the end of time, exists the remnant, of God’s people. They keep the Commandments of God. God is looking for people who are willing to keep His Commandments. Jesus said:

John 14:15 *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

John 14:21 *"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."*

This is a marvellous promise. You and I can’t do anything to add something to our salvation, that’s all done through the blood of Jesus Christ. Our responsibility is simply to obey. That’s what God calls us to do.

So it says in verse 17 that these people follow God, they keep His Commandments and have the testimony of Jesus.

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

John's testimony was there that he was a follower of Jesus Christ, and he stood solidly for Christ, this should also be our testimony.

Revelation 12:11 *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;"*

Romans 10:9 *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

How is our testimony? Is our testimony that we love the Lord Jesus Christ? That we stand firm for Him? That we will not to be moved no matter what? That we are going to follow Him? Do other people see Jesus in us?

Our testimony should be sure for the Lord that we're going to stand with Him all the way, until He comes back. So let's be faithful while we look forward to His coming.

Revelation - Chapter 13

The Beast From The Sea

In this chapter there are two beasts described. The first half of this chapter talks about a beast that rises from the sea. The second half of the chapter talks about a beast that rises from the earth.

In this study we will look at the first half of chapter 13, which describes the first of these two beasts – the beast from the sea.

Scripture uses beasts to represent nations or powers. And as you study Bible prophecy it refers to beasts as "he", and it refers to the church as "she". So this beast is very important because God says more about this beast than any other beast in scripture. So it's very important that we are crystal clear as to who this beast is, because it plays a tremendous part in the events that take place in the last days.

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

So this beast is coming up out of the sea, and it's different from any beast that has been before it, it's a non-descript beast, it has seven heads and ten horns, it is symbolic of a power, a power that is to be used in a special way in the last days. This beast is the antichrist power, the Papal Church State. We also know that it arose amongst Western Europe (as Daniel clearly shows) and therefore the sea is representative of the peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues of Western Europe.

Revelation 17:15 *"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."*

This is in contrast to the earth that helped the woman/church. Thus it is clear, as the Papacy ruled from 538 AD to 1798 AD, that the earth is to be recognized as that part of the world of which the Papal power had no control over, it must be outside of the old world. This helps to substantiate the Pilgrim Fathers flight to America as the earth helping the woman, which we will look at in part two of this study.

It must also be noted that the second beast we will look at in chapter 13 also comes up out of the earth in contrast to this first beast. Here is another link to show that this second beast arose outside of the old world or outside of the papal church's reach.

The crowns are upon the horns thus showing that it is the horns that have the power. The horns represent the divisions of the Western Roman Empire as is seen in Daniel 7. It was through the divisions of Western Europe that the Papacy ruled, through the kings and leaders of the countries and therefore the crowns upon the heads.

It is a blasphemous power according to verses 1, 5 and 6. In verse 1 it would represent the blasphemous titles that the head of this system takes to himself; Vicar of God, all names that are attributed to Christ he takes upon himself, God on earth etc.

As we will see in verse 5 he also speaks blasphemies. The Bible defines blasphemy as; when being only a man you make yourself as God.

John 10:30-33 *"30 I and my Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."*

Also claiming to be able to forgive sins when only a man.

Mark 2:5-7 *"5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 6 But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?"*

The Papacy also enters into and practices these things. In verse 6 one may ask; how can the Papacy blaspheme against the tabernacle of God, which is heaven, and the angels?

Hebrews 8:1-2 *"1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."*

"The papacy has done so be setting up an earthly counterfeit tabernacle with counterfeited sacrifices by a counterfeit priesthood to a counterfeit god. Plus they claim that the priests are greater than the angels and that the Pope can excommunicate angels." ***Ligouri 'Dignity and duties of the Priest', pg. 31. Lucii Ferraris 'Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica Juridica Moralis Theologica', Vol. VI pg. 48***

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

So this beast is made up of parts of other beasts – it has the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion and it's particularly important that we notice that the dragon gave it his power, his throne and great authority.

Like unto a leopard etc. - This casts our minds back to Daniel 7 from whence all of these beasts are found. The papacy is a composite beast, a make-up of those that have gone before it. One thing we must point out though is that it has the mouth of a lion. The lion represented Babylon in Daniel 7 and so when the papacy speaks it speaks as Babylon which is also one of its names.

Revelation 17:5 *"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*

In looking at this a little more closely, the composite beast aspect, we can gain a greater understanding of the type of rule that the papal power would like, with history also laying open this fact. It is clear that this beast points us back to the image of Daniel 2, for it is a single image made up of a mixture of the kingdoms from Babylon the head through to Divided Rome in the feet, it is a composite image. So what is it that is in these kingdoms that is so vital to the establishment of Satan's empire/the Papal church/system?

If we take the main characteristic for each of these kingdoms we discover something very remarkable about this composite empire.

Babylon was known for its idol worship, they were obsessed with their idols:

Jeremiah 50:38 *"A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols."*

Their chief god was Bel/Marodach/Marduk who was the sun god.

Jeremiah 50:2 *"Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces."*

So Babylon's main characteristic was idol worship, or more specific, sun worship.

Medo-Persia was known for its passing of decrees/laws that cannot be changed, See Daniel 6, Esther and Ezra.

Esther 8:8 *"Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."*

Greece. The Grecians were known for always seeking after wisdom, some new thing, through philosophy:

1 Corinthians 1:22 *"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:"*

Acts 17:18,21 *"18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. 21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing)."*

Humanism, searching for truth by using human methods to support human interests, is based upon Greek philosophy.

Rome is known for its persecuting/desolating power, as iron breaks and subdues all things:

Daniel 2:40 *"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise."*

When we look at the feet of the image in Daniel 2 we see that the strength of the iron/Rome continues through, its persecuting/desolating power of the state, with the miry clay being a symbol of an apostate church - clay is used to symbolize God's people, His church...

Isaiah 64:8 *"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."*

Jeremiah 18:1-6 *"1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."*

Thus miry/dirty clay would symbolize a dirty church/apostate church. So in putting all of this together we find the following points about the reign of the Antichrist power:

— There will be some form of idol/sun worship with decrees/laws that will be supported with human philosophy/wisdom, and it will be enforced by some form of persecution/death threat with

all being done in the name of God, at the end of time.
— There will be an enforcement of some type of sun/day worship by political decrees/laws, and it will be reasoned out why this is done through human philosophy/wisdom with the threat of persecution, and it will be done in the name of Christianity at the end of time. Chapter 13 shows this very thing.
— At the end of time Satan, through the anti-Christian Papal power, will attack God's people spiritually with sun worship.
— He wants to attack God's people politically with human laws.
— And he will attack God's people mentally with human wisdom/the wisdom of man.
— He will also attack God's people physically with persecution.
— And then he wants to attack God's people in the name of God!

Dragon gave - Firstly we saw that Pagan Rome was the dragon in chapter 12. But we need to remember that, even though it was Pagan Rome that gave the Papacy its power etc. which we will see in a moment, primarily the dragon is Satan.

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

So ultimately the power behind this beast is Satan.

Seat...

"When the Roman Empire became Christian, and the peace of the Church was guaranteed, the Emperor left Rome to the Pope, to be the seat of authority of the Vicar of Christ, who should reign there independent of all human authority, to the consummation of ages, to the end of time." ***Papal Rights and Privileges, pgs. 13, 14. 1889. Francis P. C. Hays (who is a Roman Catholic)***

"The removal of the capitol of the empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330, left the Western Church practically free from imperial power, to develop its own form of organization. The Bishop of Rome, in the seat of the Caesars, was now the greatest man in the West, and was soon forced to become the political as well as the spiritual head." ***The Rise of the Medieval Church, pg. 168. Alexander C. Flick. Ph.D. Litt.D.***

It is clear that Constantine gave to the papacy its seat when he moved the seat of government from Rome to Constantinople in the East, thus bequeathing her seat to the papacy. Giving this beast power and great authority was done through Justinian and his general Belisarius in 538 AD.

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

So this beast that has risen out of the sea, who has received power from the dragon, it says that he receives a mortal wound, but it then says that the mortal would was healed and then all the world marvelled at and followed the beast.

Wounded to death - With one of its head being wounded to death it shows that the papacy has to be one of the heads, But remember that the papacy is a church/state and that the church never ceased to exist but that the temporal/political power was vanquished. This took place in 1798:

"In 1798 Berthier made his entrance into Rome, abolished the Papal government and established a secular one." ***Encyclopedia Americana, 1941 Edition***

But this wound is to be healed and she will once again be resurrected and restored to her full power, as is seen in the latter portion of the chapter. This means that her temporal/political power must be fully restored to her as it was during her first reign. The healing process for this started in 1929.

On February 11th 1929 an historic treaty was signed between the Italian Government and the Vatican re-establishing the political power and diplomatic standing of the Catholic Church. 60 years of enmity ended as throngs cheered in the streets. The Lateran Concordat was signed by Cardinal Gasparri on behalf of the pope and Benito Mussolini on behalf of King Victor Emmanuel III.

To marvel or have in admiration - We see this now as the Pope is treated like a Head of State wherever he goes, no other church leader has the impact as does the Papacy, and it is growing ever stronger.

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

So this beast, this power, is not just a political power. Now beasts in Bible prophecy normally represent political powers, but this beast is different because it receives worship, therefore it is not just a political power it is also a religious power, so we have a religious-political power here that is going to play a very definite part in the events of the last days.

So this beast we are studying here in Revelation 13 is a composite of, or is made up of, four others, and the dragon gave it his power, seat and authority. Now we find that these four beasts are mentioned in Daniel the 7th chapter. And in that chapter you have a lion, a bear, a leopard and a fourth beast like a dragon. And this beast here in Revelation 13 is made up of parts of those four beasts in Daniel 7. And so the Bible is defining for us exactly who this beast power is.

Clearly in worshipping the beast you are worshipping and giving homage to the dragon. Applying the interpretation would mean that in worshipping the papal power you are giving your homage and worship to Satan himself. This is exactly what he has desired from the beginning as we saw in chapter 12.

The beast is just a front man for the dragon, it is the one through whom the dragon works and operates, a visible agency.

Revelation 13:5-6 *"5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."*

We have looked at blasphemies and now here again we see the 42 months (1,260 days/years), This dates from 538-1798 the longest reigning power, and also of persecution.

As we have seen this beast is contrary to God, it blasphemes God, His name and His tabernacle.

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

So not only does this power blaspheme God, but it is also against those who are followers of God, because it says here that this power made war against the saints, against God's people throughout the world - this is what we found as we looked at the 42 months, or 1260 days/years.

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

So it says that all those whose names are not written in the book of life will worship this beast. In the end it is clear that there will only be two groups, those that worship the beast/papacy and those that worship Jesus Christ and have their names written in the Lamb's book of life. It is worthy to note that those who follow after the papacy and worship her do not have their names in the book of life to the loss of their salvation.

Revelation 20:15 *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Notice that it is the Lamb's book of life. The lamb is a reference to the manifestation of His self-sacrificing love in dying for our sins, putting aside Himself for the salvation of others. A life that did not use force or coercion, this is in total contrast to the beast. We are to manifest the same self-sacrificing love that Christ did, a love that will put aside self and devote the entire life to Christ.

Ephesians 5:1-2 *"1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."*

True brotherly love.

John 13:35 *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

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

Now any time the Bible uses this phrase it means that this is something vitally important that God wants us to know and understand.

Now from these things we've just seen, God gives us seven points by which we can clearly identify this beast (and there are many more), so we don't have to be in doubt. It says that...

1. He receives his power and authority from the dragon

2. He would speak blasphemies

3. He would make war with the saints

4. He would rule for 1,260 years (42 months)

5. He would receive a mortal wound

6. The mortal wound would be healed

7. All the world wondered after the beast

It's important to understand what it's talking here, it's about a power, a system, it's not talking about people. We must not take anything here and apply it to individuals. This is talking about a system of false worship, a system that is contrary to God, it's not talking about sincere individuals.

The seven points that are listed here cannot be applied to any other power on the face of the earth. These 7 points have never been found to fit any other power than one. And if all seven points fit this power then we can be absolutely sure that this is who it is talking about. So we are now going to take a look at each of these seven points, one by one, and see how they fit this particular power.

Point 1 - He receives his power and authority from the dragon

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

Now the beasts mentioned in this verse represent nations – the lion represented Babylon, the bear represented Medo-Persia and the leopard represented Greece, and you can see this clearly in Daniel chapter 7. The dragon mentioned here represents pagan Rome. This dragon is also mentioned in Revelation 12. So it says that pagan Rome would give to this beast its power, its authority, and its throne. History tells us that this is exactly what happened.

"To the succession of the Caesars came the succession of the Pontiffs in Rome. When Constantine left Rome he gave his seat to the Pontiff." ***La Blanca, Professor of History, University of Rome***

This was the beginning of what history has recorded as Papal Rome. Pagan Rome gave to Papal Rome its power, its seat and its authority.

Now when we talk about the dragon we need to clarify this, because Revelation 12 tells us that the dragon also represents Satan.

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

Now Satan does not do things openly, he always uses a power or a system, and the system he used here was pagan Rome. History goes on and says this:

"In 537, Silverius was banished by Belisarius and the deacon Vigilius was then elected Bishop…From this time on the Bishops, more and more involved in worldly events, no longer belong solely to the church; they are men of the state and then rulers of the state." ***Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, vol. 1, p. 516***

Now the emperor of Rome at this time was Justinian, and we have looked at this history in previous studies, as we have looked at the Goths etc.

"Vigilius ascended the papal chair (538 AD) under the military protection of Belisarius." ***History of the Christian church, vol. 3, p. 327***

Now this date of 538 AD is very important in relation to this beast power that rises up out of the sea.

Point 2 - He would speak blasphemies

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

So it says that this beast is going to blaspheme God. We have defined from scripture what blasphemy is.

John 10:33 *"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."*

So the Jews wanted to stone Jesus because he made Himself equal with God. Of course Christ had every right to say that He was God.

But the Roman Catholic Church states the following:

"We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." ***Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII, p. 304***

So the Catholic Church claims to hold the place of God on earth, this is their own statement and there are numerous other similar statements. In one such statement they claim that all the names that apply to Christ also apply to the Pope.

Forgiveness of sins?

Luke 5:21 *"And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"*

So Christ had just forgiven the sins of this woman, and the Jews complained that He didn't have the power to forgive sins, only God can do that. Again the Catholic Church states the following:

"Does the priest truly forgive the sins or does he only declare that they are remitted? The priest does really and truly forgive the sin in virtue of the power given to him by Christ." ***A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion, p.279, Joseph Deharbe***

So the Catholic Church states that the priest has the power to forgive sins.

Point 3 - He would make war with the saints

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

So it says that this beast would make war with the saints, with God's faithful people, to overcome them. As we have looked back in history we have found this to be true. This is what history has to say about it:

"The church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, this will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history." ***W.E.H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, vol. 2, p. 40-45***

All you have to do is go back in history and read about the period known as the Dark Ages. You can read such books as Foxe's Book of Martyrs, or Short's Short Stories of the Reformation, or The History of Europe by Qualben, or Here I Stand by Bainton. These books list case after case, such as the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre where 60,000 Huguenots were slain in 1572. History is of full of examples of what took place when this beast made war against the saints. It has done exactly that. History bears out this fact without any question.

Point 4 - He would rule for 1,260 years (42 months)

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

So it says that this beast will have authority for 42 months, and we found out earlier that the Papacy came to power in 538 AD. Now there are 30 days in a Biblical month, and if we multiply 42 months by 30 days this gives us 1,260 days. And in Bible prophecy a day represents a literal year – as the books of Numbers and Ezekiel tells us:

Numbers 14:34 *"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise."*

Ezekiel 4:6 *"I have appointed thee each day for a year."*

So 42 months gives us 1,260 days, which equals 1,260 literal years during which this beast would rule. And history bears out that this is exactly what happened, because when you add 1,260 years to 538 AD it takes us to the date of 1798 AD. So the beast power would rule, or be in authority, for this period of time, 1,260 years. And this is exactly what took place, because scripture continues and tell us this...

Point 5 - He would receive a mortal wound

Revelation 13:3 *"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; ..."*

In 1798 something had to happen. Now at this time in history Napoleon is in power, and he wanted to rule Europe, he wanted Europe to become one nation, he wanted to create a European empire. Napoleon knew full well that he could never accomplish this as long as Papal Rome had power, and so this is what took place:

"In 1798, he (Berthier)...made his entrance into Rome, abolished the Papal government and established a secular one" ***The Encyclopaedia Americana, 1941 Edition***

Just as scripture had said, when the 1,260 years came to an end in 1798, the Papal power also came to an end. Napoleon's general Berthier marched into Rome, took the Pope prisoner and took him back to France where he died in prison. So in 1798 the beast received its deadly wound.

Now the Papacy was very powerful, it owned large amounts of land in Italy, which was known as the Papal States, it owned huge amounts of land, its power extended across Italy, across Europe and even as far as Britain. And when Napoleon took the Pope prisoner, he took away all of that power, abolished the Papal government and set up a secular power in its place.

Point 6 - The mortal wound would be healed

Revelation 13:3 *"... and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."*

So it says that the deadly wound that this beast received was healed. Now if all the beast's power had been taken away in order for the beast to be healed that power would have to be given back.

When the rule of the Papacy came to an end in 1798, this began a period of time known as the Roman Question, and this lasted for over 100 years. During this period there were many efforts made to re-establish the Papal government, but every time they tried the Italian parliament would not accept it. And so this process went back and forth for over 100 years, until finally we come to the 1900's.

Now at this time (as we have looked at above) there is a man who has come to power in Italy, who is no longer controlled by the Italian parliament, and his name is Mussolini. Now Mussolini decides that he is going to settle the Roman Question, and so negotiations were set up with the Papal power, and these went back and forth for quite some time, until finally they worked out what was called the Lateran Pact, and this pact was signed and put into effect in 1929.

This is how the historic event was reported in the press:

"The Roman question tonight was a thing of the past and the Vatican was at peace with Italy. In affixing the autographs to the memorable document healing the wound, extreme cordiality was displayed on both sides." ***San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 11, 1929***

With the signing of the Lateran Pact, this is what was given back to the Papacy:

1. It made the Vatican City a sovereign government
2. The Papacy was paid 21 million dollars for the spoliation of (doing away with) the Papal states
3. It gave the Papacy the right to send and receive ambassadors
4. It gave the Papacy diplomatic immunity
5. It resulted in the uniting of Church and State

Now when Napoleon took away the power of the Papacy, all that remained was the church, they no longer had any political power. But with the signing of the Lateran Pact they became more than a church, it made them a sovereign government, a sovereign nation, it gave them the same rights as all other governments, and so the Papacy became the head of a state and thus regained its political power.

In 1929, 21 million dollars was a lot of money, so the Papacy became immensely wealthy.

This is what the signing of the Lateran Pact did for the Papacy. The deadly wound, which it had since 1798, was starting to be healed. Today we can see the effects of this. In the tiny Vatican state within the city of Rome you can find ambassadors from every country in the world. For years the United States had no ambassador at the Vatican, today it does. What other religious leader has spoken at the United Nations?

So the Papacy has been given back all its authority.

Point 7 - All the world wondered after the beast

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

So this beast received a deadly wound, it was healed, and now it says that all the world followed the beast. So what has happened since 1929 and the signing of the Lateran Pact?

	1929	2010
Membership	?	1.4 billion
Ambassadors	None	180
Civic Power	None	Sovereign
Leadership	None	Foremost

In 1929 the membership of the Catholic Church was probably not very great. In 2010 it had 1.4 billion, that's at least one fifth of the world's population. At the signing of the Lateran Pact the Pope gave a speech, and he ended it with the words; "go and have babies". Now you know why he spoke those words! The membership of the church has risen unbelievably.

In 1929 the Vatican had no ambassadors. Today it has 180.

In 1929 the Vatican had no civil power, it had been taken away. Today it is a sovereign government.

In 1929 the Vatican had no leadership in the world. Today the Pope is one of the foremost leaders in the world.

As you read through the scriptures you find that both John the Revelator and the apostle Paul believed this power to be the antichrist, they both speak of it this way:

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 *"3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."*

So Paul says that this man of sin exalts himself above God. Now when people hear the word "antichrist" they think it means "against", but that's not the way it's used in scripture – in scripture it actually means "in place of", and that's what Paul is saying here. This is a power that is usurping the position of God, setting himself in the place of God.

Let's see from scripture a description of the antichrist. This list shows things about Christ compared with things about the beast or antichrist. Remember Satan always tries to impersonate Christ...

Christ	Beast of Revelation 13
Begins His ministry coming out of water – Luke 3:21	Comes up out of water
One with His Father – John 14:9	One with the Dragon
Authority from the Father – Revelation 2:27	Authority from the Dragon
Wearing a crown – Rev 19:12	Wears a crown
Wielding a sword – Rev 1:16	Wielding a sword
Seven horns – Rev 5:6	Ten horns
Ministry lasted for 3½ years	Rules for 3½ prophetic years (42 prophetic months/1,260 literal years)
Receives a deadly wound – Rev 5:6	Receives a deadly wound
Came back to life – Rev 5:6	Deadly wound healed

Let's also look at the parallels between Daniel 7 and Revelation 13...

Daniel 7	Revelation 13
Blasphemous	Blasphemous
Persecutes the saints	Persecutes the saints
Reigns for 1260 days/years	Reigns for 42 months (1260 days/years)
Arises out of divided Roman Empire	Rome gives power, seat and great authority
Lion, Bear, Leopard, 10 Horns	Lion, Bear, Leopard, 10 Horns
Diverse, Church and State	Beast (State), Church (Object of worship)

It's very important that you and I are settled into what we understand and what we believe because it says here in Revelation 13:10...

Revelation 13:10 *"10 ... Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."*

So it's very important that we know exactly who this beast is, because as we continue our study of Revelation this beast will appear over and over again. But now we are now going to look at the beast that rises from the earth, the second of the two beasts described in this chapter.

The Beast from the Earth

Many great nations are mentioned in the word of God, and the United States is no exception. This nation is mentioned because of the influence it has on the whole world and because of how it relates to the people of God. This is why nations are mentioned in scripture, because of their worldwide influence and their effect on the people of God, and the United States is mentioned for the same reasons, this is what we will now look at. Abraham Lincoln, when he gave his famous cooper union address on the eve of the Civil War, said this:

"If we could know where we are and where we are tending, we would know better what to do and how to do it." ***Abraham Lincoln***

This is basically the purpose of Bible prophecy - it's to help you and I understand where we are and where we are heading. And that is the subject of these Revelation studies – to help you and I understand where we are heading.

There are three important characters involved in prophecy that it's important for us to identify.

The first of these is "**The Dragon**". This dragon is pictured in Revelation 12, and the Bible says clearly that it represents the devil. So when the Bible talks about the dragon it's referring to Satan. Satan works through earth's leaders and nations to hurt God's people and thus bring heartache to Jesus and the Father. We so easily forget that Satan is the enemy. He is the one responsible for all evil.

The next character is what the Bible calls "**The Beast**", and we have found out that this beast represents Papal Rome. The Bible also refers to this beast as the antichrist.

The last of the three characters is called the "**False Prophet**". In Revelation 19:20, God mentions the destruction of the beast, He also refers to the destruction of the false prophet. In this passage, God identifies the false prophet as the power which "wrought miracles" before the beast and "deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image". This is a very clear reference to the activities of the lamb-horned beast, which are described in Revelation 13:11-18. These verses identified the lamb-horned beast as the United States of America. So the lamb-horned beast and the false prophet are obviously the same power.

These three characters figure prominently in the rest of the book of Revelation so it's very important that we understand clearly who they are.

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

So here you have these three characters, and it says evil spirits come out of their mouths, and these three are opposed to God and His people, the Bible says that these three are the ones who will make war with the Lamb.

We saw how the beast character received its deadly wound – this happened in 1798 AD when Napoleon's General Berthier made his entrance into Rome, took the Pope prisoner, abolished the Papal government and established a secular one, and the political power of the Papacy came to an end. So in 1798 the Papal power received a deadly wound.

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

The Papal power had led people into captivity and plunged many into the dungeon to rot. She killed, persecuted and coerced by the sword, but she received that which she dealt out. The scriptures said; he that kills with the sword must be killed with the sword and go into captivity. It had killed people with the sword, and the Bible says that this power would also be killed with the sword. And so we find that in 1798 the Papacy was taken into captivity just as the scripture said.

Matthew 26:52 *"... for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."*

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

In contrast to the Papal power, which arises out of the densely populated area of Europe, or the sea, Protestant America rises out of a sparsely populated area of the earth.

Revelation 17:15 *"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."*

The timing of these beasts are very important, because what the scripture is saying is that just as the first beast (the sea beast that came up out of the sea), just as that beast is going into captivity, then John saw another beast rising in power. Just as one beast goes down, the other beast is coming up. And this happed around the time of 1798. So as one beast was taken into captivity, the scripture says that another beast would be coming up on the horizon, rising in power.

John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist church. He was a great man and a great teacher of God's word. As he studied the book of Revelation he made notes and put them in a file. When he died they found his file which was full of notes on the book of Revelation, and they turned it into a book which you can buy, called "Notes on Revelation" by John Wesley. In his notes he talked about the two beasts in Revelation 13, and this is what he had to say about the second beast of chapter 13:

"He is not yet come, though he cannot be far off, for he is to appear at the end of the forty two months of the first beast." ***John Wesley, Notes on Revelation, 1752***

The pilgrims who emigrated to the New World were trying to get away from persecution. They landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 AD, and they began to set up a colony there and they began to grow. And as they began to grow they began to want independence from England, they wanted to form their own nation. And so in 1776 the Declaration of Independence was written. Then in 1789 we have the Bill of Rights, which was adopted in 1791. And in 1798 the first beast goes into captivity. So, just as one beast goes into captivity, the other beast was rising. There is no other power that fits this time sequence, except the United States.

Two horns like a lamb - Protestant America would be built upon anti-Catholic principles - the 2 horns on the one beast is a symbol of 2 kingdoms within this one power.

This beast with "two horns like a lamb" represents a nation of youth, innocence and gentleness, which is based on the two great principles of civil and religious liberty.

2 Corinthians 3:17 *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

At its inception, the United States had the strength of its form of government, and of its people's religion. Republicanism and Protestantism were the fundamental principles of the nation. These

principles are the secret of its power and prosperity. It is strong because the government and the church are separate, without one controlling the other.

The kingdom of the church and the kingdom of the state (as the 2 horns are separate so are church and state to be separate in the nation of America) a separation of church and state, civil and religious freedom which is contrary to Catholic teaching. Notice the following in the Constitution of the United States:

"The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government. Article VI: 'No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.' The first amendment of the Constitution (Art. 1) begins as follows: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' These articles profess the amplest guarantee of civil and religious liberty, the entire perpetual separation of church and state..." ***Article IV, sec. 4 of the Constitution of the United States***

The Lamb is also a reference to Christ, the Lamb of God (verse 8 and John 1:29), thus the nation was to be built upon Christian principles, separation of church and state being one of them.

Matthew 22:21 *"They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."*

So this second beast comes up out of the earth, whereas the first beast came up out of the water.

In Bible prophecy water represents peoples, nations and languages as we have seen in Revelation 17:15. So the other beast, the first beast, came out of nations, from populated areas of the earth, through war and strife etc, but that's not the way this second beast comes into existence. It comes into existence exactly as it says on the Statue of Liberty:

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these the homeless, tempest-tossed to me. I lift up my lamp beside the golden door." ***Emma Lazarus. Inscribed on the Statue of Liberty.***

The pilgrims came to the New World seeking a better life, seeking freedom of worship. That's how the United States came into existence, not out of the sea, not in populated areas of the world, but out of the earth, in a place that was not populated.

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

So it says that this beast has two horns. Now horns on a beast represent power. And some of the beasts in prophecy have 10 horns, and some of them have crowns on meaning that they are ruled by a monarch. This beast has two horns but it doesn't have crowns on them, but it still represents power. What do these two horns represent? They represent the two founding principles on which the United States was established. America didn't want independence from England as much to avoid the taxation as they did over the question of rulership, how they were governed, that's what they did not like.

"In defense of our civil and religious rights, with the God of armies on our side, we fear not the hour of trial though the host of our enemies should cover the field like locusts, yet the sword of the Lord and Gideon shall prevail." ***Joseph Quincey***

Civil and religious rights – those are the two horns. The pilgrims came over to the New World and they said; we want a government by the people, for the people and through the people. We do not want a

king; we want a government by the people. Secondly we want to have the right to worship as we please, as our conscience dictates. These are the two principles, the two horns, on which the United States was built. These give everyone the right to worship according to their conscience, and it also gives them the right to representation in the government.

"We shall not fight alone. God presides over the destinies of nations and will raise up friends for us. The Battle is not to the strong alone. It is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God. Give me liberty or give me death." ***Patrick Henry***

This man is speaking about how they were being governed and what England was doing back then; this was the conflict that was taking place. And the two principles of civil and religious rights are how the United States came into being and are the principles on which the government was based. Those two principals have held the United States in good stead for over 200 years, but now the government in various ways is coming close to altering or abrogating these principles on which the constitution is based, disregarding what the founding fathers believed and stood for, and forgetting how God has blessed the United States as a nation since it was formed. America's greatest need, by the grace of God, is to remember from where it has come, it needs to look back and see how the hand of God has presided over the nation and how He has led it in such a marvellous and special way.

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

The word "Lamb" means "young" and also "gentle".

1 Peter 1:19 *"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

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

So this Lamb represents Christ. It also represents being "Christ-like", having a gentle spirit, and this is how the United States began as a nation.

If you go to Washington DC, you can walk through the park or go to the House of Representatives, you can go into the Senate, you can visit all those places, and you'll find that God is written all over that city, there is statement after statement in which they say things about God. These were God-fearing men and women who laid down the principles of the nation, and these were based on Christian principles, and these principles are what has guided and led the nation over the years since its formation.

Conflict broke out between England and the United states - the War of Independence took place. That war was unbelievably hard, it was so hard that it totally bankrupted all of the 13 colonies, it took all their finances and they had nothing left. It was so severe that it severed all of the lines of communication between the colonies, and because there was no communication each one of the colonies believed that it bore the brunt of the war, each colony believed that it had been affected worst by the war. When the war was over, a constitutional congress was called, but those who went there ended up in so many arguments until finally the delegation from New York went home and it looked like the whole congress was going to fall apart. Then a man stood up and gave a speech, and said this:

"We have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understanding. In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible to danger,

we had daily prayer in this room for divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. Do we imagine that we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs the affairs of men." ***Benjamin Franklin***

And with that speech he was able to pull that congress together, and as a result they sat down and wrote one of the greatest documents that has ever been written, the constitution of the United States. These were men and women that believed in God and His word - this is what motivated them, they based their lives upon Christian principles and teachings.

When the first president of the United States was elected, George Washington, he spoke the following words in his inaugural address:

"It would be particularly improper to omit, in the first official act, my fervent supplication to the Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States...No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency..." ***George Washington***

He said that no one should be able to see and understand God's providence and leading better than the people of the United States. He went on to say:

"...We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained." ***George Washington***

He said that no nation which goes contrary to God should ever expect His blessing and protection.

This is the heritage of the United States; this is what God gave that nation. That is why the scripture says that this beast from the earth had two horns like a Lamb, because it was young, it was gentle, it was Christ-like in character.

If only the scripture ended there. If only the scripture said nothing more about this Lamb-like beast. But God doesn't work that way. God gives the whole story. And so the scripture goes on to say:

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

Now if a lamb is gentle and Christ-like, what is a dragon? It's the exact opposite. So the scripture says that this gentle, Christ-like, two-horned beast is going to completely change its character, it will change to the point where it will speak like a dragon. So this beast will change its character and will no longer exercise gentleness, but it will instead exercise force.

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

So this two-horned beast exercises the power and authority of the dragon, and the dragon represents Satan. Now let's look at what this two-horned beast is going to do.

Spake as a dragon - Eventually Protestant America will turn against those great principles that made her a strong nation and speak like a dragon - a persecuting power as seen in verses 12, 15-17. She will change to the side of the devil who ultimately is the dragon. She will speak through her legislature.

It is interesting to note that at the time of the Bush administration the Justice system/Supreme Court of America was made up of the following people:

— Chief Justice John Roberts - Catholic
— Stephen G. Breyer - Jewish
— Ruth Bader Ginsburg - Jewish
— Anthony M. Kennedy - Catholic
— Antonin Scalia - Catholic
— David H. Souter - Episcopalian
— John Paul Stevens - Protestant
— Clarence Thomas - Catholic
— Samuel Alito - Catholic

Two places became vacant, Rehnquist died and O'Connor resigned about 2 weeks later, during George Bush Jr's presidency and it is interesting to note that he placed 2 Catholics to the high court, Chief Justice John Roberts and Samuel Alito.

"Bush burnished his conservative credentials by naming Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito to the high court, and helped increase the overall conservative bent of most federal courts." ***http://edition.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/05/01/souter.politics/index.html***

Something else that is interesting to note is that there is only one Protestant filling a position.

So it is seen that the Catholics have 56% of the votes and thus the balance of power to push through decisions they want made. The Catholic Church already has control of the justice system of America. Which brings to mind a very relevant quote from Archbishop Quigley back in 1903:

"When the United States rules the world, the Catholic Church will rule the world." ***Archbishop Quigley, quoted in The Chicago Tribune, 1903***

This point is also shown by the following points.

Alberto Rivera, an ex-Jesuit priest, spoke of a secret sign to be given amongst the Jesuit order:

"...a secret sign was to be given to the Jesuits world-wide when the ecumenical movement had successfully wiped out Protestantism, in preparation for the signing of a concordat between the Vatican and the U.S. The sign was to be when a president of the U.S. took his oath of office facing an obelisk." ***The God Fathers, Alberto, pt 3, pg 26***

From March 4, 1837 when Martin Van Buren was inaugurated through to January 20, 1977 when Jimmy Carter was inaugurated, the ceremony was conducted on the East Portico of the Capitol Building. But when it came to Ronald Reagan it all of a sudden changed to the West Front of the Capitol Building, from whence one looks to the west, straight to one of the biggest obelisks.

"Since the first inauguration of President Reagan in 1981, the swearing-in ceremonies have been held on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol Building. The only exception was the 1985 swearing-in of President Reagan's second term, when cold weather forced the ceremony into the Capitol Rotunda." ***http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aa011701a.htm***

Studying Reagan's Presidency we find that he did much to unite the U.S. and the Vatican. Much more information could be given but space does not allow it.

As of 2015 the Supreme Court consists of six Catholics and three Jews.

"How many key decisions have been made by the Supreme Court on a 6-3, Catholic/Jewish basis? After all, if Catholicism is the deciding factor in American jurisprudence, then that's the kind of split we'd most often see, no? Either that or nothing but 9-0 decisions, since Catholics and Jews share a common basis for faith, philosophy, and moral law." US News: Catholics have taken over the Supreme Court. ***January 8, 2014 by Ed Morrissey***

Current U.S. Supreme Court Members

The following table lists the current members of the United States Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice and eight Associate Justices.

	Service			Birth			
Name, state	**Assoc. Justice**	**Chief Justice**	**Yrs**	**Place**	**Date**	**Died**	**Religion**
Antonin Scalia, DC	1986–		—	N.J.	1936	—	Roman Catholic
Anthony M. Kennedy, Calif.	1988–		—	Calif.	1936	—	Roman Catholic
Clarence Thomas, DC	1991–		—	Ga.	1948	—	Roman Catholic
Ruth Bader Ginsburg, DC	1993–		—	N.Y.	1933	—	Jewish
Stephen G. Breyer, Mass.	1994–		—	Calif.	1938	—	Jewish
John G. Roberts, DC		2005–	—	N.Y.	1955	—	Roman Catholic
Samuel A. Alito, Jr., N.J.	2006–		—	N.J.	1950	—	Roman Catholic
Sonia Sotomayor N.Y.	2009–		—	N.Y.	1954	—	Roman Catholic
Elena Kagan N.Y.	2010–		—	N.Y.	1960	—	Jewish

So we can see that the dragon, or Satan, is the controlling power behind both beasts in chapter 13, as the two horned beast eventually speaks as the dragon speaks.

The USA who had fled from Papal persecution and the right for freedom of belief have now forgotten where they come from and why. Sadly by the time they see, for many it will be too late.

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

Exercise all the power of the first beast - To understand this we must ask what power the Papacy had. The Papal power exercised authority over matters of the state and that of the church. So for America to exercise the same power/authority she must enter into the realm of religion and seek to dominate religious worship. It must change so as to allow church and state to unite and thus religious liberty would disappear with religious oppression being legalized. Showing that it is a world-wide power which will force or coerce the inhabitants of the earth to worship the Papal power whose wound is healed. It will go from anti-Catholic to pro-Catholic, of which we see taking place before our eyes.

The two-horned beast is going to exercise all the power and authority of the first beast, and we saw that the first beast persecuted the saints, and that it was also a uniting of church and state.

Revelation 13:13-14 *"13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."*

The two-horned beast will have great power.

Revelation 19:20 *"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."*

This two-horned beast, referred to here in Revelation 19 as the false prophet, will be given power to perform signs/miracles to deceive the whole world.

Miracles and deception - Miracles are for the purpose of deceiving those that dwell on the earth. But the deceptive miracles that this two-horned beast does in the sight of the first beast clearly links us to the false prophet, who performed miracles before the beast to deceive those that had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image, which is the identical work of the two-horned beast of Revelation 16:

Revelation 16:13-14 *"13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

These verses in Revelation 16 show that these deceptive miracles find their origin with the spirits of devils, that is, spiritualistic forces or demons. But why the miracles? One reason is that Jesus pointed to the many miracles/mighty works that He performed as testifying to His divine mission as the Saviour of mankind and attested to the truth of His mission. Jesus pointed to these mighty works as evidence of His divine authority and Messiahship (John 5:36; 10:25, 37-38; 14:10-11).

John 14:10-11 *"10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."*

Revelation 19:20 *"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."*

Here in Revelation, the miracles are used to give authenticity and authority to the errors they are teaching and enforcing and thus aiding their work of deception, bringing the populous under their control, to encourage them to make an image to the beast/Papal power.

This is how the two-horned beast speaks like a dragon.

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

Notice that the earthly government that it is to be connected with is the two-horned beast/false prophet, the United States of America. The agency that is behind the outward manifestations is

Satanic, the spirit of devils. It is also interesting to note that The United States is the birth place of modern spiritualism.

In verse 15 we see John bringing the subject matter to its natural climax, the death decree for those who refuse to worship the beast/the papal power and his image/the replicating of the papal power in the U.S. Then in verses 16-18 John steps back and gives more information on the coercion used, the mark of the beast and the number 666.

Putting these verses together in their correct order, we see that there is a progression of coercion against those who do not bend the knee in false worship. First, laws will be made dealing with the enforcement of the mark of the beast (note that the mark of the beast is the "mark" of the "beast" or the mark of the Papal power). Also note that the entire issue in this chapter is worship - who you will worship - the beast and his image or the Lamb that was slain.

So the two-horned beast makes an image to the first beast, and it has power to give life to that image, it makes the image come to life. The scripture says that the two-horned beast would both "speak" and "cause" – "speak" means to legislate, "cause" means to enforce.

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

The two-horned beast speaks and causes everyone in the world to receive the mark of the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. To receive the mark in the hand means to be led, or coerced into receiving the mark. To receive the mark in the forehead means to receive it willingly, by conscious choice.

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

Laws will be made to boycott (so they cannot function in society nor survive physically) those who will remain faithful to God and worship Him alone, to try and bring them into submission. When it is seen that this is not working, a death decree will be issued to exterminate God's true people.

So there are three laws:

1. The mark of the beast – global Sunday Law
2. No buying and selling, to enforce/coerce people to receive the mark
3. A death decree, to coerce and enforce the mark

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

The scripture says this beast would have the mysterious number 666. Verse 18 says "It is the number of a man" and Revelation 15:2 says it is "the number of his name":

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

What man do you think of when you think of the Papacy? Naturally, we all think of the Pope - but that is not his official name. Here is a Catholic quote:

"The title of the pope of Rome is 'Vicarius Filii Dei'" [in English: 'Vicar of the Son of God']. ***Answers to readers questions in Our Sunday Visitor, November 15, 1914, p. 3***

Malachi Martin, in **The Keys of This Blood**, uses the same title for the Pope on pages 114 and 122 of this book. A footnote for Revelation 13:18 in some Douay [Catholic] versions of the Bible says, "The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number."

In Roman numerals, some letters are given a numerical value. If we take the official Latin title of the Pope and convert this to Roman numerals, we get the following:

VICARIUS FILII DEI

THE LITERAL MEANING: VICARIUS - substituting for, or in place of
FILII - means son
DEI - means GOD

V	= 5	**F**	= no value	**D**	= 500
I	= 1	**I**	= 1	**E**	= no value
C	= 100	**L**	= 50	**I**	= 1
A	= no value	**I**	= 1		--------
R	= no value	**I**	= 1		501
I	= 1		--------		
U/V	= 5		53		
S	= no value				

	112				

112 + 53 + 501 = 666

So the Pope's official Latin title, "Vicarius Filii Dei", in Roman numerals = 666.

Revelation - Chapter 14

The Three Angels Messages

In this chapter we find there are three Angels with messages, these messages are for us today and this subject is vital that we should know and take heed of it.

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

This Lamb is none other than Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God mentioned in John 1 and Revelation 5:

John 1:29 *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

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

The 144,000 are shown here with the Lamb on Mount Zion to indicate their triumph over the beast and his image. Earlier John had seen the 144,000 passing through the severest trial as he had seen them condemned as worthy of death. But in their darkest hour they were delivered and are now with the Lamb secure from the conflicts of earth forever.

Chapter 13 closed with the people of God in a deadly conflict and being severely persecuted by the mightiest powers on earth that the dragon could muster. A death decree has been passed and backed up by the supreme power of the land, that the people of God must worship the image and receive the mark of the beast. Here in the first five verses of chapter 14, we see a victorious company standing on Mount Zion, the same company who were going through the severest of trials in chapter 13. God's faithful, who have gotten victory over the beast, his image and mark and over the number of his name, they will be delivered.

There are two pictures given of the sealing of the 144,000, each different from the other, and there is a good reason why the Lord gave these two different pictures.

In Revelation 6:14-7:4 we see a rather fearful, destructive and woeful time with the coming of the day of God's wrath. But it is made perfectly clear that only those who have the seal of God will be protected from His wrath.

Revelation 14:1-5 describes to us the character of those who are sealed and thus describes to us the character of those who are protected. Emphasis of character is of interest for herein we also find the message of Righteousness by Faith which will give the pre-requisite character. The message of Righteousness by Faith is also contained in the 3 Angels Message, which is the last message of love to a world on the precipice of destruction. Also that they have accepted fully the Laodicean message with its remedy, Revelation 3:14-22.

It's important to understand the character of those who are sealed, but it is also important to know why they are sealed, and that is for their protection during the day of wrath, just as the Israelites were protected in Egypt when God's wrath was poured out upon the Egyptians. The blood on the doorpost was to be for them a token/mark/sign, that when it was seen, the angel of death would pass over

them. The token was the children of Israel's assurance of safety from the plague. Yet the mark of deliverance was quickly followed by the angel of death: "this night":

Exodus 12:12-13 *"12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. 13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."*

Therefore we shall also see this in the antitype:

1 Corinthians 10:11 *"Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."*

Destruction will come promptly after the application of the sign of deliverance - the seal of God. One must grasp this understanding as it will help to take away much of the confusion.

This brings us to a natural conclusion that the sealing of God's servants is a special seal given for a special occasion, namely for the safety and security of the sealed ones, and, therefore it also distinguishes between those who are God's and those who are not, those assured of His protection and those who are not.

His Father's name written - The 144,000 are said to be sealed "in their foreheads":

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

The Father's name is said to be written in the forehead, showing that the seal and His name are synonymous. Ancient seals contained the name of the authenticating agent. For an example let's define what a seal is.

The seal of a king/ruler contains three things:

1. His Name
2. His Title, or claim of authority
3. His Territory, or region of rulership

Let's look at a President of the United States as an example:

1. Name - Barack Obama
2. Title - President
3. Territory - United States of America

As we have just seen, ancient seals contained three major elements: the name, title, and territory of the one placing the official, legal seal upon the document.

Of the Ten Commandments, the fourth commandment, the seventh-day Sabbath, is the only one which contains the required three elements of God's seal, i.e.:

1. His Name - "the LORD your God"
2. His Title - Creator - "for in six days the LORD made..."
3. His Territory - "the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them"

Exodus 20:8-11 *"8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*

The 144,000 receive God's seal because they keep His Commandments. The seventh-day Sabbath is God's eternal sign of loyalty, especially in the last days. It is the outward symbol of an inner, living faith. At a time of enormous crises and persecution, the Holy Spirit will strengthen God's faithful children to live lives of godly obedience.

The First Angels Message

Let's compare this to the first Angels message that we will look at shortly.

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

The names applied to the 144,000 represent:

1. Ownership. The 144,000 belong to God.
2. Character. The 144,000 reflect fully the image of Jesus.

In scripture, name denotes character, as the Greek word here used for name also means character, thus indicating that the 144,000 have reached a stage in spiritual growth, by the grace of God, where they fully reflect the character of Christ their Saviour and are ready for translation. Yet this is not all, for notice the following in Isaiah:

Isaiah 8:16 *"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.*

Here we find that God's law is to be sealed amongst His people. The law is also a transcript of God's character (Exodus 33:18-19; 34:5-8; 20:5-6). Every law must have a seal to be valid. As we have seen, the seal of God's law is found in the fourth Commandment, the Sabbath Commandment.

1. The Sabbath is also a seal/sign of creation, that God created all things (Exodus 31:17).
2. It is also a seal/sign that God is the One Who sanctifies us, that is, restores the image of God in man (Ezekiel 20:12).
3. The way in which a believer receives the seal of the Sabbath is by hallowing it (Ezekiel 20:20).
4. Hallow means to keep holy, consecrate, set apart for a holy use, etc.
5. In keeping holy the Sabbath day it shows one's allegiance to God (Exodus 16:4, 25-28).
6. This is shown by the 144,000.
7. They keep the law of God (Zephaniah 3:13, Revelation 14:5).
8. The image (character) of God has been restored in them, which is sanctification (Revelation 14:1).
9. Therefore the 144,000 honour the law and the seal of the law, the Sabbath.
10. Therefore they will be honoured with the seal of the Creator/living God, as the two go hand-in-hand at the end of time, they are inseparable.
11. Only those who honour the seal of the law will be honoured with the seal of the Creator.

It's also interesting to note that the seventh-day Sabbath message is found to be an integral part of the 3 Angels Messages, the last warning message given to a world on the brink of destruction:

1. A call to worship God as the Creator - "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters". This is a direct reference to the fourth Commandment.

2. A call to expose the wine of Babylon (its false doctrines/teachings), with which the inhabitants of the earth have been made spiritually drunk, and of which Sunday sacredness is a part, as it is in direct opposition to the seventh-day Sabbath.

3. The mark of the beast (Sunday sacredness) is in opposition to the seal of God, the seventh-day Sabbath.

Also, within the third Angels message, we have the keeping of the commandments of God, including the fourth. So within the Three Angels Messages there is a strong, repetitious call back to the true worship of God, which should be of no surprise considering that chapter 13 deals with forced worship at the end of time.

This raises an interesting point, for in rejecting the seal of the law, the Sabbath (the sign of allegiance to God), you will not receive the seal of the living God, which only leaves one other option, that is, the mark of the beast. So while one group, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other in choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority receive the seal of God.

It is also seen that the mark of the beast is to be enforced by coercion and laws, and is vying for the same position as the seal of God, the forehead (Revelation 13:16-17; 7:3). Also, the seal of God and the mark of the beast will be a test question, as we see that there will be those who gain the victory over the beast, his image, and his MARK etc (Revelation 15:2).

And all of this is mentioned in connection with the outpouring of God's wrath, the seven last plagues, thus showing then that the seal is for the protection of the 144,000 during this time. This is also seen in Revelation 14:9-12, two groups are contrasted, those who receive the mark and those who keep the law of God, particularly the seal of the law, the Sabbath.

Those who keep the law, including the seal of the law which is the Sabbath (choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority), do not receive the mark of the beast but receive the seal of God for protection against the coming wrath of God. The people, who accept the sign of submission to earthly powers, will receive the mark of the beast and are without protection from the wrath of God and are marked for death.

So the acceptance or rejection of the seal of the law will determine whether we receive the seal of God for protection or the mark of the beast and the wrath of God. By rejecting the seal you automatically, by default, receive the mark.

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

Voice of many waters - this we see is Jesus:

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

Voice of a great thunder - this we see to be the Father and is connected with His divine presence.

Job 37:3-5 *"3 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. 4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. 5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend."*

Psalms 29:3 *"The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth:"*

Harpers with their harps - more than likely represent the 144,000 as they are clearly represented as having harps and singing, also in connection with verses 1 and 3 it is the 144,000 that we are focusing on.

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

No other man could learn this song as it testified of the experience they had gone through, it is of such a personal nature that only those who pass through it can appreciate its significance. To them the song is a treasured and comprehensive summation of the experiences through which they have passed in the closing stages of the conflict between good and evil.

Redeemed - "to buy," "to purchase." The word is translated "buy" in Revelation 3:18 and 18:11.

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

Revelation 18:11 *"And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buys their merchandise any more:"*

Compare the phrases "redeemed us to God":

Revelation 5:9 *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"*

And redeemed from among men:

Romans 3:24 *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"*

1 Corinthians 6:20 *"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

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

Defiled - Meaning "to defile", "to stain", "to soil", such things as the conscience (1 Corinthians 8:7) or clothing (Revelation 3:4). Here the reference is figuratively to the defilement of illicit relationships. The tense of the Greek verb refers the action to a specific period of time. Here to the time when the coalition of religious elements, symbolized by "women", will bring pressure upon the saints to renounce their loyalty to God and His commandments and to join their organization. Any yielding would be an act of defilement. Now standing victoriously on Mt. Zion the saints are commended for their fidelity.

Symbolically as we have seen before a woman is used in Scripture to represent a church, a pure woman the true church (Revelation 12:1) and an immoral woman the apostate church (Revelation 17:1-5). The Church of Rome and various apostate churches that follow in her footsteps are symbolized by an impure woman and her daughters. It is to these churches that the prophet refers.

Virgins - A term applied to both men and women. The saints are here called virgins because they have either kept themselves from Babylon or they no longer have dealings with her:

Revelation 18:4 *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*

They have refused any connection with Babylon and her daughters at the time when these have become the agents of Satan in his final effort to eradicate the saints (Revelation 13:15 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed) They were not defiled by association with this union by Satan, though they may formerly have belonged to one of the various bodies before coming out.

Follow the Lamb – The 144,000 will have followed Jesus completely as His character has transformed them into His image.

Firstfruits – is related to the Greek verb "*aparchomai*", "to make a beginning [in sacrifice]", "to offer first fruits". The ancient Israelites offered first fruits to the Lord, both as personal (Deuteronomy 26:1-11) and as national (Leviticus 23:10, 17) offerings. The offering of the first fruits was an acknowledgement of the goodness of God in giving the harvest. The national offering also had typical significance:

1 Corinthians 15:20 *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."*

The term "first-fruits" applied to the 144,000 - As being the first instalment or pledge of the great harvest. The 144,000 are those who are victors in the great conflict with the beast and his image (Revelation 14:1). They are delivered from this struggle and are now safe before the throne of God.

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

Was found no guile - The form of the Greek verb suggests that a certain point of time is under consideration. At that point of time investigation proves the 144,000 to be faultless. This does not mean that they had never sinned but that by the grace of God they have overcome.

Revelation 14:6-7 *"6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."*

We can see from the wording of the verses that the messages are successive, the third "followed" the second and the second "followed" the first, one being proclaimed after the other. It is also seen that one cannot accept the second angels message and yet reject the first angels message and likewise with the third. For one cannot embrace the truth of Babylon is fallen and the wine of Babylon yet reject the message of the everlasting gospel, the judgment hour message and the true worship of the Creator etc., when the teachings/wine of Babylon is contrary to these truths. Likewise, one cannot embrace the truth of the mark of the beast and his image etc., yet reject the truth of Babylon is fallen and what constitutes the wine of Babylon when both the mark and image are intertwined with Babylon and its wine. The first angels' message prepares the way for the reception of the second and the second the third.

Angel flying in the midst of heaven - This of course is symbolic of the saints who give this message, for it has not been given unto angels to go and preach the gospel, but unto men this commission has been given. Although the angels take a great interest in the affairs of salvation as ministering spirits, to them has not been given the responsibility of the gospel.

Hebrews 1:14 *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"*

The heavens encompass the entire earth - flying in the midst of heaven is obviously referring to the atmospheric heavens, for the entire message is for those dwelling upon this earth, and thus to say that the angel is flying in the starry heavens or in paradise heaven is a mockery. This shows the worldwide nature of the message, as Jesus stated:

Matthew 24:14 *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."*

This is also evidenced by the statement that the message is to be given to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. And because it is a worldwide message there must likewise be a worldwide movement to proclaim it.

It is clear that this message is the last message to be given to the world, for the pouring out of God's judgments, the seven last plagues/the wrath of God, follows it. Also we see that the harvest follows this message (verses 14-20). And we are told that the harvest is the end of the world.

Matthew 13:39 *"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."*

The everlasting gospel - It is referred to as "the" everlasting gospel, showing that there is only one gospel and that there has only ever been one gospel. Yet this does not push aside the understanding that there are different phases of the message that are emphasized at different times as appropriately needed or when relevance requires. In saying so, there is still one theme that runs like a thread through every phase of the message, from the beginning to the end, and that is salvation through Christ. The three angels' messages clearly constitute a part of the everlasting gospel.

To give a thorough understanding of the everlasting gospel just on this single web page is virtually impossible, instead a brief statement will be given.

The everlasting gospel (the glad tidings of salvation) was proclaimed to Adam and Eve before they were driven from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15). Noah was known as a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) showing that he was a preacher of righteousness by faith, and it was only because he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8) that he could proclaim the message of salvation from sin. Faithful Abraham taught the same glorious gospel (Galatians 3:7-9) and Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11:23-27). The children of Israel were given a good understanding of the gospel through the sanctuary and its services (Hebrews 4:2). And so the list continues on.

Just as there has been but one true church in all ages, there has also been but one gospel, which is everlasting in both time and results. It is identical with the "everlasting covenant." There is but one gospel, one plan of salvation, one body or church, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, and one Name by which we can be saved (Ephesians 4:4-6; Acts 4:12). The positive phase of the gospel throughout all the ages has been justification and righteousness by faith in Christ (Romans 1:16-17). This is the good news phase of God's message to men. It is the very centre and core of the gospel around which all other truths cluster. The negative phase embraces the warnings against the prevailing apostasy of the age in which the message is being given. The negative phase therefore changes to meet the changing conditions. It warns against the agencies used by Satan to oppose the gospel. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, constitute the agencies of Satan against which the final warning is given. Such a warning had never been given before because the same combination of evil had never before existed.

As we have already stated, Noah was a preacher of righteousness. While righteousness by faith was the centre and positive phase of his preaching which saved from sin, the negative phase was the warning of the sure results of disobedience, the coming deluge. His message was present truth for that generation, and regardless of their creeds and forms of religion, the eternal destiny of the antediluvians depended on their attitude toward the everlasting gospel as it applied to their time and conditions. The same was true of the message of Lot to the cities of the plain; of Elijah to apostate Israel; of John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles to the Jewish nation, and of the threefold message of chapter 14 to the modern world. The latter is God's message of present truth for the present

generation, and regardless of the profession of godliness and forms of religion and the benefits derived from them in the past, the eternal welfare of all mankind depends on their attitude toward this heaven-sent message for our day. To accept it means eternal life; to reject it brings the vengeance of an offended and longsuffering God. Because of its preeminent importance and momentous consequences to all judgment-bound creatures, it is given with a "loud voice" so that all can hear and prepare.

There is an incredible amount of information contained in each of the three messages e.g. in the first message we have the following topics - fear God - give glory to Him - judgment hour message - worship - and the message of the Creator and creation. It is impossible to give fine detail to these things with the limited space we have, so short explanations will be given.

Fear God - The word "fear" means to revere or reverence, clearly stating that we are to reverence God. Reverence is to prostrate in homage, or to make obeisance and worship (which is to be obedient to the one you pay this homage to). From Proverbs 16:6; 8:13; 3:7 and Job 1:1, 8 we gain the understanding of what it means to fear God, it means to depart from evil/sin and walk in the path of righteousness; it is the promise of victory over sin. This is evidenced by the final verse in the third angels' message where we have the patience of the saints of God who actually keep the Commandments of God (Revelation 14:12) and also shown by the character of the 144,000. The word patience also translates to endurance and means those who endure tribulation, which are those who do not get the mark of the beast. Note the significance here in that those who do not get the mark keep the Commandments of God.

Of course the fruit of righteousness can only be manifest in a person's life as they, by faith, abide in Christ through whom they can do all things (John 15:4-5; Philippians 4:13; Romans 1:17). They do not manifest the lusts of the flesh, for they have crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof and have become a new creature in Christ walking in newness of life (Galatians 5:16, 24; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4; Galatians 5:22-23).

The message of "fear God" is a message and promise of victory over sin.

Give glory to Him - The following information is for the truly converted Christian that is willing to entirely devote themselves to God in every area of their lives.

We are told in 1 Corinthians 10 that:

1 Corinthians 10:31 *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."*

In the first part of this verse we see the health message, glorifying God by what we eat and drink. Our bodies are not our own they are a temple/dwelling place for God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19, 20). For we have been bought with the precious blood of Christ and thus should keep holy His purchased possession by eating and drinking that which He advises.

Man's original diet only consisted of nuts, grains, and fruit/berries (Genesis 1:29). After sin this was changed through the introduction of root vegetables (Genesis 3:17-18). After the flood God allowed them to eat clean meats as most of the vegetation had been destroyed by the flood (Genesis 9:3). It is interesting to see that they had an understanding of clean and unclean animals before the flood (Genesis 7:1-3). The introduction of flesh into the diet after the flood had a dramatic effect upon the longevity of the life of man. His lifespan dropped from 800-900 years to the 400's, 200's then 100's very rapidly.

The laws of clean and unclean meats were expanded upon in Leviticus 11:2-31 after Israel's bondage in Egypt, for they had lost much of the understanding of truth being in slavery to and steeped in Egyptian paganism. The way in which God had instructed to eat flesh was without either the blood or fat (Leviticus 3:17). The blood of the animal carries the life of the animal (Leviticus 17:11, 14) and thus carries the nutrients, oxygen, diseases etc., to the body, and thus by partaking of the animals' blood you are partaking of its diseases etc., which ultimately brings about disease in the human body. Fat of animals plays a major part with heart disease etc. Whatever fat is solid at room temperature will have the same congealing/solidifying effect in the body. This is where we can see how our health relates to the spiritual life. An unhealthy diet creates unhealthy blood and thus poor circulation. This in turn clouds the mind and with the mind not being clear there is poor judgment. The Holy Spirit's impressions upon the mind are not discerned as easily, for the mind is sluggish and clouded. Thus spiritual things are not as easily discerned. There is so much more that could be said but space does not allow.

Solomon in Proverbs 20 instructs us that we are to use total abstinence in the event of alcohol:

Proverbs 20:1 *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."*

Solomon also describes the effects of alcohol upon the human mind and body in Proverbs 23:29-35. Woe, contentions, and babbling. Alcohol is a depressant, and it clouds the judgment and reason to the point that a person will fight to the death for no valid reason at all. The speech becomes very slurred and the conversation becomes gibberish. Wounds without cause, redness of eyes, balance progressively disappears as the alcohol takes effect on the mind, thus causing one to stumble and fall, injuring themselves but not remembering how it happened. The eyes become very bloodshot. Alcohol bites like an adder, it is very unforgiving, it bits hard. Void of judgment, the passions are not under the control of reason and thus run riot. The mouth becomes perverse and vulgar. When all is said and done, they seek it again, for alcohol is addictive. It is easily seen that a true Christian will not partake of such a vulgar practice. With this type of effect upon the mind, it is not hard to see what effect it would have upon the spiritual well-being of a person. Alcohol is behind a great deal of domestic violence, vehicle accidents and many deaths and health problems. The Bible instructs us to drink the pure (if something is fermented it is not pure) blood of the grape (Deuteronomy 32:14) for there is a blessing in it (Isaiah 65:8).

The Bible also speaks against unnatural stimulants in Deuteronomy 29:18, (Gall = Poisonous herb/poppy, Opium = an unnatural stimulant, Wormwood = Poisonous). We are not to be using drugs that cause unnatural stimulation of the system as they are damaging to the body and mind. It has been proven back in the mid 1800's that caffeine was one of the worst things that could be put into the body because of its debilitating effect upon the nervous and digestive systems. Not much need be said about nicotine, marijuana, speed and the many other drugs, some with their addictive effects, others with their mind altering effects and all with health repercussions. They defile the temple/dwelling place of God.

We have not done justice to this incredibly large subject but we can sum it up in the following points. One should have adequate NUTRITION to have a healthy body and mind. EXERCISE should be a part of the daily life to keep the body and mind sharp and in good condition. WATER, pure and fresh should be drunk regularly to help the body stay clean. SUNSHINE is vital for the health of the body in correct doses. TEMPERANCE is the total abstinence of that which is bad and the balancing of that which is good. AIR, clean and fresh, aids for a good working body and mind. REST, adequately taken, helps the

body to repair and regroup and helps to have a clear mind. TRUST IN GOD who is the Sustainer of all life and the great Physician. If these eight laws are abided by good health will result.

The second half of 1 Corinthians 10:31, deals with every other facet of our lives, "whatsoever ye do". This means it has a direct relation to the way we dress and adorn ourselves, what we watch, read, listen to and the amusements we take part in, so we are to glorify God in every aspect of our lives. We must be "proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:10) and not making any provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts (Romans 13:14). Our reading material, music, television programs, etc. must be proved to see if they are acceptable to God. Satan will work through the senses to gain his objective, the surrender of you to him, and this we see in the temptation of Eve, her sight, taste, hearing and no doubt her sense of touch were being enticed to draw Eve into choosing to sin.

Philippians 4 is a very worthy test to put these things through to see if they are what the true Christian will partake of:

Philippians 4:8 *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

The emphasis is that the devil will try and take you down in any way he possibly can and therefore every avenue should be carefully guarded. This is why the Bible says...

Proverbs 4:23 *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."*

Once again so much could be said but space disallows it.

The true Christian will follow the principles found in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-4 thus glorifying God by the way they adorn themselves. Clothing should be, modest, and not revealing. Dress should be without the use of gold or pearls. See also Genesis 35:1-4; Isaiah 3:18-24; 4:4. The painting of the face and the putting on of jewellery was a sign of moving into apostasy (Ezekiel 23:40). Cross-dressing is also an abomination in the eyes of God for it brings in confusion of the sexes, plus it was practiced amongst the pagan religions (Deuteronomy 22:5). In chapter 12 the church of God is likened to a woman clothed in natural beauty whereas the apostate church in chapter 17 is decked with the things of this world.

Tattoos are not in accordance with the Word of God (Leviticus 19:28) for they deface the temple of God as does body piercing. Tattooing and body piercing are a part of heathen customs and also a part of their spiritualistic/witchcraft practices.

God is looking for a peculiar people who will be ambassadors for Him (2 Corinthians 5:20). An ambassador is a representative of his country and is dressed accordingly. If we are ambassadors for Christ we are representatives for Him and should show this by the way we present ourselves.

The hour of his judgment is come - The reason for the message of "fear God and give glory to Him" is because "the hour of His judgment is come." So we see that God, in His mercy, has given the message of victory over sin, the health message and the message of Christian standards for the purpose of preparing a people to be able to stand during the time of judgment. This shows that one is not judged according to what they profess but according to what they do, according to the character they have formed. There is no need to fear the judgment, for if one is in a faith relationship with their Saviour it will naturally be shown by how they live (James 2:17-18, 26). Faith establishes the law (Romans 3:31) and faith works by love (Galatians 5:6), the two are inseparable.

The judgment spoken of here began in 1844, at the end of the 2,300 day/year prophecy.

This also brings to view the message of Christ our High Priest ministering on our behalf in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

Worship Him that made - The first thing that is interesting to note is that the thrust of the previous chapter, chapter 13, is worship. The last part of the first angels' message is a direct quote from the fourth/Sabbath commandment of the Ten Commandments, which is a call to worship the Creator of all things.

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

Exodus 20:8-11 *"8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*

This message is a call to give your complete obedience and allegiance to the Creator of heaven and earth, of which the Sabbath commandment is the only one in which you show who you are giving this allegiance and obedience to. It is a call to restore the Seventh day Sabbath to its rightful place as part of the Law of God. And it is this Law that is to be written in the believer's heart and mind, as a part of the New Covenant experience (Hebrews 8:10-12; 10:16-17), and have their sins blotted out.

One who does not accept and keep holy the Sabbath day, at the end of this world's history, will not and cannot have the New Covenant experience, thus their sins will not be blotted out and they will be eternally lost. For how can one claim to have the New Covenant experience of having the Law of God written in their heart and mind yet completely oppose and reject the fourth commandment, the Sabbath, contained in this very Law.

So as the world is being called to worship the beast (the Papacy 13) and receive his mark (Sunday sacredness) there will be a faithful remnant who will stand up, in the face of great opposition, and give the Sabbath message, the message of the true worship of God. Even today there is a great movement against this message and against those who proclaim it. This opposition will increase until a death decree will be passed for the extermination of those who persistently desire to honour God by keeping holy His Seventh day Sabbath.

Those who persistently desire to oppose the Sabbath command are actually working in direct opposition to God and His last day message, which is to make ready a people prepared for their Lord, as seen here by the first angels' message. They are promoting the beast powers (the Papacy's) false system of worship and will, if they do not heed the call to come out of her my people (Revelation 18:4), unite with her in opposition to God and His people.

This call to worship the Creator of heaven and earth, etc., also comes at a time when the majority of the world including many in the Christian realm, are embracing some form of evolution. People today would prefer to worship the creature more than the Creator (Romans 1:22-25).

There is a fundamental reason why Satan attacks the message of creation with its Creator God. Throughout the Old and New Testaments you find that the one who has created you is also the one who redeems you (Isaiah 43:1-3; 44:24; 45:11-12, 17-18; John 1:1-3, 12-14; Colossians 1:14-17; Hebrews 1:3). There is an incredibly powerful reason for this fact found in Romans 1...

Romans 1:16,20 *"16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek ... 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"*

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The type of power that saves is found to be that power which created the world. So in setting aside creation and the Creator they are setting aside the very power of the Gospel which redeems them/man from sin. If God is not a God who has the power to instantly create things out of nothing, then He does not have the power to redeem/save.

The first angels' message as being a part of the everlasting gospel message is a message of:

1. Victory over sin, obedience to the Law of God through faith.
2. Contains a message on health.
3. A message dealing with Christian standards.
4. A judgment hour message, living in the time of judgment since 1844.
5. This also involves the work of Christ as our High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary.
6. Seventh day Sabbath, the fourth Commandment.
7. God is the Creator of all things.

Every one of the above points as contained in the first angels' message and is under heavy attack from Satan, and sad to say, the majority of the attack comes from other "Christians".

So we have now looked at the First Angels message where we were called to: Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. We will now move on to the second Angels message, this is a call about Babylon and its fall, we will be looking back at history so that we can see just what was involved in the fall of literal Babylon and how it relates to spiritual Babylon's fall in these last days.

The Second Angels Message

There is just one verse for the second Angels message but this one verse is extremely important...

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

This second angel is declaring across the whole world that Babylon is fallen is fallen, and the reason she has fallen is because she had made all nation drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. A man by the name of Charles Dickens wrote a book entitled The Tale of Two Cities, which deals with the cities of London and Paris during the late seventeen hundreds and talks about the upheaval that was taking place in those two cities.

Now, as you start to study the Bible, particularly as you get into the prophecies you will find a tale of two cities, but these two cities are Jerusalem and Babylon, and you will find that these two cities are contrasted over and over again as you go through the Word of God.

Babylon is not only a real kingdom that existed in ancient times, but it is symbolic of a power that opposes God and His people. It is mentioned in both the first and last books of the Bible. What is Babylon? It symbolizes a counterfeit religion and a doctrine of salvation by works.

Many of the things that happened to literal Babylon the apostle John pulls on and makes the same application as we approach the end of time, this is what we will look at in this study, so it becomes

important that we go back and look at the history of literal Babylon to see what took place as we make the application to what is happening today when it refers to spiritual Babylon.

In the Old Testament we are given a prophetic warning regarding the fall of ancient Babylon:

Jeremiah 51:6 *"Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He will render unto her recompence."*

The first record we have of Babylon is found in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 10:8 *"And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth."*

Here it speaks of Nimrod becoming mighty on the earth and if you would like to do some study in this area, particularly with ancient history then The Two Babylon's by Alexander Hislop will give you lots of the facts of what happened here. Going on in Genesis 10 it says...

Genesis 10:9-10 *"9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."*

Genesis 11:4,9 *"4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth ... 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."*

Here is the first reference we have to Babylon – Babel, you can read about this is Genesis 9 and 10. So, what happened here? Well, after the flood was over and once again the earth became populated, people began to move and live in different places, the animals were no longer tame and were sought after for food, anyone who was a hunter was revered by the people because many of the people feared for their lives because of the wild animals, and so Nimrod was revered among the people because he was a mighty hunter who protected their lives, and the people started to revere him for this.

When he set up these cities, Babal/Babylon being one of them, he began to build walls around the city for protection, and this is one of the reasons that the people began to place him on a pedestal, and they started to consider him as more than human, in fact because of his greatness they began to worship him as a god.

History tells us that he married a woman by the name of Semiramis, and the people now begin to worship Nimrod as the sun god, (you can see more of this in our video The gods of Babylon) to the people this sun god was a great god that always went forward, never backwards, he was the god of conquest. They believed that his wife was a goddess, and they worshiped her as a goddess of fertility. Now when Nimrod died she told the people that her husband had gone back to the sun, and so the people continued in their worship of him as the sun god, this is the beginning of the city of Babylon, and as you read through the scriptures, you will find that Babylon continually, over and over worshiped the sun, it was their god.

Babylon as a city was built, destroyed and built again, but as you come to the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar was really the one that made Babylon into the great city it became, however, it was Nebuchadnezzar who enriched it, lavished it and made it into the city of wonders and wealth that we read about today, but the people of Babylon continued to worship the god of the sun.

The Bible tells us how Nebuchadnezzar captured Israel and carried off captives, among these was one young man by the name of Daniel. This was the beginning of God's efforts to get the city of Babylon to recognise Him as God, effort after effort was made by God to get these people to understand that He was God and to accept Him. One of the first things you read in the book of Daniel is where Nebuchadnezzar has a dream, and in the dream God shows him all the nations and all that will happen; you can read about this in Daniel 2 or watch the video of Daniel and Revelation on our website which will give you all the history and information on this fascinating Bible prophecy.

Now, at the end of the dream and when Daniel has interpreted the dream to King Nebuchadnezzar he says there is no God like Daniel's God, now it does not say that he accepts Daniels God, he just says there is no God like Him. It is not to long after this that Nebuchadnezzar sets up and image on the plains of Dura and decides that the people should come and worship this image, he tells them at the sound of the music they were all to bow down and worship this image and they all did except three young men, three companions of Daniels, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and because they would not bow down or serve any God accept the true God of Heaven they were thrown into the fiery furnace, but instead of burning them up, it just burned the ropes that bound them. And as they walked around in the furnace one other person was seen with them who had the appearance of the Son of God, this is what Nebuchadnezzar said in Daniel chapter 3. After Nebuchadnezzar called them out of the furnace, he said there is no God like the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but, Nebuchadnezzar continues to worship the sun.

No change of heart here. As we come on down in time God now gets very personal with Nebuchadnezzar, and we can read about this in Daniel 4:

Daniel 4:4-5 *"4 I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me."*

Daniel 4:10-12 *"10 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. 11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: 12 The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it."*

So here is this dream of a huge tree, it gives shelter and has food for all, this is a description of Babylon a mighty flourishing kingdom and of Nebuchadnezzar its King.

Daniel 4:13-16 *"13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; 14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: 15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: 16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him."*

Now it says that this tree that is flourishing is to be given the heart of a beast and eat grass with the cattle. Nebuchadnezzar could not comprehend what this dream meant, so he called in Daniel who told him what it meant. Here are his words...

Daniel 4:24-25 *"24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: 25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew*

of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

Now this great King was told that he would eat grass like an oxen until he would wake up and realise that the God of Heaven is the one that rules in the affairs of men.

Daniel 4:27 *"Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."*

Here Daniel says to the King change, repent; don't keep on the way you are going. But sadly, as so often happens when we are shaken we feel we need to do something, we need to change but within a month or two the things that shook us are forgotten, things seem to be ok now everything's normal again and we end up back in the same old rut, this was the case with Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 4:29-31 *"29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? 31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee."*

Words of pride and self-reliance came from the king, but while the words were still in the king's mouth he is told from Heaven that the kingdom had departed from him. That very day his heart was changed into that of a beast and he began to eat grass like an oxen for seven years, until he woke up, and then you find the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar took place. But unfortunately it did not convert the City of Babylon, the City of Babylon continued to worship the sun, and was still opposed to worshiping God. The destruction of Babylon does not take place until the fifth chapter and it is here that you have its fall, under the reign of King Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson.

At the time of the fall of the Babylonian Empire to the Medes and Persians, we are told how Belshazzar and his court defied the true God:

Daniel 5:3,4 *"3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. 4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone."*

Daniel 5:26-31 *"26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. 27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. 29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. 30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. 31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."*

That very night Babylon was destroyed and Belshazzar king of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) was slain and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom. So in the fourth chapter of Daniel you have the fall of Babylon and in the fifth chapter you have the destruction of Babylon.

So when we get to the book of Revelation, in the 14th chapter you have the fall of Babylon, but the destruction of Babylon does not take place until the 18th chapter. Now in the fall of Babylon God gave the people an opportunity to repent and change their ways, over and over God had given them ample

evidence of His power His might and greatness, they could see it but refused to accept it, and it was not until several years later that you have the destruction of Babylon.

The gospel of the kingdom was preached in Babylon through Daniel, and Nebuchadnezzar was brought to acknowledge and to worship by his experience. But after Nebuchadnezzar's death his successors failed to profit by his experience. The climax was reached when Belshazzar used the sacred vessels from the house of God, dedicated to His worship, in which to drink the Babylonian wine of idolatrous worship. Then came the handwriting on the wall, the fall of ancient Babylon, and the death of Belshazzar.

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

Please notice here that this angel is not saying Babylon is going to fall, it says it has fallen. It's not a case of maybe she will change - Babylon has now fallen. When it says that Babylon has fallen, this means that she has fallen in the eyes of God, not in the eyes of man, because we see that she leads them contrary to God, in a different direction altogether.

Who is Babylon? It's vital that we establish who Babylon is because this will help us to see the whole picture. In Revelation 13 it says...

Revelation 13:1,4 *"1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy ... 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?*

Revelation 17:5 *"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*

This must be a world-wide power, because it says she has made all nations drink, so it has influence over the whole world. Now notice how Babylon had caused the whole earth to become...

Jeremiah 51:7 *"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."*

"Through the centuries the astrological beliefs of the Chaldeans of Babylon eventually penetrated as far as India, China, and Indo-China, where divination by means of the stars is still practised...In the opposite direction they spread to Syria, to Egypt, and over the whole Roman world." **Franz Cumont, Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans**

When studying the scriptures there are two cups, the cup of the Lord and the cup of Babylon. The Lord's cup contains the living truth "as the truth is in Jesus"; the cup of Babylon is her false doctrines - her human tradition substituted for the living word and law of God, and her unlawful union with the secular power, upon which she depends to enforce her teachings rather than upon the power of God. Thus, while maintaining a form of godliness, she denies the power thereof.

2 Timothy 3:5 *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."*

The Roman Church says of the Bible and tradition:

"Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of equal sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still, of the two, TRADITION is to us more clear and safe." (emphasis supplied) ***Catholic Belief, p. 45, 1884***

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

Now without question the Papal power has world-wide power and the world has and is following her.

Notice how Babylon's daughters reveal their mother's characteristics:

Revelation 17:5 *"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*

The authoritative Creed of Pope Pius IV says:

"I acknowledge the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church for the mother and mistress of all churches." When professed Protestant churches repudiate the fundamental principle of Protestantism by accepting human speculation, tradition, or political power, in place of the authority and power of God's word, they may be regarded as daughters of Babylon. Their fall is then included in hers, and calls for a proclamation of the fall of modern Babylon." ***Creed of Pope Pius IV, Article 10***

Babylon of old was steeped in paganism, right from the tower of Babel built by Nimrod, on down to Nebuchadnezzar, through to Pagan Rome and on into Papal Rome.

Even the Catholic Church acknowledges the association between Babylon and Rome:

"'Babylon', from which Peter addresses his first Epistle, is understood by learned annotators, Protestant and Catholic, to refer to Rome - the word Babylon being symbolic of the corruption then prevailing in the city of the Caesars." ***The Faith of Our Fathers IX. The Primacy of Peter***

It talks about the false prophet which is the United States/Protestantism, which is a political secular power. The Dragon/Satan represented Pagan Rome, and the beast which represent Papal Rome, these all constitute the agencies of Satan and we will see the influence of Pagan Rome here, these things all fit together.

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

So these go contrary to the word of God, they are opposed to His word and His people.

Revelation 16:14 *"For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

These three are the political backbone of this union. Churches do not have political power, and anytime you find a church persecuting you will always find that she uses a political power to do that. So there needs to be a political power involved.

Revelation 19:20 *"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."*

So you have the beast, you have the false prophet and you have the dragon.

Revelation 16:19 *"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nation's fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."*

So here Babylon is divided into three parts, and those three parts that we have just looked at is that of Papal Rome, the false prophet and the dragon, and we will see how this all comes together, because this is a confederacy of false beliefs that make up Babylon.

Revelation 14:8 *"... because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."*

She made – this means ENFORCEMENT, and to make someone do something you have to have the arm of the state to do that. And so here we see that she is going to make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Now the dragon, the false prophet and the beast, how does this become a confederacy of false belief? Simply this way. Out of the dragon you have Paganism, out of the false prophet you have Protestantism, and out of the beast/Papal Rome you have Catholicism, taking all three of these things and putting them all together. And this is what the scriptures refer to as Babylon.

Babel just means confusion, taking these three, bringing them together and when they come together God refers to them as Babylon.

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

You see it's the enforcement of this that brings about what scripture refers to as The Mark of the Beast:

Revelation 14:8 *"... because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."*

False beliefs – made up from Paganism, Protestantism, and Catholicism, and in the last days this will figure in the overall scheme of things in a very prominent way. Now when we read about the collapse of Babylon, Babylon was doing very, but it's in the eyes of God that she falls, not in the eyes of men, so to the outward appearance she is financially stable and all things look to be good, until she collapses.

When she collapses then it doesn't go well at all. And as you watch things you will see this whole process take place. But it's these false beliefs that we have to take note of.

Revelation 17:2 *"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*

Have been made drunk - Can you reason with a drunk man? No, you can't, and these people are drunk with the wine of the wrath of this woman, these false beliefs, so to get them to reason from the word of God is almost out of the question, they can't understand because they're drunk.

So we have Paganism, Protestantism and Catholicism. Now if you have these three, which are all religious beliefs, and we have seen that they will all come together, what do they have in common, what do they believe that could unite and form a system of false beliefs? Well, they all have Sunday worship, along with the trinity, which came from Babylon, Paganism, their worship of the sun god. This was handed to Catholicism, and Catholicism took Sunday as a belief and a day of worship and bequeathed it to Protestantism as a sacred legacy, and so today you have all three worshiping on Sunday, this is one point they can unite on. Also to belong to the World Council of Churches you must hold to the doctrine of the trinity.

Another thing they believed was the immortality of the soul, and again this comes directly from Pagansim. Greek mythology taught that the body was the prison house of the soul and that when a person died the soul was set free. This is how the ancient Spartans chose their soldiers - when a baby boy was born they would take him on top of a mountain and lay him on a shield and leave him for 24 hours and if he survived he became a Spartan soldier.

This was their belief and this was given to Catholicism, and Catholicism handed it to Protestantism, and they all hold to the immortality of the soul as a belief. So here is another point on which they can unite.

Revelation 17:5 "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

This is talking about Babylon and those who follow her beliefs as her daughters. But God has given us warnings and tells us to come out of her...

Revelation 18:4 *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*

You see Babylon has fallen, but God says there are people in Babylon that are His people and that He is calling out, we are not to be part of that system, we are not to receive of her sins and what she has done. And so you and I must be faithful to God's word and stand solidly upon His word and make sure that what we believe we stand by and not be willing to be swayed by the conditions and the things that are taking place.

The Third Angels Message

Now onto the third Angels message, and it is vital that we understand this because it carries in it tremendous consequences.

Revelation 14:9-13 *"9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead*

which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

These verses **clearly tell us what the mark of the beast is and how not to receive it**. These verses also have finality to them that this whole thing is coming to an end. Verse 13 tells us blessed are the dead in the Lord they shall escape all these things that will come upon the earth as the mark of the beast is enforced, because we read in the 13th chapter:

Revelation 13:16-17 *"16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."*

So these are the words of scripture showing what will happen right down at the close of time, and each one of us will be called upon to make a choice, we can only sit on the fence for so long, but the time is coming when each one of us can sit on the fence no longer, and a decision will have to be made, will you follow the Lamb, or, will you follow the beast? Now we will be between a rock and a hard place because all those who decided to follow the Lamb will receive the wrath of the beast...

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

This is very clear regarding the beast and the power involved with him, we will need to be clear on where we stand because it clearly tells us...

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

So this is a serious thing, because if we decide that we are going to follow the Lord come what may then we must understand that we will receive the wrath of the beast.

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

Now if we say we are going to go along with the beast and the majority and follow what the majority of the world will do at that time thinking it is really not that important, then we will receive the wrath of God, because it tells us the time has come where we have to say we are on one side or the other and make a commitment, we have to be serious about what we are doing. If we walk with the Lord we will not receive the mark of the beast, if we follow the beast then we receive the wrath of God.

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

Or the wrath of God is complete.

Revelation 16:1-2 *"1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."*

So if you decide to go along with the majority at that time then you must prepare yourself because you will receive the wrath of God which is the seven last plagues and no eternal life, you will be between a rock and a hard place. But if we like David believe that the Lord is merciful and will care for

us then we need to put our trust and faith in Him, because one thing is an absolute certainty, the beast won't look after you.

So who is involved in the mark of the beast, who are the players in this?

Revelation 16:13-14 *"13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

Here it speaks of these spirits of demons like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon the beast and the false prophet and these have gone out to the world to lead them to the great battle of God Almighty.

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

Now we found out that when it speaks of the dragon this is Satan and Satan has given his power and authority to Papal Rome.

Revelation 19:20 *"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."*

Papal Rome and Protestantism are going to be foremost in bringing about the mark of the beast; they will also be foremost along with Satan in being cast into the lake of fire.

These three make up what the scriptures refer to as Babylon, and it is this part that takes the false teachings and uses them to lead the people to accept certain things that the world goes along with.

There is one more part that is involved and that is what is found in Revelation 17 because it says...

Revelation 17:12 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."*

We will be looking at these ten kings later, to see how these all fit into it, but it says...

Revelation 17:13 "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."

So we see that there are four players that are involved, we had the dragon the beast and the false prophet and we also have the 10 kings and these 10 kings represent the nations of Western Europe which we will examine in more detail later. But these are the powers that will bring about and enforce the mark of the beast.

What is this mark? Well the scripture tells us:

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

So this makes it very clear that the mark is placed in the forehead or on the hand. This does not mean that somebody will come along and brand you, physically putting a mark on you, it does not mean inserting a chip into you, it does not mean that.

When it says that the mark of the beast will be received in the forehead, in the scriptures the forehead represents intelligence, the place where we give mental assent to something, where we accept and believe things, where we decide (or not) to go along with the teachings that these spiritual powers are putting out, that they made the world drunk with through the wine of her fornication.

Revelation 17:2 *"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*

That's her false teachings and this is where we have to decide if we go along with or turn aside from. And that is how you receive this mark in your forehead.

The frontal lobe is one of the four major divisions of the cerebral cortex. This part of the brain regulates decision making, problem solving, control of purposeful behaviours, consciousness and behaviours.

It says repeatedly through the five books of Moses, "in the hand" and "in the forehead". It talks about the Covenant being in the hand and in the forehead – and it was always symbolic 100% of the time – so if we're going to be consistent in interpreting the Bible when we get to Revelation, which is a compilation of all the Books of the Bible, you can't now change the rules and say it's a literal stamp in the forehead or in the hand. Because keep in mind, it also says that God's people have the Seal of God and their Father's Name in their forehead. So, obviously "in the forehead" means in the mind, the thoughts "in the hand" means in the actions. That's a very clear Bible principle.

Now if we say well I don't believe in either one, and just think we can sit on the fence, we can't do that because the hand represents co-operation, something we give our hand to, willing to co-operate and go along with - if we do this we will receive the mark of the beast.

Now in contrast to the mark of the beast we have the Seal of God, and when we read in scripture we will find that the Seal of God is never placed in the hand, it's always in the forehead. In other words we have to be willing to say; yes Lord I accept this, this is what I believe.

When looking at the mark of the beast the scriptures define this clearly, they also show how not to receive it. We are going to read Revelation 14:9-11 and when we have read that there will be a question we will need to answer.

Revelation 14:9-11 *"9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."*

Now these three verses, do they talk about the people that receive the mark of the beast? Yes, it clearly shows this. Now verse 12...

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

Do these people receive the mark of the beast? No. Why don't they receive the mark of the beast? Because they keep the Commandments of God and keep the faith of Jesus. So, if we keep God's Commandments and have faith in Jesus, we will not receive the mark of the beast, that is clear. Therefore the mark of the beast must affect the Commandments of God and the faith in Jesus Christ. This is a logical conclusion, and therefore the mark of the beast has to affect two things...

1. The Commandments of God
2. Faith in Jesus Christ

What does God say about keeping His Commandments?

John 14:15 *"If ye love Me, keep my commandments."*

The scripture if very clear on this, there is text after text after text where God makes it very clear that He wants us to keep His Commandments.

John 14:21 *"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."*

So if you want to love God and want Him to manifest Himself in you then we need to keep His Commandments. Now, has anything been done that affects the Commandments of God and our keeping them?

"The church, after changing the day of rest from the Jewish Sabbath of the seventh day of the week to the first, made the Third Commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord's Day." ***The Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol.4. p.153***

A change was made. They took the Commandments of God, they took the second one out and moved them all up so that the forth Commandment became the third Commandment, and they changed the third Commandment from the Seventh Day Sabbath to the first day of the week, and they say they had the right to do this. This is a statement made by a priest from St Catherine's Church:

"Perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the Church ever did, happened in the first century. The holy day, the Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday not from any direction noted in the Scriptures, but from the Church's sense of its own power...People who think the Scripture should be the sole authority, should logically become Seventh-Day Adventist, and keep Saturday holy." ***Saint Catherine, May 21, 1995. Catholic Church Sentinel.***

He says if you are going to build your faith on the word of God then you should keep the Sabbath day holy and not the first day of the week, there is no foundation or basis to keep any other day than the one the Lord sanctified and hallowed, the seventh-day Sabbath.

"Sunday is our mark of authority...The church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact." ***Catholic Record, Sept 1, 1923***

They say they have the right to make that change, but God says differently.

Deuteronomy 4:2 *"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."*

Revelation 22:14 *"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city."*

But...

Revelation 22:18-19 *"18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

When anyone confesses to be of Jesus Christ, but then adds or takes away from God's Holy, Inspired Word, this person, whether minister or member, perverts, corrupts and adulterates the understanding and wisdom of Christ's Word! This is a serious sin against God, His Word, His Commandments, and His purpose for man, and a sin that will have to be paid with one's life.

We need to stand on the word of God alone, we have seen that this apostate system has changed the Commandments of God along with many other things in God's word. But it says...

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

Romans 1:17 *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."*

You and I as followers of Jesus must walk by faith, and sometimes we find this hard, but we must day by day learn to walk by faith to trust completely in God's word.

Philippians 3:9 *"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"*

So by faith we must reach out and claim the righteousness of Jesus to cover our lives. This is what the reformers preached and believed, and this is what the word of God teaches that it's the righteousness of Jesus Christ that counts not our own but His and we must accept that righteousness He gives to us by faith, salvation comes no other way, only His righteousness meets the demands of the law. As the song says...

Jesus take me as I am
I can come no other way
Take me deeper into You
Make my flesh life melt away
Make me like a precious stone
Crystal clear and finely honed
Life of Jesus shining through
Giving glory back to You

"the Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apostolic...outside of her there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins...Furthermore...it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff." ***Pope Boniface VIII - Unam Sanctam***

So here he says salvation is not by Jesus, not by what He did, but by belonging to the Catholic Church. That is not righteousness by faith, how do they feel about righteousness by faith?

"If anyone shall say that by faith alone the sinner is justified, so as to understand that nothing else is required to cooperate in the attainment of the grace of justification, and that it is in no way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be an anathema." ***Council of Trent***

This is basically saying that if you believe by faith that the sinner is justified through Jesus then let him go to hell. This is saying that salvation does not come through faith, and now you have them moving exactly as the scriptures said they would on the Commandments of God and faith in Jesus Christ.

Why is this so important in what we do, well it's because it deals with the question of worship.

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

So do I worship God or do I accept the changes in God's word and give the beast power, the false prophet and the dragon the right to do that?

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

These people, God's people say; no, I stand on the word of God and what it has to say.

Hebrews 11:8 *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."*

By faith Abraham followed God's direction and took his family not knowing where he was going. God says to us, here is My word follow me, and sometimes it may lead us to where we do not know where we are going, but we have to walk by faith and believe and say yes Lord I will walk with you by faith.

James 2:23 *"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."*

Maybe we think we are to bad and there is no hope for us, our sins are to dark, but you see it's not based on that, it's not based on us but on the righteousness of Jesus, and if we reach out by faith to take hold of this it is accounted to us as righteousness, and the only thing God asks of us is that we follow Him, keep His Commandments and walk with Him, and therefore, His righteousness is given to us, this is righteousness by faith, and God over and over again in His word has totally rejected righteousness by works, starting way back with Cain in Genesis.

You see faith is accepting what God says, reading His word and accepting what it says, saying; yes Lord. It may be hard, we may not fully understand it all, but we must believe in His word and follow Him, keeping what it has to say.

Sunday-keeping is righteousness by works, not by faith, because there is not one place in the Bible that teaches Sunday as the day of worship. That is totally built on the word of the beast, and God will not accept that.

How do we keep from receiving the mark?

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

We get victory by following the Lord, by committing our life to the Lord, let Him handle our lives and give us guidance and direction. And if you and I will commit our lives to the Lord He will handle the circumstances, we just have to make the commitment and be willing.

Revelation 14:12-13 *"12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."*

These people keep the Commandments of God and so do not receive the mark of the beast.

But what about those who do not keep Gods Commandments, when will these receive the mark of the beast?

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

The he there refers to the false prophet, because it is the false prophet that causes the world to make an image to the beast, and if you do not want to go along with that then you will receive his wrath. You will always find that when referring to the beast or beast power it is always referred to as he, when it uses he it is always talking about a civil power. And when it talks about she it is talking about the religious aspect of it.

So here we find in Revelation 13:15 that it is talking about a civil power that will enforce this.

Revelation 13:16-17 *"16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."*

In other words when they enforce Sunday Legislation and people go along with it that is how a person will receive the mark of the beast, that's when it takes place, people do not have it at present.

"The civil authorities should be urged to cooperate with the church in maintaining and strengthening this public worship of God, and to support with their own authority the regulation set down by the church's pastor: For it is only in this way that the faithful will understand why it is Sunday and not the Sabbath day that we keep holy." ***Roman Catechism, 1985***

Here is another quote:

"In respecting religious liberty and the common good of all, Christians should seek recognition of Sundays and the Church's holy days as legal holidays. It is time that we demonstrate our Catholic vitality and engage in the public policy debate. We have the power and the people to embark on this movement – a movement that will benefit all Americans." ***Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 2188, 1994 Edition***

In other words they are saying, all people should keep our laws, laws that the church makes, these should be enforced and we want the state to enforce them. So how will it be implemented?

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

Here it tells us, if you don't go along with them then they will boycott you. Well you cannot boycott people so long as they have money, because if you have money, what you can't get at the front of the store you can get at the back. But we are living in an age where money is quickly disappearing, why, because of the internet, and because of the internet to day we have what is called cyber money, which means we can go on the internet and buy things worldwide simply by using cyber money. We are moving more and more towards that and this way we could then be boycotted, because all they have to do is say don't accept that persons number and you have been boycotted.

Economic sanctions are being used right now to control buying and selling for countries that don't cooperate. That's one thing that we're seeing that we've never seen before. All the nations getting together and forcing other nations that don't comply through economic sanctions – they can't buy or sell unless they cooperate.

Those sanctions are going to be used on nations that do not worship the beast. And individually, we may end up with some sort of a super card where if you're not worshipping the way and the day they tell you, you can't buy or sell.

This would be the way we imagine they will implement the whole thing. And this is where we are today.

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

This is where we stand at this point. The next thing in the 14th Chapter of Revelation is this...

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

This is the coming of Jesus, we are almost there, almost home, we need to stay focused and build our trust and our relationship with the Lord so that we may receive the Seal of God and not the Mark of the Beast.

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

Another angel - That is, in addition to the three who delivered the messages of warning in verses 6-9, before the second coming of Christ.

The temple has earlier been introduced into the prophetic picture (Revelation 11:1-2, 19). It will be noticed that John frequently alludes to items introduced in earlier visions. The setting remains largely the same. For example, the four "beasts" introduced in Revelation 4:6 appear repeatedly in subsequent visions (Revelation 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4).

The harvest in verses 15-20 describes the great harvest at the end of all things. The harvest comprehends two distinctive events. One is described in verse 16-17 and the other in verses 18-20. The first refers to the gathering of the righteous, represented here by ripened grain as shown in the Greek by the word translated "ripe." The second refers to the wicked, represented by the clusters of "fully ripe" grapes.

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

The earth was reaped. This represents the gathering of the righteous (Matthew 13:30; Luke 3:17).

Revelation 14:17-18 *"17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe."*

This angel has power over fire and the final destruction.

Clusters of the vine - The figure of the two harvests is borrowed from the ancient Palestinian agricultural year, which consisted of two main harvests. The grain harvest and the vintage. Here the vintage represents the wicked gathered for destruction.

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

Winepress - The figure is suitable with reference to the colour of the wine, which resembles blood. The figure is probably drawn from Isaiah 63:1-6.

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

The wine press in days of old was trodden by the feet of men (Isaiah 63:2-3).

Without the city - The picture is probably drawn from Old Testament prophecies describing the destruction of God's enemies outside Jerusalem (Joel 3:12-13).

Horse bridles - A figure of speech indicating the great and complete slaughter of the wicked hosts.

Furlongs - Sixteen hundred furlongs would be about 321.8 kilometres or 200 miles. No satisfactory explanation can be found for the particular number 1,600. Jerome thought it to be an allusion to the length of Palestine. This is speculation however and adds little to the understanding of the passage.

The main thought is that the enemies of the church of God are to be completely and finally overthrown. Therefore the church can look forward to full and complete deliverance from all her enemies and joyful triumph in the kingdom of God.

Revelation - Chapter 15

The Seven Last Plagues

The 12th and 13th chapters of Revelation portray the anger of the nations toward God's people. The 14th chapter portrays God's final warning message to the nations, embodied in the messages of the three angels. The 15th and 16th chapters portray the execution of God's divine wrath.

The 15th chapter basically sets the background for the 16th chapter.

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

Here John sees seven angels, each having a bowl, and in the bowls is contained the wrath of God, and it says that with these the wrath of God is complete. So the bowls represent the plagues that are about to be poured out.

Now we need to understand that the 7 last plagues are poured out only on the wicked. The righteous do not receive these plagues.

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

These are God's people that have been redeemed from this earth. These are the people who responded and accepted the message of warning mentioned in chapter 14. They have been saved from the world of trouble and are now secure in the kingdom of God. The victory was obtained by the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 12:11) They stood loyal to God even when the death penalty was pronounced. (Revelation 13:15) Now they stand safe on the sea of glass. The victory is complete and their struggle is over. They overcame and now in the heavenly kingdom they sing the anthem of victory.

Psalm 91:9-10 *"9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."*

So God promises to those who walk with Him and follow Him that no plague will come near your dwelling. It does not mean that we will not see these plagues, but it does mean that they are not going to fall on us.

Revelation 18:4 *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*

This makes it clear that these plagues do not fall on the righteous; they fall only on the wicked, on those who do not follow God and that are opposed to God.

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

This is no doubt a reference to the song of deliverance after Israel crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-21). That song celebrated the deliverance from Egyptian oppression. And the new song, deliverance from the tyranny of "Babylon the great":

Revelation 17:5 *"And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth."*

Servant of God - Compare Joshua 14:7, where Moses is designated "the servant of the Lord":

Joshua 14:7 *"Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart."*

And Exodus 14:31 where he is called "His [the Lord's] servant":

Exodus 14:31 *"And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses."*

Of the Lamb - The deliverance of the saints was wrought by Christ the Lamb of God and it is natural that He should be adored and exalted in the song of deliverance.

Great and marvelous are your works - There are many allusions to Old Testament phraseology in this song. The marvelous works of God are extolled in Psalms 139:14; Psalms 111:2, 4. There may be a specific reference here to the "works" of God in the seven last plagues. The "sign" delineating these plagues is described as "great and marvelous" (Revelation 15:1).

Just and true are your ways - or, "righteous and genuine." Compare Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 145:17; Revelation 16:7; 19:2.

King of saints - This reading fits the thought of Revelation 15:4 where the prediction is made that all nations shall come and worship before God.

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

Who shall not fear thee - Compare Jeremiah 10:7:

Jeremiah 10:7 *"Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee."*

The message of the first angel in chapter 14 was, "Fear God, and give glory to him." The saints had heeded this appeal, and now that their pilgrimage is over they join in this wonderful ascription of praise to the glory of God. Compare the cry of the worshipers of the beast, "Who is like unto the beast?"

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

Glorify thy name:

Psalms 86:9 *"All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name."*

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

The purpose of a testimony is to glorify God in Christ.

Acts 7:44 *"Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen."*

Numbers 9:15 *"And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning."*

Here the latter meaning probably applies. The wilderness tabernacle was a type of "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man".

Hebrews 8:2 *"A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."*

Testimony in heaven was opened. It's very important that we understand what is being referring to here.

Exodus 32:15 *"And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written."*

Moses here has the two tablets of stone, called the testimony, and on these is written the law, the Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God.

Exodus 32:16 *"And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables."*

Now when it talks about the temple being open, and the tabernacle of the testimony, it's talking about the law of God, and John could see the law of God open in heaven.

Exodus 25:16 *"And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee."*

God told Moses to take the testimony, the law, and put it in the Ark of the Covenant.

Exodus 25:22 *"And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."*

So the law is placed inside the ark, and the ark is inside the tabernacle or temple, and it says this was open.

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

Now this is not talking about the temple on earth, it's talking about the one in heaven, and it is open. This is at the time that the 7 last plagues are poured out, the temple in heaven is open and the ark is seen there, because the ark which contains the law is the basis of God's judgment. You see there is no such thing as violating God's law without there being punishment. The people who receive the plagues have gone absolutely contrary to God's law, they have refused to walk in the light of God's law and so therefore they receive the 7 last plagues.

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

So the people who keep God's commandments, who follow Him and are obedient to Him, do not receive the 7 last plagues.

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

Clothed in pure and white linen - White garments are the typical attire of celestial beings, and symbolise purity and righteousness. See Matthew 28:3; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10; Acts 10:30.

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

These four beasts are before the throne of God (Revelation 4:6-8).

Now let's take a look at these 7 last plagues. These plagues are poured out after probation has closed.

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

No man was able to enter the temple - Literally "no one." This no doubt means that the time for intercession is past and no one can enter and have access to the mercy seat. The time of preparation is over and now is the time for the pouring out of the unmingled wrath of God.

This tells us that the service in the temple has come to an end. Christ has left the sanctuary. He is no longer there, interceding on behalf of mankind. He has left the temple. The words have been spoken...

Revelation 22:11 *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."*

And now therefore the plagues take place, probation has closed. As we saw in our last study, the wicked show no repentance or change of heart, their cup of iniquity is full, and so because it's full, God pours out His wrath.

Revelation - Chapter 16

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

Here we see 7 angels pouring out the wrath of God on the earth.

Go your ways - Although John does not specify the moment for giving this fearful command, the context makes evident that it will be issued soon after the close of probation but prior to the coming of Christ.

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

Obviously the series of calamities foretold here is still future.

Because the first plague is poured out upon men who have received the mark of the beast and who worship its image, this places the plagues after the image of the beast has been established and the mark enforced (Revelation 13:14-17), and also after the proclamation of the third angel, which warns against the beast and its mark (Revelation 14:9-11). And since the seven last plagues constitute the fullness of God's divine wrath (Revelation 14:10; 15:1; 16:1), this clearly implies that the probation of those upon whom they fall has closed (Revelation 22:11).

Since at the time of the fifth plague men are still suffering from the sores of the first plague (verse 11), this implies that the plagues are poured out successively and in a comparatively short period of time. It also appears that the judgment of mystical Babylon, which takes place under the seventh plague (verse 19), precedes the kings of the earth at the appearance of Christ.

Pouring out the vials - To afflict the earth with the calamities figuratively represented by the seven bowls testifies to the authority and power of God. Both result in the defeat of men who chose to defy God, and thus in the deliverance of His people from a situation that would otherwise be without remedy. Both demonstrate the justice of God and bring glory and honor to His name.

The ten plagues upon Egypt were literally painful and each was designed to demonstrate how false the claims of their gods were, and how futile their reliance was upon false religion (Exodus 7:17; Exodus 12:12). In a similar way the seven last plagues will be literal, yet each will strike a blow at some aspect of apostate religion and have symbolic overtones. For instance, it is obvious that the first angel did not pour a literal chemical from a literal bowl upon men who had received a literal mark inflicted by a literal beast. But the angel himself is probably literal and the men upon whom his vial falls are certainly literal men, and their sufferings equally literal. The symbolic significance of the third plague is clearly pointed out in Revelation 16:5-6.

Revelation 16:5-6 *"5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."*

The Wrath of God

2 Kings 13:3 *"And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all their days."*

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

It may be asked why God would torment men in the fearful manner described in Revelation chapter 16 after the close of human probation when there will be no opportunity for repentance. Why doesn't Christ come and end the reign of sin immediately?

In Old Testament times various calamities, such as invasion, famine, pestilence, earthquake and other natural disasters were often permitted by God as remedial, disciplinary agencies to bring men to repentance (see Isaiah 1:5-9; 9:13; 10:5-6; 26:9; Jeremiah 2:30; 5:3; Hosea 7:10; Joel 1:4; 2:12-14; Amos 4:6-11; Haggai 1:5-11; 1 Samuel 16:14; 2 Chronicles 18:18).

Obviously the seven last plagues can serve no such purpose. However, there can be no doubt that the plagues do serve a necessary function in the outworking of the plan of Heaven.

It may be noted that the first four or five plagues are in a sense a preliminary nature and lead men to realize that they have been fighting against God. But instead of repenting they curse Him more bitterly than ever and become even more resolute in their opposition (Revelation 16:9, 11, 21).

So the plagues serve to reveal the spirit of rebellion which controls their hearts. The tares as it were are proved to be tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43), and God's justice in destroying them is made evident.

Being prepared to die for another is the ultimate act of love. (John 15:13) And so the intent to take another's life marks the ultimate degree of hatred. During the last two plagues a situation develops that makes this distinction apparent. The justice of God in ending human history is made evident to men as well as angels (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10; Revelation 16:13-14, 16-17).

It will be demonstrated before the universe that the remnant people would rather die than disobey God, and that those who have chosen the service of Satan would if possible slay all who stand in the way of their purpose to control the earth. Caught in the very act of attempting to execute the death decree, they will stand without excuse before God.

So the line is clearly drawn between those who serve God and those who don't, and through the unconverted Satan is permitted to demonstrate what the universe would be like if he was allowed to control it.

It is interesting to note that of the 10 plagues in Egypt the first three were also suffered by the Israelites but the last 7 were only upon the Egyptians.

The plagues fell on Egypt just before the Children of Israel were liberated from their slavery. The plagues are going to fall on this wicked world just before Spiritual Israel, God’s people, are liberated from the world that is in bondage to sin. And so, just before the second coming, there will be a period and I believe based on some things in Revelation and Daniel, that the period of the plagues will all fit within one year, because when you look at the severity of these things, how long can the world can go on with the fresh water supply being blood, or the oceans being blood, most of the population of the world lives either by rivers or oceans, also men being scorched with great heat.

Also, when we look at the time span of the plagues that fell on Job, it was just a matter of weeks when you read the context.

And how long did the plagues last that fell on Egypt? Again, it was the matter of a couple months, and so for these reasons, based on those stories, the plagues will probably fall just with a few months. And it says in Revelation, "All of her plagues come within one day", and a day in prophecy is a year, therefore it looks like within a year it all happens.

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

So the first angel pours out his vial or bowl on the earth, (The numerical assignment of each angel demonstrates that the plagues are successive) and those who have received the mark of the beast and worshiped the image to the beast etc. received loathsome sores. These are no ordinary sores; they are extremely painful, so painful that the scripture says the people gnawed their tongues because of the pain.

In the LXX Septuagint the Greek word for "sore" is described as boils that came upon the Egyptians (Exodus 9:9-10), a "botch" that could not be healed (Deuteronomy 28:27), and of the boils that came upon Job (Job 2:7). Against this "sore" the boasted miracle working power of the spirits now working with apostate Christianity (Revelation 13:13-14; 18:2; 19:20) prove useless. The false claims that men have based on miracle working power is demonstrated in a way that they cannot deny.

Exodus 8:19 *"Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said."*

This is the first installment of "the wrath of God" it falls upon those who have failed to heed either the third angel's message, which warned them against worshipping "the beast and his image" (Revelation 14:9), or God's final call to come out of mystical Babylon (Revelation 18:1-4).

Revelation 16:3-5 *"3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. 4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus."*

The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea - Under the third plague the "rivers and fountains of waters" are affected in a similar fashion. The sea is primarily for international commerce and travel. It has been suggested that by the obstruction of international travel and trade, (Revelation 13:13-17; 16:13, 14; 17:3, 12) this plague demonstrates God's displeasure with respect to Satan's plan to bind the nations of earth together under his control. Compare Balaam's experience (Numbers 22:21-35).

Became as the blood of a dead man - In consistency, odor and color but not necessarily in composition, however, nothing more offensive can be imagined than the coagulated blood of a dead man, every living thing, animal life as well as human life.

To place all this in context, it is a medical fact that great care is required while conducting autopsies because the blood of a dead person can be toxic. When we contemplate the vast amount of life in the oceans we can understand what a horrendous calamity this will prove to be. Dead sea-life by the multiplied billions will be washed ashore; layer upon layer will lie along the coasts and clog the estuaries. Not only will the harbors, river mouths and beaches be choked with rotting sea life, but the overpowering stench will pollute the air for kilometers and make breathing a misery.

An example of such an occurrence has occurred on a small local scale off the coast of Florida, as reported by the United States Admiralty and published by Australian Associated Press (AAP):

"The reappearance of a 'red tide', which experts say is caused by tiny sea organisms known as 'gymnodinium', has been reported by commercial fishermen in waters off the Gulf coast. Dead deep-sea fish are stated to be strewn along the beaches. One fisherman is reported to have been rendered unconscious by fumes given off by the organisms..." ***'Red Tide' Reappears FORT MEYERS (Florida), Tuesday (Australian Associated Press)***

Rivers and fountains of waters - In Bible times "rivers and fountains of waters" were primarily useful for everyday requirements such as drinking, bathing and irrigation. Where the second plague would no doubt result in a great inconvenience and perhaps interruption of travel, the effects of the third would be immediate and serious. Compare the first plague on Egypt:

Exodus 7:17,19 *"17 Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. ... 19 And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone."*

However, God is declared righteous and just in pouring out the plagues because the people receiving them have been in opposition to the law of God.

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

They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, they have poured out literally. This no doubt includes the unshed blood of the living saints who have been marked for martyrdom. By condemning the people of God to death, the wicked have incurred the guilt for their blood as if it had already been shed.

Matthew 23:35 *"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."*

The punishment is appropriate for the crime. Here the wicked are given blood to drink because they killed God's people, they made war on the righteous and deserve the punishment now given to them. It is in no sense an arbitrary act on the part of God.

The result of the third plague is that all the activities for which we use water will be impossible. All potable water will be red and repulsive and the natural reaction of the population will be to refuse to drink it. However the fourth plague will compel them to drink.

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

Now the 2nd and 3rd plagues are an answer to the prayer of the saints who were under the alter, which we saw before when we studied the 7 seals.

Revelation 6:9-10 *"9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a*

loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

This is talking about all those who were martyred for the cause of God and it says that their blood, like the blood of Able, cries out for justice, saying; how long oh Lord? When are you going to judge?

And so the second and third plagues are an answer to that prayer, saying; you are just, O Lord, in pouring out these plagues on the unrighteous.

True and righteous - Or true and just (Revelation 1:5; 3:7; 6:10; 15:3). In visiting these terrible judgments upon those who have rejected divine mercy God is true in the sense that He is true to His word. He is carrying out what He had promised to do (Revelation 14:9-11 etc.). He is righteous or just in the sense that justice demands punishment to those who have defied Heaven.

Revelation 16:8-9 *"8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."*

So the 4th plague is poured out on the sun, and the sun becomes extremely hot, so hot that it scorches men.

The first three plagues are poured out into the earth, the sea, and the fountains and rivers of waters respectively. The next three are poured out upon the sun, the beast's throne and the river Euphrates respectively.

Scorch men with fire - Or burn men with fire. The wicked understand who is pouring out the plagues, they blaspheme God for what He is doing, they know He is the one doing it, but they refuse to repent, and so the sun scorches people.

Normally the sun warms and cheers men and controls plant growth, climate and many other processes necessary to maintain life. Now it sends forth an excess of warmth and energy that torments men and destroys life. Though men suffer directly from this intense heat, its worst results are no doubt severe drought and famine.

It is also possible at this time that the sources of power will be inoperative and refrigeration and air conditioning unavailable. The natural and desperate response of the population will be a need for fluids to quell a raging thirst. However, regardless of the nature of the form of the liquid available, it will be blood-red, foul-smelling and repulsive. Yet because of the unrelenting, inescapable heat, people will be compelled to drink.

At this present time we can resort to the beach for relief from the heat of scorching summer weather, however, near the close of history the shorelines of all continents and islands will be heaped with vast masses of rotting flesh and the accompanying stench of decay. To add to their torment forest fires will add to the heat and prevent people seeking coolness in the shade of the outdoors.

Joel 1:15-20 *"... the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty ... fire has devoured the open pastures ... the water brooks are dried up ..."*

No doubt this plague will destroy the food supplies of the world. Crops will fail resulting in a famine which will afflict the world as never before.

Amos 8:3 *"The wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence. There shall be many dead bodies in every place, they shall cast them forth with silence."*

The literal plague is also accompanied by a famine for God's Word (Amos 8:11-12). Throughout the land there is a vain quest for easing the suffering from the first four plagues and averting further calamities. But it is not motivated by godly sorrow, but by sorrow of the world (2 Corinthians 7:9-11). The objective is to escape the misery of the plagues and not to enter into a genuine state of reconciliation with God. And so Satan convinces the inhabitants of the earth that they are not sinners and that they have made a mistake in tolerating God's chosen people, if they take care of them it will take care of the plagues also.

Romans 1:21 *"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."*

The wicked refuse to accept God, they refuse to follow Him, they refuse to do His will, they go contrary to the will of God, and therefore the sun scorches them, even in the face of these severe judgments that would lead honest contrite men to amend their ways (Isaiah 26:9-10) .Their hearts prove to be hardened and unsusceptible to divine mercy (Exodus 4:21; Ephesians 4:30; Revelation 16:1). But the scripture tell us that this does not happen to the righteous.

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

God's people are cared for and protected, the sun won't scorch them. You and I may see this but we will not experience it. That's what it means to be under the protection of God. When all the earth is going through this terrible experience, this terrible judgment, God still cares for His people and looks after them; they are under His umbrella of protection and care. No heat will strike them and no sun will scorch them.

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

God promises to the righteous His care, His protection and His leading.

Looking at it objectively, it could appear that the majority of the world's inhabitants have been deceived by the leaders of Babylon and may not necessarily be in rebellion against God. Therefore subjecting them to the plagues could be deemed harsh and unjust. In light of this concern, a period of time will be essential in order to demonstrate the true spirit of the unsaved. This period of time would necessarily exceed a few days or weeks for this to be fully demonstrated.

With this in mind, it is significant that during the first three plagues there appears to be no apparent reaction on the part of the unsaved against God. However during the fourth, fifth and seventh plagues the unsaved finally give vent to their true feelings.

It seems likely that the first four plagues will fall upon the apostate Babylonian world. The number four in Scripture often denotes universality, or the totality of a population. The final three plagues, however, concentrate upon the leadership of Babylon. The plagues will reveal the true character and spirit of the unsaved and the justice of their punishment.

Fourth plague - And they blasphemed the name of God ... and they did not repent and give Him glory (v9).

Fifth plague - They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores and did not repent of their deeds (v11).

Seventh plague - Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail (v21).

The normal reaction of humans to such extreme pain would be to cry to God for mercy and relief. Finally however when the fourth plague falls upon them, the unsaved will burst forth in rebellion, blaspheming God. They do not repent. This will reveal to the universe their true condition. Though they had been misled, deluded, and hoodwinked by the religious leaders, at heart they themselves are also in rebellion against God.

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

The 5th plague is poured out on the seat or throne of the beast (Revelation 13:2). The seat of the beast is most likely his headquarters. The beast here primarily represents the Papacy in its revived state and not so much its religious aspect but in its assumed role of a world power, dominant over world powers (Revelation 13:1-2, 10; 17:3, 8-9, 11).

Except for the small remnant that still resists his supremacy, Satan numbers the world as his subjects and it is through the revived Papacy in particular that he seeks control over the entire human race (Revelation 19:19). It would therefore appear that for the duration of this plague the entire world is enveloped in darkness. So while men grope unrepentantly for light in a spiritually dark world (Revelation 16:8-9), God sends literal darkness on them symbolic of the deeper spiritual night that is yet to enshroud the earth.

The entire clause reads literally, his kingdom became darkened. The Greek implying that it remained so for a period of time. This is literal darkness that would bring cold and misery. The absence of light and heat would be all the more difficult to bare after the intense heat experienced under the fourth plague.

Thus the reasons they gnawed or kept biting their tongues out of pain, and probably intense cold accompanied the prolonged darkness.

Not all of the wicked will receive all of the 7 last plagues, if they did then all the wicked would be destroyed, and we know from God's word that the wicked will still be alive to see Christ come, but they will receive at least one or more.

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

Again the wicked blaspheme God because of the pain they are suffering, but they don't repent, they don't change. It's strange how some people just will not repent.

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

Now this 6th plague is very import because a lot happens when the angel pours out his vial or bowl on the great river Euphrates.

It reminds us of the fall of the ancient city of Babylon, where Cyrus, the general of the Medes and Persians, came and surrounded the city. The people in Babylon felt their city was impregnable, so they went up on the top of the wall, threw down food and laughed at Cyrus. So Cyrus took his men and marched them down the Euphrates River and at a certain spot they dug canals and they diverted the river into these canals, and the river Euphrates was dried up. And so Cyrus and his men marched along the muddy bottom of the river and found that the gates into the city had been left open (just as the scriptures had predicted – Isaiah 45:1) and they marched in and took the city of Babylon and in effect freed the children of Israel from captivity who were being held there in bondage.

Revelation 17:15 *"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."*

When it says that the river Euphrates is dried up, that water represents people, nations and languages, and so it's saying that these civil powers that are at war with God and His people are dried up, so that Christ can come.

Revelation 5:10 *"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."*

When it speaks about the kings of the east, it's referring to Christ and His people, they are the kings of the east, and they prepare the way for God to set up His everlasting kingdom.

Revelation 16:13-14 *"13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

Babylon is divided into three entities, you have the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, who are in league with one another, they are a confederacy of evil, that send out the spirit of demons to gather all the people for the battle of God Almighty, or the battle of Armageddon. The dragon represents the devil, and also paganism. The false prophet represents the United States and also Protestantism. The beast represents Catholicism. All these are in opposition to God, but their water is dried up, to prepare the way for the coming of Christ.

Revelation 16:15 *"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."*

What this is saying is that when the 6th plague is poured out, Jesus is coming back. Jesus is saying that during the 6th plague He'll be coming back and will put an end to all this. Suffering will be no more. God will bring it to an end.

But what does it mean when it talks about walking naked and seeing his shame? In Old Testament times, to be naked or to be uncovered was shameful, it was considered an insult, it was an embarrassment.

Remember when David had become king of Israel, one of the Pagan kings had been good to David, and so David out of kindness and wanting to show his respect, sent some of his soldiers to that king to express his appreciation. But when the soldiers arrived, some of the king's counsellors convinced him that the soldiers had come to spy out the land, and it says that the king tore their garments and removed half of them, leaving them half naked, and shaved half off half of their beards, and that's how they were sent back to David. The king was showing that he despised David, and it caused the soldiers to be ashamed. When they reached Jericho they were too ashamed to go any further, and so David told the soldiers to remain in Jericho until their beards had grown back. By doing all of this the king was demonstrating his contempt for David.

You and I don't want to face the Lord shamefully. We don't want to find ourselves in a place where we have not done what He wants us to do. This is what its saying, don't be ashamed, we need to walk with the Lord and follow Him and do what He wants us to.

Revelation 16:16 *"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."*

All the world has come arrayed before God and the battle of Armageddon is there. God is victorious. Christ is the King of kings, Lord of lords, and He rules over all.

Now unlike what many people believe, Armageddon is not a literal battle between Israel and the United States, or between Israel, the United States and Russia. It's none of those. This is talking about God's controversy with the nations, the people who have gone contrary to God, that have not walked with Him, that are opposed to God and to His people and to what the word of God teaches. This is what the battle of Armageddon is.

Armageddon is understood to be primarily the climactic struggle between the forces of Christ and those of Satan at the end of time.

As the Euphrates River is dried up, this is what prepares the way for the battle of God Almighty.

Revelation 17:14 *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."*

These people will make war with the Lamb, they will fight against Christ. And this doesn't mean with literal military weapons, it simply means they are opposed to God, they go contrary to God, and they don't follow Him or do His will. But all those who are called and chosen and faithful, they follow the Lamb, in other words they do what He asks them to do.

Revelation 17:16 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."*

Here you have the dragon, the beast, the false prophet and the ten kings, these are all civil powers, and the scripture says that these have all given their support to the woman – she's riding on the back of the beast, she receives their support. But there comes a time in this relationship when they all turn on the woman. The woman here represents Babylon, and Babylon represents a counterfeit system of worship which the whole world has gone along with and accepted. And evidently it reaches a point where it no longer works and so they turn against the woman, and it says they will hate her and will destroy her. This is what happens in the drying up of the Euphrates River, its part of that process.

Revelation 16:17 *"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."*

The seventh plague completes the punishment and fall of Babylon. A loud voice comes out of the template saying; it's over, it's completed, it's finished. All sin and suffering will be finished and will be no more.

Revelation 16:18 *"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."*

This is down at the very end of time, Jesus is coming back, and it says that there's a great earthquake, like this earth has never seen. Now this world has seen some earthquakes as high as 8 points on the Richter scale. But the destruction of this last great earthquake will be almost unimaginable; it will be completely off the scale, like no one has ever seen before.

Revelation 16:19 *"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."*

The great city is Babylon. She has made the world drink the wine of her fornication. Now God is going to give her the wine of His wrath to drink.

Revelation 16:20-21 *"20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."*

There will be a great earthquake, and hail will fall, every hail stone will be about the weight of a talent, that's somewhere between 50 and 100 pounds, some authorities say that it's 57 pounds. Can you imagine hail stones falling that weigh 57 pounds? Those become missiles that go right through buildings and will cause unbelievable destruction.

Verse 17 tells us that Christ says; it is done. Three times He says this:

John 19:30 *"It is finished."*

Jesus said this when He was hanging on the cross.

Revelation 16:17 *"It is done."*

This is what we just learned about in relation to the seven last plagues. The wrath of God is poured out.

Revelation 21:6 *"It is done."*

This is when the earth has been purified by fire, and God has recreated it new for His people.

In the original language the word "finished" is the same as the word "done". In other words, it's over, sin no longer exists; it has been eradicated from the universe.

The great earthquake that takes place at the end of the plagues will cause everything on the earth to be shaken or destroyed. The plagues will have done their work. And now Christ can come back, claim His people and set up His kingdom.

This is what He says to you and to me.

Joel 3:16 *"The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."*

We have this promise that we can depend on, that God will be our shelter through every time of trouble, and that He will care for us, even to the very end of the world.

The plagues in order:

- Grievous sore
- Sea became as blood
- Fountains of waters; became blood
- Sun Scorch men with fire
- Kingdom full of darkness
- Mighty earthquake
- Hail out of heaven

Isaiah 28:21 *"For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act."*

The blood of God's people will be shed in the coming time of trouble, but only prior to the close of probation. After probation closes none of the saints will suffer martyrdom or death. This is because

martyrdoms are only permitted by God for the purpose of witness, to convince those who view the martyr's stand for the truth of God and to lead them also to Christ. After the close of probation no one remains to be convinced. All have made their final decision and the day of salvation has ended. Further martyrdoms, consequently, would be pointless.

At this time Michael (Christ) delivers His people (Daniel 12:1). However, the death decree is issued and a world-wide attempt is made to rid the earth of righteous dissent.

Revelation 13:15 *"He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed."*

While the unsaved will not be permitted to take the lives of the saints after the close of probation, God will nevertheless regard their intention to kill the saints as seriously as if they had achieved their nefarious aim. By condemning the people of God to death they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood, as if it had been shed by their hands.

God's love is represented in our day as being of such a character as would forbid His destroying the sinner. Men reason from their own low standard of right and justice.

Psalms 50:21 *"These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."*

They measure God by themselves. They reason as to how they would act under the circumstances and decide God would do as they imagine they would do. However, the scriptures show God as He is.

Isaiah 55:8 *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."*

God is a God of righteous justice.

Deuteronomy 32:35 *"To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste."*

Roman 12:19 *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."*

Malachi 3:6 *"For I am the LORD, I change not;"*

Revelation - Chapter 17

The Scarlet Beast

To many people the 17th chapter of Revelation is a puzzle; they just can't seem to make all the pieces fit. They read this chapter, and they struggle to understand it, and so they give up. But in reality this chapter is one of the great chapters in the book Revelation, and we're going to see if we can put all the pieces in place.

Now consistently, all the way through the Bible, a woman in Bible prophecy always represents a church, a spiritual power. And there are several verses that give us the key to understand this.

Jeremiah 6:2 *"I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman."*

Here God's church is compared to a beautiful and delicate woman.

Ephesians 5:25 *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*

And Paul does not leave us in any doubt, he makes it clear what he's talking about because he goes on and says:

Ephesians 5:32 *"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

So Paul is talking about the relationship between Christ and His people, the church. And as you read God's word you'll find that it always refers to the church as "she", and it always refers to Civil power as "he", it makes that distinction, so we don't have to be in doubt as to what it's talking about.

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

This woman is a good woman, she's pure. It says she's clothed with the sun – this represented the early church, back when it was being formed, as it came out of Judaism. She was clothed with the sun, which represented the gospel. The moon under her feet represented the Old Testament period that she was coming out of. The garland of 12 stars on her head represented the 12 apostles to whom Christ had given the commission to take the gospel to the world – we've seen before that stars symbolise messengers or leaders, the leadership of the church. So this woman is a good woman.

But now we come to Revelation 17 and we find a woman that is just the opposite of the one in Revelation 12.

Revelation 17:1-2 *"1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*

Judgment - Greek "*krima*" - meaning "sentence", "decision", "verdict", "decree". The kings of the earth have committed fornication, or adultery, with this woman, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with her wine (teachings/doctrines).

Sits on many waters - Exercises power over many "peoples" and "nations" (see verse 15). The form of the verb in Greek presents the "great whore" as in power at the time and as continuing to exercise

power, just as the ancient city of Babylon was situated upon the literal waters of the Euphrates (see Jeremiah 50:12,38) and dwelt figuratively "upon many waters" or peoples - the peoples of earth (see Jeremiah 51:12-13, Revelation 16:12).

Revelation 17:3 *"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."*

Carried away - Not in body as if he was removed from the isle of Patmos to some other place, but in a visionary way, in the spirit, just as Ezekiel was carried between earth and heaven in the visions of God to Jerusalem (Ezekiel 3:12-14; 8:3; 40:2-3; Revelation 21:10).

The wilderness in Greek is "*eremos*", meaning "a desolate place". The related verb used in Revelation 17:16 means "to desolate", "to lay waste", "to strip bare", "to abandon." A "wilderness" was an uninhabited region where life could be sustained only amid difficulty and danger. Food, shelter and possibly even water would be difficult to obtain and there would be danger from wild animals and perhaps from brigands. Accordingly, some consider that when used figuratively as here, a "wilderness" would be a situation fraught with difficulty and danger, apparently for God's people. Absence of the definite article before the word "wilderness" in the Greek, clearly makes the term qualitative and descriptive. In other words, it specifies a condition rather than a particular location.

So John says that he was picked up and carried by the spirit into the wilderness, you have to understand that when reading this. You can read that John was carried into the wilderness, but, if it doesn't make the impact on you that it should, you will not understand this prophecy. If you try and leave John on the island of Patmos, you won't understand it. You see it clearly says the Sprit carried him into the wilderness, into a future time.

Remember in our studies we have seen the woman, the church flee into the wilderness to try and escape persecution, this is the time John was taken to in vision to this period of the 1260 years from 538 AD to 1798 AD. If you don't establish this you won't put all the prophecy together, he was carried forward to this time (verse 8).

The Old Testament prophets repeatedly represented an apostate people as a licentious woman (Jeremiah 3:1-25; Ezekiel 16:26-32; Ezekiel 16:15-58; 23:2-21; Hosea 2:5; 3:1; etc). This "woman", the "great whore" (Revelation 17:1), or mystical "Babylon the great" (verse 5), is guilty of "the blood of all that were slain upon the earth" (Revelation 18:24) throughout history. Mystical Babylon constitutes the organized religious opposition to God's people, probably from the beginning of time, but here particularly at its very close.

The form of the verb "sits" denotes continuing action. In verse one the "great whore" is represented as being in direct control of men as individuals religiously, and here as directing the policies of civil government. It has ever been a characteristic of apostate Christianity to attempt a union of church and state in order to consolidate religious control over public policy. Compare the declaration of our Lord that His "kingdom" is not "of this world":

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

So whilst the woman in Revelation 12 represents a good or pure church, here in Revelation 17 we have a bad church, one that is impure and corrupt. The woman (church) sat upon the beast (state) so the church has control of the state.

Revelation 17:4 *"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:"*

Notice that pomp, ceremony and show does not necessarily equate to Godliness. Just because it may look good, just because it may have a lot of splendour, doesn't make it right. This woman has all the rich adornments on the outside, but there's something wrong on the inside.

Scarlet or "crimson" - A brilliant color certain to attract attention. In Isaiah 1:18 scarlet is the color of sin. Compare the "great red dragon" of Revelation 12:3.

In Bible prophecy beasts are commonly used to symbolise kingdoms or political powers (Daniel 7:3-7, 17; 8:3, 5, 20-21; Revelation 12:3; 13:1). The color of this beast no doubt represents a sinful kingdom, and not just sinful, but one that actually thought to change the law of God:

Daniel 7:25 *"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."*

The names of blasphemy with which this beast is covered indicate that it stands in opposition to God. Accordingly, the beast itself may be identified as Satan working through those political agencies in all ages that have submitted to her control.

In certain respects this beast resembles the great red dragon of Revelation 12:3, and in others the leopard like beast of Revelation 13:1-2. The chief difference between the beast of chapter 13 and that of chapter 17 is that in the former, which is identified with the Papacy, no distinction is made between the religious and the political aspects of Papal power, whereas in the latter the two are distinct. The beast representing political power and the woman a religious power. With the two united, the apostasy and opposition to God are complete.

Purple and scarlet colour and decked with gold - Compare Revelation 18:12, 16-17. Old Testament priest robes were made of "gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet" (Exodus 28:3-6). The borders of the priest robes were to have a fringe of blue and when they looked upon the ribband of blue, they were to remember all the Commandments of the Lord. Blue symbolizes God's Commandments and is the colour of sapphire like God's throne from which His law was cut (Numbers 15:38-39; Ezekiel chapter 1 etc). The Papal priest's robe colours are also gold, purple and scarlet as per the great whore. The colour blue is missing from the Papal Church as per the great whore. So while scarlet being the colour of the beast represents sin (transgressing God's law; 1 John 3:4), the missing colour blue represents the law of God.

This apostate religious organization depicted in all her seductiveness, gaudily dressed and vulgarly bedecked, stands forth in striking contrast with the "bride" of the Lamb, who John saw arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (see Revelation 19:7-8; Luke 16:19).

Revelation 17:5 *"And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth."*

Mystery - This word is descriptive of the title but not part of it. Hence the appropriateness of the term "mystical Babylon".

Babylon the great - Although in one sense, mystery Babylon may be considered as representative of apostate religious systems throughout history, "Babylon the great" in the book of Revelation also designates the united apostate religions at the close of time. In Revelation 17:18 mystical Babylon is

called "that great city" (Revelation 16:19; 18:18). Babylon is referred to as "great" here in view of the fact that this chapter deals most particularly with Satan's great final effort to secure the allegiance of the entire human race through religion. "Babylon the great" - the name which refers to the great threefold religious union of the Papacy, apostate Protestantism and Spiritualism.

The term "Babylon" refers to the organisations themselves and to their leaders but not so much to the members. The latter are referred to as "many waters" (Revelation 17:1,15) and as the "inhabitants of the earth" (verse 2 and verse 8).

Mother of harlots - As already noted, "Babylon the great" includes apostate Protestantism at the time envisioned here. The daughters of this "mother" thus represent the various religious bodies that constitute apostate Protestantism. This woman is contrary to what God would have her, she is not what He wants her to be.

Revelation 17:6 *"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."*

Drunken - Literally "continuing in a state of intoxication". In a general sense Babylon may be said to be "drunken" with the blood of the martyrs of all ages (Revelation 18:24) but in a more immediate sense with that of martyrs and prospective martyrs in the closing scenes of earth's history. God holds Babylon accountable for the blood of those whose death she has decreed but whom she is prevented from slaying. Babylon is utterly intoxicated with her past success at persecuting the saints (Daniel 7:25; Matthew 24:21; Revelation 6:9-11; 18:24) and with the prospect that soon she will have the satisfaction of completing the gory task.

John sees this woman and he can't understand what he is seeing, he can't understand how this woman, who represents the church, could be and do all of these things. We need to understand exactly who this woman represents, and we don't have to be in doubt. God has not put us in a place where we can't understand this piece of the puzzle.

There are four identifying points that will reveal clearly who this woman is and that will allow this piece of the puzzle to fit perfectly into its place.

1. It has to be a world power

Revelation 17:2 "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication..."

She has to be a world power, since the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her they have been involved with her. It has to be a church that has been involved with the kings of the world. There are not very many churches that are world powers. The membership of the Catholic Church today is over 1 billion, spread across the earth.

2. It leads the world astray from God's word

Revelation 17:2 "... and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

This church covers the world, because the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk by her wine, so it can't be some little power somewhere, it has to be a world-wide power. It has to be a power that has had enough influence that the inhabitants of the earth have been affected by what she had to say. The wine of her fornication represents the beliefs, the teachings of this church, with which she is feeding the people, and these are false beliefs and false teachings. This is how she leads the inhabitants of the earth astray and how she leads them to go contrary to God's word.

3. It is a persecuting power

Revelation 17:6 "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"

This woman is a power that has persecuted God's people. History is full of evidence of this. All you have to do is read books like Foxe's Book of Martyrs, or Short's Short Stories of the Reformation, or Here I Stand by Bainton, or The History of the Reformation by D'Aubingne. All these will tell you what this power has done throughout history and the many, many people that she has persecuted. We could mention the Spanish Inquisition, the persecution of the Waldensians, or the Hugenots, it's all there. Thousands upon thousands of people down through the ages gave their lives for what they believed.

One historian says:

"The church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant that has a competent knowledge of history." ***History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, W.E.H. Lecky***

So history tells us very clearly that this woman has done just that.

4. It is a union of church and state

Revelation 17:3 *"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, ..."*

This woman who represents a church, a spiritual power, is sitting on a beast, which represents a civil power. The woman riding the beast means that the woman controls the beast. Just as a rider controls the horse they are riding, so this woman controls the beast she is riding, in other words this spiritual power is in control of the civil power that she is in union with, she has taken over state power, and this represents the uniting of church and state.

So these four points identify clearly for us exactly who this woman represents, we don't have to be in doubt about it, it's clear from God's word.

Now that we have identified the woman who sits on the scarlet coloured beast, we next need to identify who the beast itself represents. Well, let's see that the scriptures say about it.

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

Here are 3 frogs, and who do they represent?

Revelation 16:14 *"For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

The frogs represent demons, and these demons will go out into the world and will be performing signs and wonders, in other words they will be performing miracles.

So there are 3 powers here – the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet. What are these? What do they represent? We've seen that the dragon is clearly portrayed in scripture as the power of Paganism. We've seen that the beast represents the Papacy, or Catholicism. And we've seen that the false prophet, pictured in Revelation 13 as the beast with two horns, represents Protestantism. And so we have coming out of these three powers frogs, which are the spirits of demons. And this means that

Catholicism, Protestantism and Paganism have united and have gone out to gather the kings of the earth to bring them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and they are controlling the civil powers of the world.

We can see this if we look at the following points:

1. "The great harlot who sits on many waters" (Revelation 17:2)

Waters in Bible prophecy represent peoples, nations. If she is sitting on the waters it means that she is controlling them.

2. "saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast" (Revelation 17:3)

This means that the woman is controlling the beast that she is sitting on. She is a religious power that is controlling civil power.

3. "seven mountains on which the woman sits" (Revelation 17:9)

Mountains represent kingdoms, and this woman is in control of them.

Revelation 17:2 *"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*

This means that the kings of the earth have symbolically slept with this woman, they have symbolically had sexual relations with her, and through this relationship she has made the world drunk with the wine of her fornication. The world has accepted and believed what she is giving them and they are following her.

Now we'll take a look at the wine cup that the woman holds in her hand, as this represents Satan's deceptions regarding the scriptures.

Revelation 17:4 *"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:"*

How have the inhabitants of the earth been made drunk by the wine in the cup that this woman holds? What beliefs are there that Paganism, Catholicism and Protestantism can all agree on and believe?

1. Natural Immortality of the Soul

The belief that when you die, you don't really die, you simply pass to another plane of existence. This idea comes directly from paganism, that's where it had its origin. Catholicism embraced it and brought it into the church as a belief, and this was later handed down as a sacred legacy to Protestantism and the protestant churches accepted it hook, line and sinker.

2. The Trinity

Nowhere in scripture is this mentioned, nowhere in the scriptures are we told there are three in one, one in three. The Bible clearly shows a Father and His only begotten Son.

The trinity comes from Babylon of old. We have studies on our website on this and you will see that most all religions have a trinity; this is one of the ways Satan uses to direct worship his way, we have seen that he was the third highest Angel in heaven, that he was jealous of Christ and the close relationship Christ had with His Father, so he introduced the trinity concept of worship.

3. Sunday Sacredness

Again this is something that comes directly from Paganism. There is absolutely no scriptural basis for Sunday sacredness. The pagans were worshippers of the sun, they worshipped it as their god, and again this was something that was handed from Paganism to Catholicism, and Catholicism embraced it and actually began to enforce it. Then as time passed Catholicism handed this to Protestantism and it was accepted by them.

4. Eternal Torment

Again this does not come from scripture; it's an idea that comes from Paganism, that's where it originated. And again this idea was passed to and embraced by Catholicism, and you have Catholicism publicising it through works like Dante's Inferno. And again this is another belief handed over from Catholicism to Protestantism.

So this tells us that these three world powers, Paganism, Catholicism and Protestantism all come together and work together to produce what the scriptures refer to as Babylon, or confusion, a false system of worship.

Revelation 17:7 *"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns."*

Now the angel proceeds to give to John a detailed explanation of the strange scene he is looking at. This explanation is very important to us as these things are happening in our world—right now before our very eyes.

Revelation 17:8 *"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."*

So here in vision John has been carried away into the wilderness, and we have a beast that was, is not, and yet is. Now in order for us to understand what John is seeing, we need to understand exactly where he is. Unless we understand where John is we won't understand his vision. So where is John? He's in the wilderness, in vision. So John is seeing this beast in the wilderness. You can't interpret this as John being on the island of Patmos. You can't look at this prophecy from our day, you have to look at it from where John is, and John is in the wilderness, and in the wilderness he sees this beast that was, is not and yet is.

Notice the words — this beast "was" — it was ruling during the 1260 years; but now at the time the vision is showing to John it is towards the end of the 1260 years. He is told it "is not". But he is told it will come back — it will ascend out of the bottomless pit. Now we have heard the expression "bottomless pit" before in the prophecies; and what it means here is the depths of wickedness and sin of this world. Every time this expression is mentioned in prophecy it shows us that here is some new demonstration of Satan's power; some different form of wickedness than he has used before. We saw the "smoke out of the bottomless pit" which was a dark religion which arose in the deserts; we saw a beast from the bottomless pit arise to kill the two witnesses in the French revolution, which was a form of atheism, not before known in Europe; and now we see that this beast, when it comes again will arise from the bottomless pit. As wicked and cruel as it was before in the 1260 years, it will be worse and a slightly different form when it comes again.

Revelation 17:9 *"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."*

Now this is the place in Revelation where many people start to get confused. It's interesting that the Bible would use the same phrase in both the 13th and 17th chapters of Revelation concerning understanding this.

Revelation 13:8 *"Here is wisdom ..."*

Revelation 17:9 *"... here is the mind which hath wisdom ..."*

This is important because many of the things in the 13th chapter apply to the 17th chapter. It is interesting to note that Rome is often referred to as the city on 7 hills or mountains. But also another meaning can be seen here as in prophecy - a "mountain" refers to a church or religious power and "seven" means complete or total. So this power sits on, or influences and tries to control all religious organizations. The city of Rome is also built on seven literal mountains or hills:

"It is within the city of Rome, called The City on Seven Hills, that the entire area of Vatican State Proper is now confined" ***The Catholic Encyclopedia, p. 529***

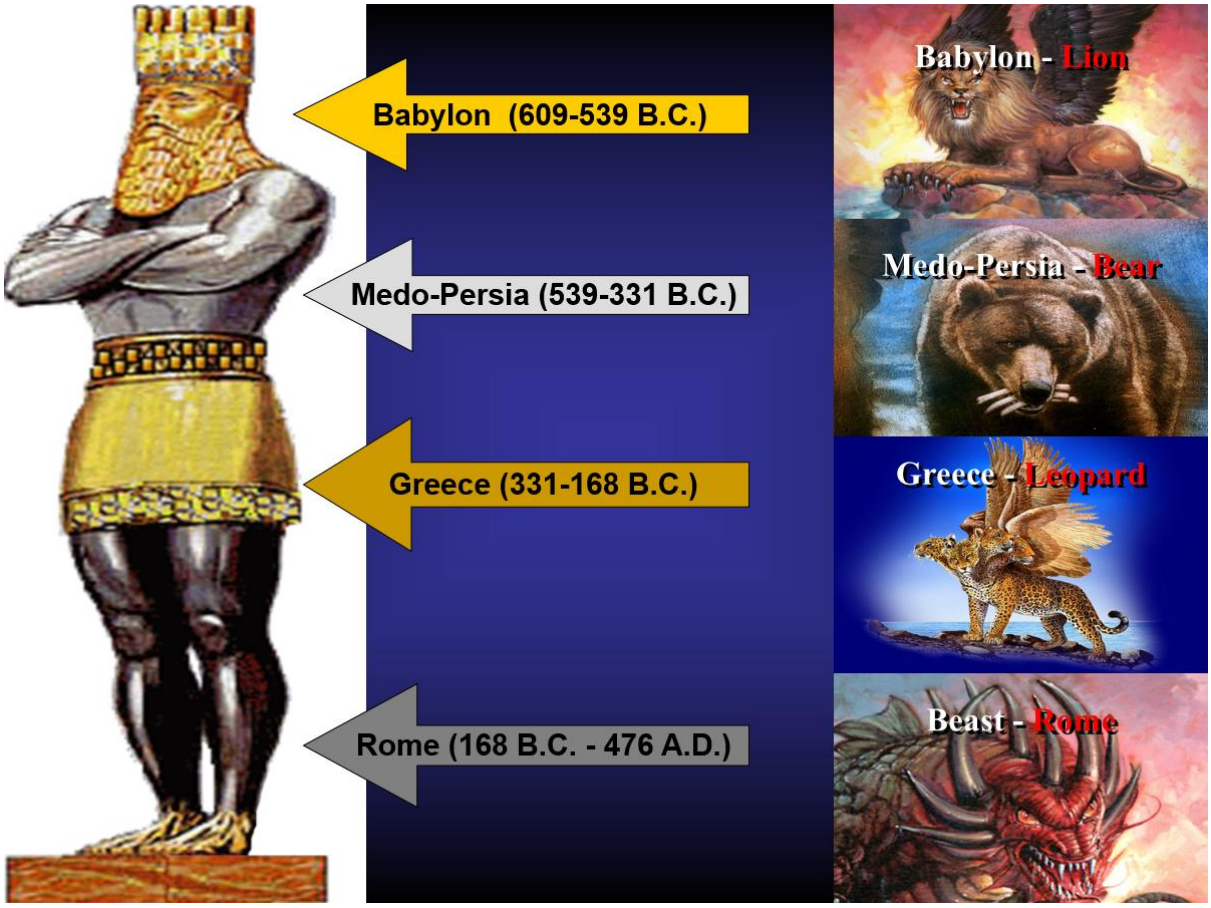
"...group of hills on or about which the ancient city of Rome was built. The original city of Romulus was built upon Palatine Hill (#1) (Latin: Mons Palatinus). The other hills are the Capitoline,(#2) Quirinal, (#3) Viminal,(#4) Esquiline,(#5) Caelian,(#6) and Aventine (#7) (known respectively in Latin as the Mons Capitolinus, Mons Quirinalis, Mons Viminalis, Mons Esquilinus, Mons Caelius, and Mons Aventinus)." ***Encyclopedia Britannica query: "Seven Hills of Rome"***

Revelation 17:10 *"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."*

These seven heads of the beast, and the seven kings are the same, they are state powers, remember a Beast in Bible prophecy equals State Powers. They represent all the powers Satan has used to fight against God and His truth and His faithful people throughout world history. So here Johns is saying this beast that has 7 heads.

Five have fallen, one is, and one is yet to come - that's seven. So let's identify these. The scriptures make it very clear who the seven heads of these beasts are. In Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 :

1. First we had Babylon, which fell to...
2. Medo-Persia, which fell to...
3. Greece, which fell to...
4. Pagan Rome, which fell to...
5. Papal Rome



If you have watched our videos on Daniel and Revelation you will see how the United States rose to power as the 6th head just as the 5th head, Papal Rome, went into captivity.

Now in the riddle John said there were seven kings; five have fallen, one is and the other is not yet come, and when it does come it will only be for a short time.

When we looked at Revelation 13, we had a beast coming up out of the sea, this beast also had seven heads and ten horns. It had the mouth of a lion, the feet of a bear and the body of a leopard. We saw that this beast was a composite of the beasts in Daniel 7. We identified that Pagan Rome handed over its power and seat to Papal Rome, and this then became the fifth head.

He (Papal Rome) was the one that "**was**", from 538 AD onwards, the little horn power, the Papacy. Then it was "**not**", because remember that Papal Rome was in power until it fell to Napoleon who took the Pope prisoner in 1798, which is when it received its "deadly wound" (Revelation 13:3). So it "**was**" from 538 to 1798, then it was "**not**" because it had fallen in 1798, it had been mortally wounded. And as this one falls he sees the one that "**is**", the United States, the beast that came up from the earth, rise to power. But he says one more is still to come.

Revelation 17:11 *"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."*

Now we're back to the beast. Here John gives us all the pieces of the puzzle and we just have to put them in place to see exactly what it's talking about.

Now when the Bible talks about a beast, you'll find that different beasts represent different powers. In the books of Daniel and Revelation we find 7 beasts described.

So this is what has taken place. Five have fallen, one is and one was yet to come, and we today are living in the time of the last beast. There are no more to come. This is the last one. The next thing that will happen will be the coming of Jesus Christ.

So it's saying that this scarlet beast that was, is not and yet is, that beast is number eight. This is strange. He's not only number eight but he is of the seven. So there's no point in looking for this eighth beast in some place other than these seven.

There are eight points of identification that tell us exactly who this beast is.

1. It is of the seven. So this limits it – it has to be one of those seven beasts that we find in Daniel and Revelation.
2. It "was". This means it had to exist in the past.
3. It "is not". There was a time in which this beast "was not" - it fell from power.
4. The beast "is himself also the eighth". After the time when it "was not", this beast returns to power.
5. It had to make war with the saints. It had to be a persecuting power, it had to persecute God's people.
6. It unites church and state.
7. It received a deadly wound. This is what caused it to become "is not" - to fall from power.
8. Its deadly wound was healed. The wound is healed when the beast returns to power. And when the deadly wound is healed then all the world wonders after the beast.

The scriptures identify clearly that this beast is Papal Rome. It says that it will return to the ascendency, and with the uniting of Paganism, Catholicism and Protestantism, you have what the scriptures refer to as Babylon. This is the woman that the scriptures portray as riding on this beast right down at the end of time.

Now there are other players involved that will enter in as we look at the 18th chapter of Revelation. Some of those players are the ten kings:

Revelation 17:12 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."*

So it says that these kings are going to rule with the beast.

Revelation 17:13 *"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."*

So this beast power will exist right down until the end of time, and ten kings are going to join the beast and give to it their power and authority.

Now the interesting thing about this is that it tells us in Revelation 13 that the two-horned beast, the beast which rose up from the earth, which we've learned represents the United States, will make an image to the first beast (Papal Rome).

So we have ten kings and we have the two-horned beast (the United States), and all these give their power and authority to the first beast (Papal Rome). Notice that these are civil powers, and the woman, which is Babylon, rules over them all.

The Ten Kings

Now we are going to look at the last part of Revelation 17 where it talks about the ten kings. These ten kings have a very definite part to play in the last days, and so it's very important that we understand who these ten kings are, what they're going to do and how it all fits together.

There are five different powers that we will look at. It's very important that we identify each of these powers and see how they are involved in the events of the last days.

The first of these powers that we will look at in particular in this study is the ten kings.

We've already looked at the power which the scriptures refer to as the Beast, and which we identified as Papal Rome, now we will be looking at the relationship of the ten kings to this beast power.

We also need to identify who is the Harlot, or Babylon. We need to understand the difference between Babylon and the Beast. And we need to understand the relationship between the Beast, the Harlot or Babylon, and the ten kings.

We also have the False Prophet, which the scriptures identify as apostate Protestantism in the United States. So we need to understand how the Beast and the False Prophet are involved.

Finally we will take a look at the Lamb, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and how He is involved in all of this.

So let's start by taking a look at the ten kings and see what the scriptures have to tell us about them and who they represent.

Revelation 17:12 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."*

So this beast has ten horns and it says the ten horns are ten kings. These kings have not yet received a kingdom; they are not yet in power. If we take the "one hour" and interpret it prophetically where a day represents a year then that "one hour" would represent 15 literal days. The original Greek phrase "one hour" just represents a very short period of time, so either way its not long.

As we have studied we have seen these ten horns represent powers/nations; they have not received a kingdom as yet. In our Daniel and Revelation videos you will see that many have tried to bring the kingdoms under a one-world rule - Napoleon, Charlemagne, Hitler etc, but we are told here in verse 12 that these ten horns, these powers, will receive power for one hour with the beast, in other words they will all come together to unite in power for one hour, or a very short time, and when they do unite they will give their power to the beast – the Papal System. This power, these ten horns, represent the European Union (EU).

The Western European Alliance (WEA), historically associated with the Western European Union (WEU), is made up of over 25 countries, however it grew from an original core group of ten full member nations, while subsequently adhering countries took on distinct tiered roles such as associate members, observers, or associate partners.

The original ten member nations were:

Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom

Core Membership Structure:

• Full Members: The original ten nations held unique, voting-status decision power.

• Associate Members: Applied to NATO countries outside the European Union.

• Observers: Granted to EU countries that were not part of NATO.

• Associate Partners: Designated for Eastern European nations that had not yet joined NATO or the EU.

It is most interesting that in the plans which the world leaders and powers have drawn up for the 'New World Order', they have the world divided up into exactly ten parts. The leaders designated for these ten regions will agree to let this Beast power rule, this Beast power with the woman on its back, this is the way they can best get the people under control by using state and religious power - but who is to rule it?

The last Pope will lead the world to believe that Rome is a good and moral power and so these 10 leaders will agree to give "their kingdom to the beast". Sadly they have forgotten how Rome used such power in the past when she had it and also that it is Rome's boast that she never changes. The Papacy supposedly gives the government of the UN moral authority, and the third player, the USA is what gives the financial and military power to this final government that leads the world to Armageddon.

It is very interesting to see the style of the EU building, along with the statue they have outside of a woman riding a beast. Also interesting is that the that the 2 Euro coin of Greece also shows a woman riding a beast.

One other interesting thing is that The Tower Building (named after the Tower of Babel) houses the Fifth Parliament of Europe. It is certainly a building of the Space Age.

The legislative amphitheater is arranged in a massive hemicircle and has 679 seats, each assigned to a particular lawmaker. For example, Seat 663 is assigned to Rep Souchet, 664 to Thomas-Mauro, 665 to Zizzner and 667 to Rep Cappato.

While these seats are allocated to Members, one seat remains unallocated and unoccupied. The number of that seat is 666. The relevant section of the seating-plan provided to each Member reads as follows:

660 Marchiani
661 Montfort
662 Quiero
663 Souchet
664 Thomas-Mauro
665 Zizzner
666 -------
667 Cappato
668 Turco
669 Bonino
670 Pannella
etc.

The number ten is used many times in scripture to represent the concept of totality, we have the ten toes of the statue and the ten horns of the beast in the book of Daniel. So the ten kings simply represent a number of kings/rulers uniting and working together, and these ten kings receive power with the beast.

Revelation 17:13 *"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.*

When it says they are of one mind, it doesn't mean that they are going to come together and be one kingdom, it means that there will be a number of them that will work together for the same goal. When it says they give their power and authority to the beast, notice that they don't give it to the woman who is riding the beast, they give their power and authority to the beast itself (church and state).

Revelation 17:17 *"For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."*

When it says "until the words of God shall be fulfilled" it means that these ten kings will be involved right up until the end, right up until the coming of Christ.

Now there are many places in scripture where ten kings are mentioned:

Daniel 2:44 *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."*

Daniel 7:24 *"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."*

Here we have a beast that has ten horns, and the scripture says that these ten horns are ten kings.

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

Here the dragon has ten horns, which the scripture says represent ten kings. This is repeated in Revelation 13 and 17. Note that in Revelation 12 and 13 the horns have crowns on them depicting rulers of those kingdoms, but when we get to Revelation 17 there are no crowns on the horns showing that there is not a single sovereign that reigns here.

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

Revelation 17:12 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."*

Scripture makes it very clear that these ten kings had to exist in Western Europe, and they were comprised of the Germanic tribes that came down and overran the Roman Empire, and they were such kingdoms as the Anglo-Saxons, the Franks, the Heruli, the Vandals, the Ostrogoths etc. This is very important because these barbarian tribes became the nations of western Europe, such countries as Germany, Italy, France and England. The Anglo-Saxons became the English, the Franks became the French etc. So, when it talks about ten kings, it's talking about these kingdoms or nations in Western Europe. And it is these ten kings that will play a major role in the last days.

Back in 1991, the Common Market, known today as the European Union, was just forming, and even though it was just forming the London Telegraph came out with this statement:

"If European federalism triumphs, the EC [European Community] will indeed be an empire. It will lack an emperor; but it will have the Pope. It is difficult not to think that Wojtyla realizes this." ***Sunday Telegraph, London, August 25, 1991***

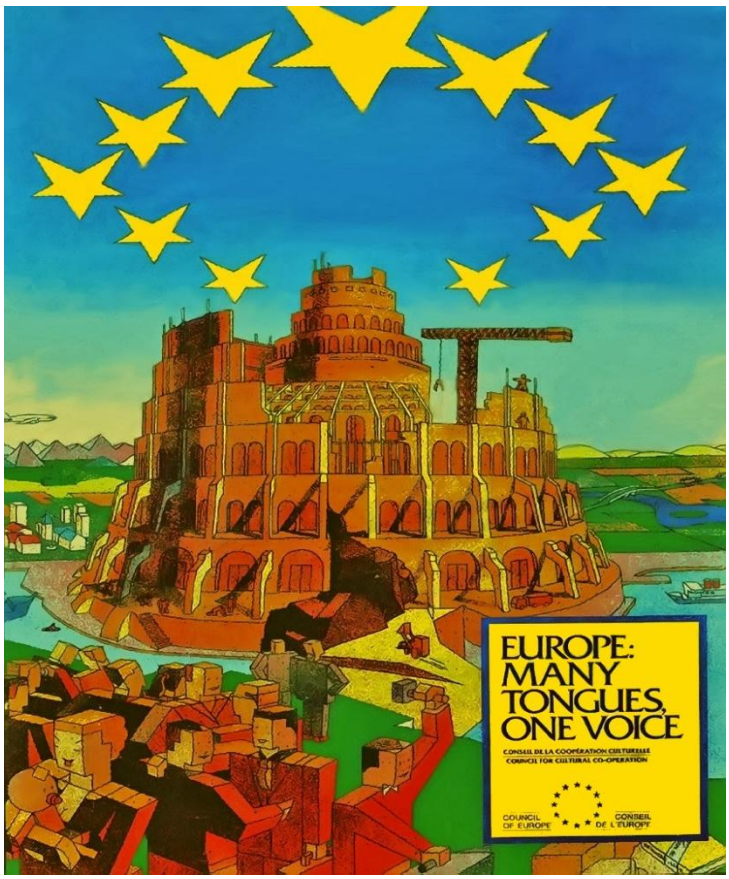
In other words it's saying that these ten kings will make up an empire which will be very much involved with the Pope. These ten kings will give their authority to the beast.

Revelation 17:17 *"For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."*

This means that these nations are going to come together and work together.

In the United States, 200 years ago, it was decided that all of the separate states would work together. But this was not the case in Europe. When all of these separate countries decided to come together as a European Union it caused major problems. One of the biggest problems is that these countries all speak different languages. Another big problem is that these countries used different systems of weights and measurements. Yet another big problem is money – all these countries used different currencies. All these are major problems that had to be worked out. But today you can drive across England, France and Germany and all through Europe and it seems to be working. They are of one mind, working together.

The poster for the European Union shows stars representing the nations that comprise the Union, and it has the slogan "EUROPE: MANY TONGUES, ONE VOICE" – meaning that they are of one mind, working together. It's interesting to note the tower of Babel is also on their poster.



This is the headquarters of the European Union, this is where the ten kings are all involved. Outside the parliament building is a statue of a woman riding on a beast; this is the symbol that is used to represent the Union.

So we must understand that today the European Union is a major power in the world, because the nations of Europe have the largest combined army in the world. The Euro currency is as powerful as

the US Dollar, in fact there are some countries who say that they should stop taking the Dollar and take the Euro instead. So these nations of Europe are a major power in the world today – these are the ten kings.

The Beast – Papal Rome

The ten kings give their power and authority to the beast.

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

We have learned that this beast power represents Papal Rome, we saw clearly the eight points of identification. So what is the relationship between the beast and the ten kings?

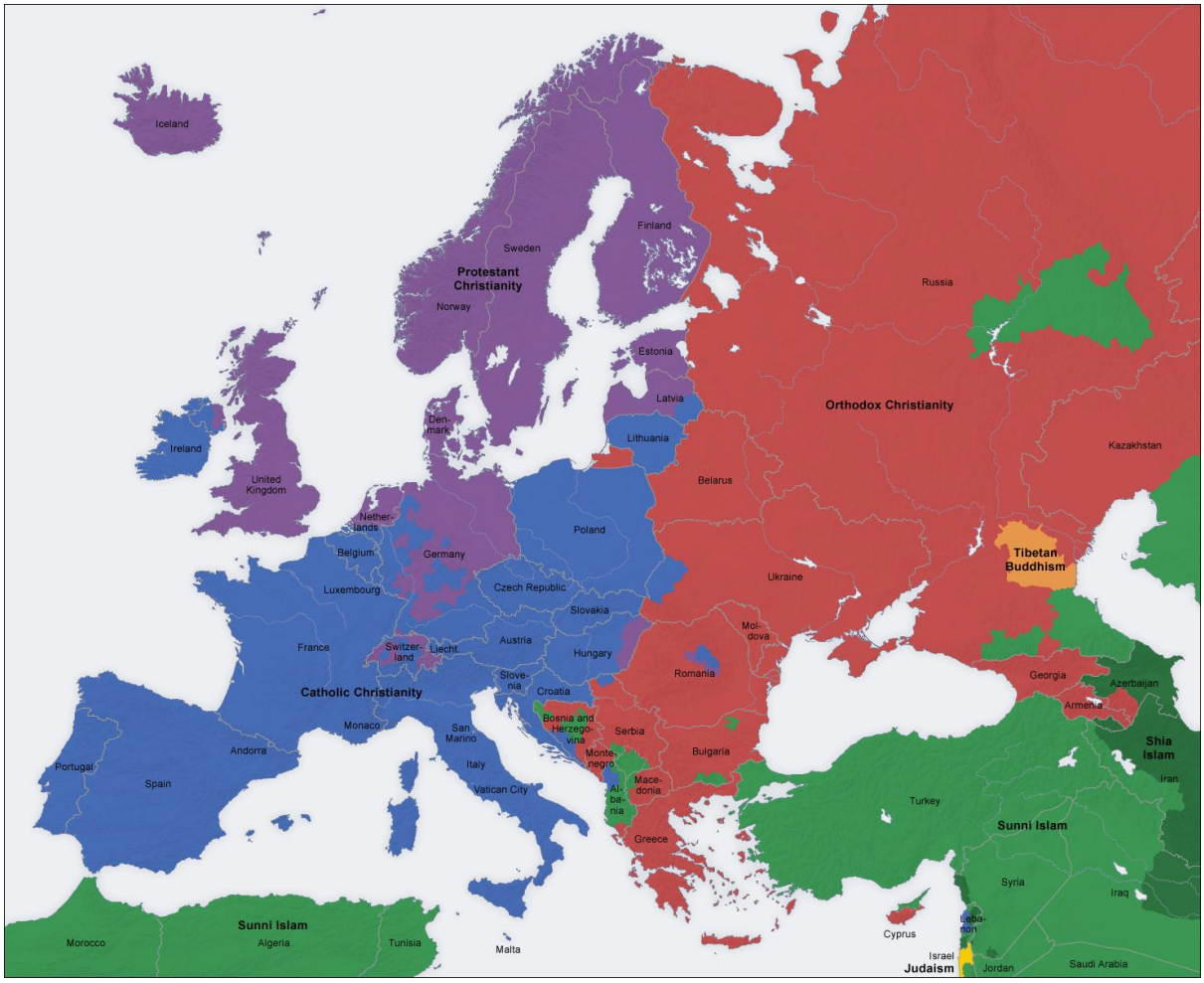
Revelation 17:13 *"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."*

Is there anything happening today which shows that things are going this way, that this is beginning to happen?

Pope Benedict XVI urged the European Union not to forget its [Catholic] "Christian roots" as he received the EU's new envoy to the Vatican on Monday Oct. 19, 2009. "Europe will not truly be herself if she cannot keep the originality that made her great" the Pope said. He encouraged the continent to promote the "holistic development of people that the Catholic Church considers to be the only way to remedy imbalances present in our world." The Pope also said he was pleased at the "excellent relations" between the European Union and the Holy See, and the Church wanted to help in the construction of the EU.

The Papacy very much has a hand in what is going on. So there are movements happening in the world today which show that the ten kings are preparing to give their power and authority to the beast.

We need to understand the political background in order to understand what's happening here. This map shows the religions of the nations of Europe.



Those in blue, which are the majority, are Roman Catholic. Those in purple, which are mostly in the north, are Protestant. Those in red are Eastern Orthodox. Those in green are Muslim.

The following statement was made by Charles Malik, who was the ambassador to the United States, he taught at Harvard, and he was very much involved in the United Nations and what went on there.

"The only hope for the western world lies in an alliance between the Roman Catholic church which is the most commonly, influential, controlling, unifying element in Europe and the Eastern Orthodox church. Rome must unite with Eastern Orthodoxy, because the Eastern Orthodox church controls western middle east, [the east end of the Mediterranean] and if they don't solidify that control, Islam will march across Europe. Islam is political. The only hope for the western world lies in a united Europe under the control of the Pope. And then all Protestant Christians around the globe must come into submission to the Pope so we will have a unified Christian world." ***Charles Malik, President of the General Assembly United Nations, Ambassador to the United States, Guest Lecturer at Harvard***

He is saying that the Roman Catholic church and the Eastern Orthodox church need to unite, because the Eastern Orthodox church controls western Europe, and if they don't unite then Islam will be free to march across Europe.

And we find changes taking place in the world today that are beginning to open the door for this uniting to take place.

Babylon – The Harlot

It's important to understand that when we talk about Babylon we're talking about a system, a religious system, and it's not just one religion, it's a uniting of several religions, and that's the reason it's called Babylon, because it's confusion.

Revelation 17:3 *"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."*

As we saw in our last study, when a woman is sitting on a beast, that means she controls the beast.

Revelation 17:4-5 *"4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth."*

So the woman riding the beast is the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.

Revelation 17:6 *"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:"*

This woman is not in harmony with the scriptures, she is in opposition to the scriptures and to God. But just because she is in opposition doesn't mean that she isn't religious – you can be religious and yet be in opposition to God and His word. This woman certainly is religious, she's a spiritual power, but she's not in harmony with the word of God.

Revelation 17:14 *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."*

This unanimous consent of the nations is achieved through the agency of the three evil spirits that we have looked at; The Dragon - The Beast and the False Prophet. Now that probation has closed, God permits a worldwide religio-political union whose objective is the annihilation of His people. Such a plan He has held in check ever since the days of Babel (Genesis 11:4-8; Daniel 2:43; Revelation 14:8), but now He withdraws His restraining hand (Revelation 17:17; 2 Chronicles 18:18).

Under the leadership of the Beast, the final stage of the age long warfare against Christ and His people now begins. This stage of the conflict termed "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:16).

God's faithful people who have suffered so long at the hands of their enemies (Revelation 6:9-11; 12:13-17; 13:7, 15) are delivered when He who is "Lord of lords, and King of kings" lays bare His mighty arm and comes forth to champion their cause. Christ intervenes at the moment the forces of evil launch their attack on the saints at the opening of the seventh plague.

The title "Lord of lords, and Kings of kings" is used in Scripture of Christ as He returns to earth to vanquish the hosts of evil and to deliver His loyal people (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 1:5; 17:14).

Revelation 17:15 *"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."*

If she's sitting on the waters that means she is controlling them, she's controlling the peoples and nations.

Revelation 17:16 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."*

So these ten horns have given the woman their power and authority, and now the scripture says they turn against her and hate her and burn her with fire. So these ten kings are going to have a total change of mind and attitude toward the woman.

Revelation 17:17-18 *"For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."*

When the scriptures talk about the great city, Babylon, that's the same as the woman, there's no difference between the woman and the city, it's still Babylon, and so the woman is that great city.

Literal Babylon was the "great city" of ancient times. From the days of Babel the city of Babylon has been representative of organized opposition to the purposes of God on earth (Genesis 11:4-6; Revelation 14:8). A city is a highly organized and integrated association of human beings. Hence how appropriate is "Babylon the great" as a prophetic symbol for the organized, universal apostate religious organization.

Revelation 16:3-4 *"3 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 4 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

So here we have three powers; the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, and out of their mouths are going frogs that are demons that are deceiving the whole world.

Revelation 16:19 *"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."*

So the city, which is Babylon, which is a spiritual power not a political power (because a civil power is always referred to as "he", but a spiritual power is always referred to as "she") is divided into three parts, and the reason it's in three parts is because we have the dragon (Paganism), the beast (Catholicism, the Papacy) and the false prophet (Protestantism), those are the three parts. Protestantism at one time was given the grace of God and preached the word of God, but in the last days has given this up and it no longer stands for what its pioneers stood and fought for.

Revelation 17:16 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."*

What has happened is that this woman has assumed civil power, that's why the scripture says she's riding the beast, or sitting on the waters, or she's the great city, it's saying that she as a spiritual power has assumed civil power. But notice that the ten kings did not give their power and authority to the woman; they gave them to the beast. You see a religious power has never had civil power, they have always had to use a civil power to achieve their ends, and down through history it has always been the case that if a church achieved control then they used civil power to carry out their operations. And we find that even the Papal power uses civil power to accomplish its purposes.

Babylon falls because she has not done what she promised she would do, and when the kings find themselves deceived, they turn against her, hate her and burn her with fire because all the things that she promised have not happened. She ruled over the nations but here rule has come to an end.

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

Now water represents peoples and nations. In ancient Babylon, the river Euphrates flowed right through the city. And we found that Cyrus took his army and diverted the Euphrates river into canals and they dried up the river so that they could get inside the city. So it says here that in the last days, the waters will be dried up, in other words all the opposition to God and His kingdom will be dried up. And when it talks about the kings of the east, it's referring to the coming of Christ. So the river is dried up in preparation for the coming of Christ.

Why would the scriptures use the word "kings", meaning more than one, concerning the coming of Christ? Simply because God's people, you and I, are kings.

Revelation 5:10 *"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."*

The False Prophet – Apostate Protestantism in the United States

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

We have the ten kings giving their power and authority to the beast, and now we have this power, the false prophet, giving its power and authority to the beast.

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

The false prophet is given great power to perform signs. And how will it use that power?

Revelation 13:14 *"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast ..."*

So this false prophet has been able to deceive the world - to deceive the world into doing something.

Revelation 13:14 *"... saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."*

The false prophet is going to make an image to the beast.

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

So this false prophet has performed great signs, the people have turned to him, believing, and he has told them that they need to make an image to the beast. The woman is riding the beast, which means that you have unification of church and state, and so to make an image to the beast, the image has to be like the beast, and so you have to have union of church and state, and it says that the false prophet is the one that will give impetus to this, to bring it about.

Revelation 19:20 *"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image."*

So it's telling us clearly that the United States will be foremost in bringing together this union of church and state. Is there any evidence that things are going this way today? Well in the US supreme court

there are nine justices. Presently six out of those nine are Roman Catholic, and three are Jews, sadly there is not a Protestant among the whole group. This group has enormous power, they literally hold the power of life and death.

So we find that one after another things are happening, so that step by step we are moving closer and closer to this whole thing coming together in the time in which we are living today.

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

The word "speak" means "legislation", and the word "cause" means "enforcement". So it's telling us that the image of the beast will be legislated and enforced, this is how the image is going to be set up, it says that the false prophet will give life to the beast, meaning that it will be legislated and enforced, that it will actually happen.

So you and I, as time goes by, can watch more and more the encroachment of church into political power, which we see more and more of this happening in our day.

The Lamb – King of kings and Lord of lords

Revelation 17:14 *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."*

These ten kings, the beast and the false prophet, will make war with the Lamb. What does this mean? It doesn't mean that they will make physical war. It means that they will teach things that are in opposition to what God teaches. When it says they will make war with the Lamb, it means they are drunk with the wine of Babylon and so they will teach things that are contrary to the word of God. These teachings may sound perfectly logical, but if it does not agree with the word of God then it is not truth. So they are in opposition to the Lamb and are fighting against Him, but He will overcome them.

Revelation 11:15 *"... The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."*

So Christ will overcome them and will set up His kingdom and will reign forever.

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

God is going to come to this earth and live with us, He will move His throne from heaven to the earth. Astronomers are continually discovering that the universe is so much bigger than was previously thought, and of all the millions of worlds in the universe, God is going to come and live here on earth with us, His people who He loved and gave His life for. Amen.

Revelation - Chapter 18

God's Final Call

With chapter 18 we continue to look at events that will take place right down at the end of time, the time in which you and I are living.

When you pick up your Bible, you'll find that invitation after invitation has been given by God. Remember that God gave a very definite invitation in the days of Noah. God also gave a very definite invitation to the Jewish people, He sent prophet after prophet with an invitation for the people to follow Him. In the time of the New Testament, God did the same thing, He gave one invitation after another.

In this chapter we will be looking at God's final invitation – there won't be any others after this – this is the final one. And with this chapter the door of mercy closes forever. The chapter opens with an angel that has a message that is so powerful it illuminates the earth.

Revelation 18:1 *"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."*

This angel speaks with great authority, and what he has to say illuminates the earth. The message that this angel is speaking is what gives impetus to the third angels message of Revelation 14, it's what causes it to move across the earth with great power, and brings about what the scriptures refer to as the "loud cry" or the "latter rain".

So despite satanic efforts to shroud the earth in darkness, God now sets it ablaze with the glorious light of saving truth.

The third angel in Revelation 14 had this to say:

Revelation 14:9-10 *"9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation;"*

With a loud voice means it is being proclaimed across the whole earth. So this third angel is proclaiming a message across the earth, warning people not to receive the mark of the beast. And here the angel in chapter 18 adds emphasis to that message which is proclaimed across the earth.

So what we are looking at here is basically the last invitation that God is giving to mankind, there won't be another.

Revelation 18:2 *"And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."*

This angel is proclaiming that Babylon has fallen. Notice there is a great difference between when she has fallen and when she is destroyed, because she can fall in the eyes of God, and yet not in the eyes of man. So when it says Babylon has fallen, it means she has fallen in the eyes of God, she is not following what He has said.

Revelation 18:3 *"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."*

So all the merchants of the world have become wealthy through what she has done. In other words, Babylon has been well received by the world, but she has fallen in the eyes of God. It says the nations have become drunk though the wine of her fornication, (false doctrines) and it's very difficult to reason with someone who is drunk.

Babylon The Harlot

What is Babylon and how has she made the world drunk with her wine? Well, remember that Babylon is made up of three things: Paganism, Catholicism and Protestantism. We have the dragon, which represents Paganism, we have the beast, which represents Catholicism, and we have the false prophet, which represents apostate Protestantism. These three things together, a mixture of the three, make up what scripture refers to as Babylon. And the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk through her wine, representing her teachings. An example is the belief in the immortality of the soul. Her teachings come straight from Paganism, and the Catholic church took these beliefs from Paganism and handed them down to Protestantism, and so today the whole world is full of the idea that man does not die, that he is immortal, that his soul simply goes off to another place after death, but that is not what the Bible teaches, there is no foundation for that belief in the word of God. Another example is the belief in the false Sabbath – Sunday sacredness – again this is not based on scripture, another is the trinity, baptism by sprinkling etc. these came directly from Paganism and they were passed onto Protestantism through the Catholic Church. And so these false beliefs and teachings, originating in Paganism, are what the scripture refers to as Babylon, meaning confusion, and this is how the whole world is made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Revelation 18:4 *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*

Notice that God is saying very clearly that He has His people in Babylon, which is why at this point the door of mercy is not closed. Today the door of mercy is not closed, today it's open, and anyone can come to God, and give Him their heart, and surrender their life to Him and commit their life to Him, and because the door of mercy is open they can and will receive mercy. But in this chapter we will see that the day is coming in which that door closes, forever, and when that door closes there will be no more opportunity to come to God. But right now God is calling His people to come out of Babylon, that's the invitation God is giving.

Almost till the very close of time, some or perhaps many of God's people have not heard the call to come out of mystical Babylon. Compare God's call to His people in ancient times to flee from literal Babylon. (see Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6, 45) As God's people formerly came out of literal Babylon in order that they might return to Jerusalem, so His people today are called out of mystical Babylon in order that they may be accounted worthy to enter the New Jerusalem. All who are truly His people will hear His voice and heed His call (Matthew 7:21-27; cf. John 10:4-5).

But things are good in Babylon. Those in Babylon have lived in luxury on the earth. When the Jewish people were carried off into exile in Babylon of old, they didn't have it rough there. Daniel was the prime minister of the country. Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego held high offices. They were treated well, they had nice homes, good jobs and things were good in Babylon. In fact it was so good there

that after 70 years in Babylon, when God said the time had come to go back to Jerusalem, this is what happened:

Ezra 8:15 *"And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi."*

So when Ezra told the Jews he was going to take back a group to Jerusalem to live there, not one of the tribe of Levi showed up, not one, they all had it so nice in Babylon they wanted to stay there. In fact Ezra had to go back and make another appeal before he got some of them to go back with him. Why didn't they want to go back to Jerusalem? Because things were not very nice back in Jerusalem, the city was in ruins, there were no jobs, things were not good there at all, it was rough and it was hard.

In the last days it's not going to be good for God's people. But it will be good in Babylon. And you have to make a decision, whether you are going to come out of Babylon and be on God's side, or whether you're going to go along with Babylon. Each of us has to make that decision. And so God says; Come out of her My people. And this is God's last call. There won't be another one. There won't be another time or place where God gives another invitation. It will be over.

Now notice what happens from this point on. Today the door of mercy is still open you can come to God, accept Him and follow Him. But from this point on in the chapter, the door closes.

Revelation 18:5 *"For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."*

The cup is full, and her sins have reached to heaven. When does this happen? When do her sins reach to heaven? It takes place when this happens:

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

When that decree is made, that those who do not have the mark of the beast and who do not worship his image should be killed.

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

"**Speak**" means to legislate.

"**Cause**" means to enforce.

So when mankind enact laws that force everyone to follow the beast and do what it says, that is when her sins have reached to heaven. And that is when the door of mercy closes, forever.

So the time has come for the door of mercy to close on Babylon who has taken a position in opposition to God.

All the way through the Bible you will find that Paganism has always been in opposition to God. God, in His mercy and kindness has pleaded with Catholicism for years to change. And because she would not change, out of that grew the Reformation. And great men, such as Knox, Calvin, Luther and Zwingli and all the other great Reformers, stood up and took the word of God and built their beliefs on it, and out of that the great Protestant movement was born. And when the pilgrims went over to the New World, as they were getting on the ship, their pastor Robinson stood there and urged them that when

they got to the New World that they would follow the word of God, and he said to them; As you understand what the word of God teaches, walk in the light of it.

Unfortunately Protestantism did not continue to walk in the light that God gave them. And Protestants have given up what they originally believed and stood for. And today there is no conviction to follow what the word of God says. And so as a result, you now have those three powers uniting together into what the scripture calls Babylon. They unite on the worship of a day that God never sanctified, they hold beliefs that the scripture does not teach, they turn away from the Sabbath and refuse to follow what God's word says about it. And for those reasons her cup of iniquity is full, and so God says this to her:

Revelation 18:6 *"Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double."*

God says; Give back to her double for what she gave.

Literally "give her to the limit". The harlot, the apostate organization Babylon the great, is to be repaid in full for her evil deeds. In absolute justice, Heaven does not withhold any part of the payment due. The reward to be meted out to Babylon is described briefly in Revelation 17:16-17 and greater length in this chapter 18. Also compare Jeremiah 51:6.

Literally "according to her deeds." Her reward will be paid in kind. The punishment will fit the crime and be appropriate. Compare Isaiah 47:3; Jeremiah 50:15, 29; 51:24.

Revelation 18:7 *"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."*

The Bible teaches clearly that there is a period of time in which Babylon will sit as a queen, and it will be great and things will be wonderful, and the whole world will wander after her and follow what she says, so much so that it says they are drunk by the wine of her fornication.

So many things have glorified her and made her wanton. So many things have contributed to her pride and wantonness. Arrogant self-confidence has made her confident of the ultimate success of her plot to obliterate God's remnant people and to reign supreme over the earth. She is proud of her wealth, popularity and power. Compare Isaiah 47:6-10; Ezekiel 28:2, 4-5, 16.

Inordinate conceit has spawned utter confidence in her evil scheme to rule the world. The attempt to deceive others has resulted in absolute self-deception. Not only has she made others "drunk," she herself is in a state of intoxication.

I sit a queen - Note the present tense. The true church is represented in Scripture as a "chaste virgin," (2 Corinthians 11:2) Christ's bride. (Ephesians 5:23-32; cf. Revelation 12:1; 19:7-8) The great harlot impersonates Christ's bride before the inhabitants of earth over whom she claims dominion in His name. But she is a counterfeit "queen." (Isaiah 47:6-10) She is a harlot who has never had a legal husband, yet is able to boast of her conquests. Do not the "kings" and "great men" of the earth wait upon her? (Revelation 18:9, 23) Are they not captive to her will and dedicated instruments of her nefarious schemes?

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

It says she has lived luxuriously, she has not followed what God has said; therefore repay her double for what she has given. And the seven last plagues will be that double repayment.

At this point, probation for the human race will have closed.

Revelation 22:11 *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."*

When these words are pronounced, probation closes for mankind. And when probation closes, the things that Babylon has lived so luxuriously with, all come to an end.

Revelation 18:8 *"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."*

So God is going to pour out His full wrath on Babylon.

As we saw before, some people like to take the "one day" here and interpret it as a literal year; they also take the "one hour" of verse 10 and interpret that as 15 literal days. We can't be certain exactly how long this period will be, but we can be confident that it refers to a short period of time.

Revelation 18:9 *"And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,"*

The inhabitants of the earth will see Babylon, and all that she stood for, crumbling. The ten kings, the beast and the false prophet all accepted her and followed her, but now everything she said is crumbling and falling down, and they stand back and weep.

They mourn for her, sob on account of her, in loud unrestrained wailing. Anticipating their own impending fate, the hapless "kings" and "merchants" of earth join in a dirge of death for haughty Babylon, now in torment upon her blazing funeral pyre. The dramatic effect of verses 9-20, which describe the doom of the great harlot is heightened by their exotic oriental literary form, poetic diffuseness highlighted by graphic imagery. The appeal of chapter 18 is primarily emotional but that appeal is reinforced by incisive logic: For those who respond to God's call to flee from the wrath to come (verse 4), there is still respite from her impending doom.

The symbolism of the chapter is drawn almost entirely from the Old Testament as a comparison of the many cross references cited makes evident. A careful study of these Old Testament parallels in connection with the historical incidents alluded to greatly clarify the highly symbolic imagery of this chapter. In Revelation 17:16 it is the kings of the earth (verse 12) who set Babylon a fire. They are pictured here mourning.

Revelation 18:10 *"Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."*

Her judgment has come swiftly upon her. No doubt in the realization that recently they had collaborated with Babylon, (see verse 3) were involved in her "sins," and were accordingly destined to share in her "plagues." (verse 4) They realize that their own fate is inescapably bound up with hers. They had not heeded God's call to "come out of her" (verse 4) and must soon share her fate. Compare Ezekiel 27:33, 35.

They had expected to receive power permanently with their paramour mystical Babylon. She had assured them that she was enthroned a "queen" forever and that should they cast their lot with her, they too would enjoy endless dominion. Realizing too late the futility of such a scheme, they now give way to utter remorse.

Revelation 17:16 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."*

So the ten kings that followed her now turn against her and make her desolate and naked. This means complete global financial collapse, that's what is pictured here.

Revelation 18:11 *"And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:"*

The merchants of the earth have had it good, things have gone well for them and they have lived luxuriously. But now all of a sudden it has all come crashing down and no one buys their merchandise any more.

Revelation 18:12 *"The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,"*

All the things that man makes, sells and trades, all that ceases to be worth anything. All the gold and silver will be worth nothing, because it will no longer be able to buy anything.

Revelation 18:13-14 *"13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all."*

Complete global financial collapse has taken place, and none of it will be worth anything.

Revelation 18:15 *"The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,"*

Those who accepted her with open arms and praised her greatness are now going to stand back and mourn and weep because she has met her end.

Revelation 18:16 *"And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!"*

All the merchandise is not worth a thing. And not only that, but world trade will come to an end. Today we live in a time when you can trade all over the world. You can go home, sit at your computer and you can buy anything from anywhere in the world. This all comes to an end.

Revelation 18:17 *"For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,"*

This is describing world trade.

Revelation 18:18-19 *"18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."*

The great controversy has come to an end. Babylon has fallen. It's over.

Revelation 18:20 *"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."*

The desolation of Babylon brings victory and joy to all righteous beings throughout the universe. The anthem of victory over Babylon is recorded in Revelation 19:1-6 and the feast celebrating the

deliverance of God's people is alluded to in verses 7-9. The inhabitants of heaven are first to rejoice in the triumph of Christ and His church.

Revelation 18:21 *"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."*

Compare Jeremiah's illustration of the fate of ancient Babylon (Jeremiah 51:63-64; Isaiah 13:19; Revelation 14:8).

Revelation 18:22 *"And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;"*

A highly figurative description of the desolate state of Babylon. Compare Isaiah 24:8; Ezekiel 26:13.

Revelation 18:23 *"And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."*

The sights and sounds of life are gone (Jeremiah 25:10). She has been punished for her deceptions, for the souls she has lured to destruction, and for all the pain, misery and suffering she has inflicted on the "prophets" and the "saints". Apart from Gods people all were deceived by her deceptions and followed her practices. Babylon secured the allegiance of the inhabitants of the whole earth.

Revelation 13:3 *"... and all the world wondered after the beast."*

Revelation 18:24 *"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."*

Revelation 17:6 *"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."*

The Bible is telling us that time is short. You and I have time right now, but it's running out. When we reach the events described in this chapter, it's over, there's no more time, because the controversy has reached its end and God's kingdom has come into being.

You and I need to make absolutely sure that we're walking by faith, following God, obeying Him, that our will is surrendered to His will, and that we are following the word of God.

Revelation - Chapter 19

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

The great controversy has ended, the victory is won and the time of the marriage supper of the Lamb has come.

Revelation 19:1 *"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:"*

Now notice as John looks back and picks up some of the very first things in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 19:2 *"For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."*

This woman Babylon who has done all these things to the servants of God down through the ages, God has now avenged on her the blood of all the saints.

Revelation 19:3-4 *"3 And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."*

And now John mentions again things that he first described in the 4th chapter of Revelation.

So what John is saying is that the things he saw in vision in the 4th chapter, those things have been given to John all the way down through the book of Revelation and they have now come to a completion, and the angels and elders now bear witness that everything has happened just as God said it would.

Revelation 19:5-6 *"5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."*

We find the same thing at the beginning of the book of Revelation, where it speaks of a voice like a great thunder and like many waters, proclaiming God's greatness.

So this is the time in which the marriage supper of the Lamb has come. Babylon is no more. All the false systems, all the religions, all those that were in opposition to God and have led people away from what God's word teaches have all come to an end, they are no more.

You and I must understand that this is a great controversy, that this is a struggle between truth and falsehood, between what is right and what is wrong. There is no such thing in Christianity as half way as there are in other religions; there is no yin and yang, the balance between right and wrong which is taught in false religions. What matters is what is right, what is just, what is good. We have reached the place where all these things have triumphed.

So Babylon has come to an end, she is no more, and now it's time for the marriage supper of the Lamb. God is going to gather all of His people for this great marriage supper, and we find that this marriage supper is patterned after a Jewish wedding; all the elements of a Jewish wedding are present in the marriage supper of the Lamb. And these are the things that took place in a Jewish wedding:

1. The bridegroom goes to the home of the bride and pays her dowry. There would be no wedding unless the bridegroom paid the dowry. The dowry would be different depending on what the father of the bride asked for, and the dowry belonged to the bride, this was her guarantee that if the marriage broke up she would keep the dowry.

2. The bridegroom then returned to his father's house to prepare a place for his bride. Up to the point that he paid the dowry there was no guarantee of a wedding, but once the dowry was paid then the wedding was certain and so the groom went back and prepared a place for his bride, he would build a place where they would live together, and often their home would be built near to the home of the groom's father.

3. While the groom is building the marriage home, the bride stays at the bride's father's house and prepares herself for the wedding. This is the time during which the bride makes all her preparations for the wedding, and there are many examples of this in scripture.

4. When the bride and the home are ready, the bridegroom returns for his bride.

5. The bridegroom then takes his bride to his father's house for the wedding.

This is how a Jewish wedding took place. And when you understand that the marriage supper of the Lamb is based on this Jewish type, you can understand what Christ has done, because everything that Christ has done follows the pattern of a Jewish wedding. For example:

Ephesians 5:31 *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."*

In other words, a man leaves his parents' home and goes to find a bride and is joined to her, and God takes this and compares it to what He does for His church.

Ephesians 5:32-33 *"32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."*

So Paul takes this scenario of courtship and wedding and a man being joined to his wife, and compares it to Christ and His love for His church.

Revelation 19:7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."*

So God's people, the church, have made themselves ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb, just as a Jewish bride made herself ready before her wedding.

Revelation 19:8 *"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

The bride is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. How does this happen? This is the work that should be going on within our lives now, asking God to sanctify us and purify us for the wonderful event.

In the original Greek, the word "granted" means "given", so the bride was "given" the fine linen to wear, it's not something that she is capable of by her own works, it's something that was given to her, and it's totally and completely free, you can't work for it, you can't buy it. The righteousness that you and I need and must have is totally without one thread of human devising, it is completely the righteousness of Jesus Christ it comes no other way. But we can't have that if we are not willing to spend time with Him; we have to spend time in the word of God for that to take place.

Isaiah 61:10 *"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."*

So God Himself puts upon us this robe of righteousness, which He alone can give to us.

2 Corinthians 5:21 *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

This is how it takes place. In Matthew chapter 22 Jesus tells the story of a great supper, referring to the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Matthew 22:10 *"So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."*

So the servants went out and gathered all kinds of people, both bad and good. It doesn't say just good people it says the wedding hall was filled with good and bad people. This is trying to show us that there isn't anything within ourselves that makes us acceptable to God.

But there's something that is a common denominator among all the wedding guests:

Matthew 22:11 *"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:"*

The common denominator among them all was that they all had a wedding garment. There were some of them that were good moral people, there were some of them that were bad, but all of them had on the wedding garment which had been given to them by the King – that was the thing that made the difference, that's what gave them the right to be there – the wedding garment.

Matthew 22:12-14 *"12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen."*

What was the man going to say to the king? He couldn't say; well I couldn't afford it because the garment was free, there was nothing the man could say to the king, he had no excuse. And it's the same with you and me. The righteousness of Christ is offered to us totally and completely free. All you and I have to do is accept it and put on the garment – it covers all our sins – it covers the morally good and also the morally bad, it covers them all, and it's offered freely to all. This is the garment of Christ's righteousness.

Revelation 19:9 *"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."*

The bride is the church. You and I are the guests, and we're invited to the wedding, and it's required that we have the wedding garment, which is the righteousness of Christ.

Are we becoming kinder? Are we becoming more loving? Are we becoming more gentle? Are we becoming more forgiving? This is the righteousness of Christ. This is what must happen to us if we're going to do what He wants us to do.

Now when the bride is ready the bridegroom is going to return to receive His bride.

Christ decided to leave His Father's house and come to this earth. And for what purpose did He come? To pay the dowry.

John 17:4-5 *"4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."*

So in the beginning Christ was with His Father, He then came to earth and said; Now I have come to the earth and have done what You asked me to do, now glorify Me with the glory I had with You back before the earth ever existed. So he came to this earth to pay the dowry for His bride, and at Calvary He paid the dowry.

Ephesians 5:25 *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*

That was the dowry which Christ paid. The dowry required that He give His life for His bride, He paid the highest price that could be asked, and He paid it for us. And remember that the bride gets the dowry, and it's good for eternity, it's a guarantee that you and I can be in the kingdom of God.

And after Christ paid the dowry what did He do? He went back to His Father to prepare a place for His bride. After He paid the dowry, that was the guarantee that the wedding would take place, after He died on Calvary then the wedding was made certain and so He could return to His Father in heaven and prepare a place for His bride.

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

And so Christ went back to His Father to prepare a place for His bride, and that's what He has been doing, preparing a place for you and me.

Probably His preparing a place for us could be done a lot faster than the time it took for a Jewish bride to prepare herself. The length of time that we have been on this earth, from the time that He left to go back to his Father, to this day, is not because He has been slow in preparing a place, but it has more to do with the time that it has taken the bride to get herself ready. How does the bride make herself ready?

Ephesians 5:26 *"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"*

In other words, it says that this washing process, the cleansing that takes place, all this takes place by the word. So the cleansing process takes place by the word of God. Are some of us not being washed because we're not spending time in the word of God? What does the word of God do for you and me?

Ephesians 5:27 *"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*

All of this takes place by the word. So we need to open our Bible and read it, spend time in the word of God. There is nothing that we can do that is more important than the time we spend in the word of God, especially in this day and age. You and I must spend time in the word of God if we are going to receive the cleansing that He desires to give us.

Revelation 19:10 *"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

This was such a wonderful scene that John, caught up in the wonder of it all, fell down to worship the angel who was showing him the scenes. But he is quickly reminded that he must not do this; he must only worship God.

He is told something very important here. Revelation 12 tells us that the Remnant believers will keep the Commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. Now here we see what the Testimony of Jesus is; it is the Spirit of Prophecy! The remnant of God's faithful ones will have the true gift of prophecy among them.

We also see that the angels are God's servants, and they are employed in caring for us and teaching us as Jesus directs them. Yet there is more to this work of the angels, as their job is to guide and direct every person who chooses to follow Jesus with all their heart. They also work with people who haven't given their hearts to Jesus, trying to guide them to the light. But even so, we are never to pray to angels or worship them.

If we really give our whole heart to Jesus, then the angels will help and guide us. God will never give us a message that says something that doesn't agree with the Bible. Sometimes the Holy Spirit guides people who have given their hearts to Jesus to help teach people who don't know Him yet; we see this in the story of Phillip and the Ethiopian, the Holy Spirit sent Phillip out where he met a person who wanted to learn about Jesus.

Joel 2:28-29 *"28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."*

Revelation 19:11 *"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."*

Heaven was open when John's attention was first directed to it and remained open. (Compare Revelation 4:1; 11:19; 15:5). Accompanied by the angel armies of heaven, (Revelation 19:14) Christ is seen descending from heaven as King of kings (verse 16) in power and majesty to deliver His faithful people from those who are bent upon their destruction. The scene described in verses 11-21 is the climax of "the battle of that great day of God Almighty," often called the battle of Armageddon.

In Bible times horses were used almost exclusively in connection with warfare or government business. When used figuratively in the Bible as here, the horse is usually a symbol of battle. (Exodus 15:21; Isaiah 43:17; Jeremiah 8:6; Ezekiel 38:15; Zechariah 10:3; Revelation 14:20)

White typifies holiness of character (Revelation 3:4; 6:2; 7:14). White horses have ever been the favorite of kings and military leaders. Christ has received the right to rule this earth as King of kings and now appears figuratively as a warrior riding forth as a conqueror on a magnificent white charger to occupy His lawful domain and to escort His faithful people back to the "marriage supper":

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

It should be remembered that oriental names depict character (Acts 3:16), and that therefore the names here ascribed to Christ specifically represent Him in His role as champion of His beleaguered people on earth. Four statements are made concerning Christ's name in connection with the battle of Revelation 19:11-21.

Notice how John reaches back to other chapters in the book of Revelation and pulls out many of the attributes of Jesus Christ that we have found there.

1. Christ is called "Faithful and True" (verse 11) in that He now appears, according to His promise, (John 14:1-3) to deliver His own. To them He has seemed to delay His coming, (Revelation 16:15) but they "have waited for him" and He now appears for the purpose of effecting their salvation. (Isaiah 25:9; Revelation 16:17)

2. The "name written that no man knew but he himself" (verse 12) represents the heretofore unknown role in which He now appears as the avenger of His people (Revelation 16:1). In the performance of this "strange" work (Isaiah 28:21) He acts in a role new to both men and angels.

3. But as the avenger and deliverer of His people He is still "The Word of God" (verse 13). He is "The Word of God" at work carrying out the will of the Father on earth, now in judgment, as formerly in mercy. (John 1:1-3; Revelation 19:15)

4. The title "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (verse 16) applies in a special sense to Christ at this time. (Revelation 17:14) All power has been given into His hands. (1 Corinthians 15:25) Satan selfishly aspired to the exalted position that could only be given to Christ as the Son of God. (Isaiah 14:12-14; Revelation 12:7-9) But the latter, not counting equality with the Father a thing to be grasped, had voluntarily relinquished the full exercise of the attributes and prerogatives of Deity for a time, (Philippians 2:6-8) and thereby demonstrated His worthiness to receive the honor and dignity implicit in the title "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

In righteousness. His cause is altogether just. (Revelation 15:3; 16:5) Throughout history earthly rulers have waged war for selfish ends and personal or national status of power and authority. Compare Isaiah 11:1-5.

Now He doth judge and make war. He executes judgment by waging war. This war is against the political and military forces of earth, which had assembled to destroy His faithful servants (Revelation 13:15; 16:13-14, 16-17).

Revelation 19:12-13 *"12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."*

His eyes were as a flame of fire (Revelation 1:14). As Christ goes forth, the great champion of eternal justice, nothing escapes His notice.

His Crowns - Greek "*diadema*". In the Bible diadema is never applied to the reward of the saints. It is always the crown of royalty. In addition to the many royal crowns that Christ receives as King of kings, He also wears the chaplet of victory, the stephanos since He too overcame Satan. (Revelation 12:3; 14:14) A name (Revelation 2:17).

His name is called the Word of God. So there is some relationship between the Bible and Jesus Christ, and if you want to get to know Him its easy, you find Him right there in the Bible.

Revelation 19:14 *"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."*

The armies that follow are angelic hosts, they accompany Christ at His second coming. (Matthew 24:31; 25:31; 22:7).

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

The sword is obviously figurative and rpresents the word of God:

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

By the word of the Lord the earth and its inhabitants were brought into being (Psalms 33:6,9), and now by the word of His mouth He terminates their existence (Revelation 19:20-21).

Rod of iron - Psalms 2:9; 110:1-2, 5-6. The ancient shepherd's rod had a double function. The crook on one end served to help and guide the sheep, while the heavy ferrule on the other end, a metal cap or ring to strengthen the rod, made it also a weapon of assault. This was used for the protection of the flock. To repel and kill wild animals that would scatter and destroy it. It is now time for the Good Shepherd to use the "rod of iron" against the nations for the deliverance of His beleaguered flock on earth. His ruling or smiting the nations with a rod of iron results in their extermination, not their government during the millennium as some hold.

Winepress - Compare Isaiah 63:3:

Isaiah 63:3 *"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."*

Revelation 19:16 *"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords."*

Why would He have this name written on His robe and on His thigh? Because His robe is a robe of righteousness, and He is righteous.

It's written on His thigh because that's the sign of His covenant that He makes with you and me. In this covenant He says; I will be your God, and you will be My people. And He says; I will remember your sins no more, and I will cover you with My righteousness. Christ's name (His works) is to fulfil the promise and covenant (under His thigh) He made to us when He took the Book of Life from the right hand of the Creator to be our leader, our King of king and Lord of lords, leading us in truth (rod of iron) and righteousness (Isaiah 9:4-7).

In Old Testament tradition, when a covenant or promise was made, it was done by the one making the promise placing a hand under the thigh of the one benefiting from the promise. In other words, it was a way of signifying that a promise and covenant had been made (Genesis 24:2,9; 47:29).

So when Christ comes back He says; I am your God and you are My people, He comes to gather His bride.

In His majesty, kindness and love, He gives to us the robe of His righteousness. But if you don't want to be involved in the marriage supper of the Lamb, if you don't want to be there, then there's another supper that you will go to, whether you want to or not. And both of these suppers are pictured here in this chapter.

Revelation 19:17 *"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;"*

Now this is not talking about the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is the supper of the great God. And the angel is inviting all the birds to come to this great supper. Perhaps the blinding light of the sun is here descriptive of the glorious light of the divine presence (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9; Revelation 6:15-17). Thus the angel who issues the challenge of Revelation 19:17 would be standing next to Christ as in ancient combat an armor bearer would be near his lord.

This invitation to the fowls warns the assembled hosts of the wicked as to the fate that impends for them (Revelation 16:15-17). It is couched in the graphic oriental phraseology of a challenge to personal combat. (1 Samuel 17:44-46) To be devoured by the scavengers of the skies constituted one of the curses for disobedience pronounced by Moses in his valedictory address to the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 28:26). John's phraseology in Revelation 19:17-18 appears to be based on God's words to the heathen nations of earth as recorded in Ezekiel 39:17-22; Jeremiah 7:32-33).

The gruesome alternative to eating at the marriage supper of the Lamb (verse 9) is to be eaten by the fowls of heaven at the "supper of the great God." Those who do not voluntarily accept God's gracious invitation to be present at the one must respond to His imperative summons to the other.

Revelation 19:18 *"That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."*

So here we see another invitation, but this time it's given to the birds, to come and eat the flesh of all those that spurned the invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Here is speaks of literally "flesh pieces":

Revelation 17:16 *"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."*

Kings - The confederate nations of earth acting in concert under the direct supervision of Satan in the guise of an angel of light (Revelation 16:14; 16-17; 17:12,14).

Captains - The leaders in command of the military forces assembled to carry out Satan's will in the closing scenes of the great controversy.

Mighty men - Armed forces organized, trained, and equipped.

Flesh of horses - The remainder of verse 18 is a graphic word picture of the total destruction of all the forces of evil at the second coming of Christ (Revelation 6:15; 14:17-20; 16:21).

Free and bond - Compare Revelation 13:16:

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

It's our choice. It's up to us to choose whether we will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb, or whether we will be at the supper of the great God where the birds will come and eat the flesh of all people.

Revelation 19:19 *"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."*

All those who are in opposition to God now assembled for battle and engaged in bitter conflict among themselves (Revelation 16:17,19).

Revelation 19:20 *"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."*

So here it's talking about the beast and the false prophet being cast into a lake of fire - or the lake which is fire. This phrase immediately turns the reader's mind to an identical phrase in Revelation 20:10, which in turn seems to call for the conclusion that these phrases refer to the same fiery event being the destruction of the wicked at the end of the thousand years.

But to do so presents a problem. The 19th chapter is most evidently discussing events in connection with the second coming of Christ. Hence to hold that the lake of fire mentioned in Revelation 19:20 describes an event at the close of the millennium is to lift this verse out of its contextual sequence. It is always better if possible to find an explanation that allows any given statement to maintain its historical sequence in a passage of Scripture.

As regards Revelation 19:20 this is possible on the reasonable premise that there is a fiery judgment from God both at the beginning and at the close of the millennium. There is no inconsistency and certainly no contradiction in speaking of a lake of fire at the beginning and a lake of fire at the end of the millennium. We see in the next verse it goes on to speak about the remnant, the rest of the wicked that were left.

Revelation 19:21 *"And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."*

What is it that proceeds from Christ's mouth? What is the sword? The sword is the word of God. Jesus said it is His words that will judge us. We have to come to the place in our experience where when we read what the Bible says, we are willing to accept what it says. There are many that read what the Bible says but are not willing to accept it, or they read what it says and yet they say it doesn't make any difference. We have to come to the place where we are willing to let God call the shots, where we are willing to let Him show us what to do. If we're not willing to do that then He can't do His work in our life. The Holy Spirit must come into our life and change us, make us different, make us love one another – that's the work of the Holy Spirit – and we have to be submissive to that work.

The remnant or **the rest** - All of earth's inhabitants except the redeemed.

Then the angel invites the birds to come and eat the flesh of all people. And it says the birds were filled with their flesh. Now Jeremiah gives us an insight into what happens here.

Jeremiah 4:23-26 *"23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. 24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. 25 I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. 26 I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger."*

This is telling us that the supper of the great God is over. The birds have come and eaten and have fled. Only Satan is left for a thousand years to contemplate all he has done and all he has lost, no one to tempt, he is on death row waiting for his final destruction at the end of the thousand years.

Today the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is inviting you and me to come and be a part of the marriage supper of the Lamb. You may think of yourself as one of the guests that was bad, but notice that He had a wedding garment for every one of the guests, and that garment covers each person.

The Lord simply invites us to come. He has a robe of righteousness to cover our life, so that we may have the marvellous privilege of sitting down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Revelation 22:17 *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*

Revelation - Chapter 20

The Millennium

Chapters 17 through 22 of Revelation deal specifically with the final events of earth's history, and in this section we will be looking at the thousand years of peace described in chapter 20.

Some people believe that we're already in that thousand year period, but the Bible says that during this period the devil will be chained up (figuratively speaking), which at this present time he is not, he's still free to deceive and tempt human beings, so that period can't have started yet.

We are going to look at when this thousand year period starts, when it ends and what goes on during that period, where is the devil, where are the righteous and where are the wicked - all of this has to fit together.

There are certain things that have to be done in order to prepare for eternity, and in this chapter the Bible describes a period of 1,000 years that is set aside for that purpose. The righteous have to be sure in their hearts that God is completely just. The wicked also have to understand that God is just in carrying out the punishment for their rebellion against Him. And the entire universe has to know that God is just. For righteousness to reign throughout eternity, these things have to be settled. The events described in chapter 20 follow immediately upon those portrayed in chapter 19.

So we'll take a look at this thousand years and what takes place during this period that God has set aside for this purpose - for you and I to become settled for eternity.

Revelation 20:1 *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand."*

John saw the angel descending coming down to Earth.

The Key the angel has is no doubt symbolic of being able to imprison or confine. The fact that an angel carries the key shows that he has complete control of events. The dragon will be unable to avoid being cast into the pit.

The bottomless pit - In the Greek is "*abussos*" (Revelation 9:1). This is a symbolic vision. So the bottomless pit is not some subterranean cavern or some yawning chasm elsewhere in the universe. John is describing the prophetic picture that unfolded before his eyes. In vision he saw an actual pit, but the shutting up of the dragon in the pit was merely a symbolic way of showing that Satan's activities would be brought to a halt. This is made clear by the statement showing the purpose of his confinement; "that he should deceive the nations no more" (Revelation 20:3).

Revelation 20:2 *"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."*

How Satan's activities will be brought to a halt is clear from the context and other scriptures, which show that the earth will be utterly depopulated at the second coming of Christ. According to Revelation 19:19-21 the wicked are destroyed in connection with the coming. At the same time the righteous are "caught up ... in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Paul's language shows that at His second coming Christ does not establish His kingdom on earth. Else why would He remove the saints from the earth? Its establishment takes place after the close of the

millennium when the New Jerusalem comes down. (Revelation 21:1-3) That Jesus removes the saints from the earth at His coming is further implied in John 14:1-3. In comforting His disciples in their sorrow concerning His departure, Jesus informed them that He was going to His Father's house, where He would prepare dwellings for them. Then He would return and take them to be with Him. Compare John 13:36; 17:24. The dwellings are no doubt in the New Jerusalem, which is not transferred to this earth until the close of the millennium (Revelation 21:1-3).

Revelation 20:3 *"And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."*

So the devil is bound for a thousand years, no longer able to deceive the nations.

Set a seal - Greek "*sphragizo*" - meaning "to seal". For the function of ancient seals (Revelation 7:2). The present seal may be compared with that placed on the tomb of Jesus (Matthew 27:66). The sealing symbolizes that Satan will be effectively restrained for the period indicated.

Satan's work of deception will be cut short by the depopulation of the earth. There will be no one whom he can deceive.

Greek "*dei*" - meaning "it is necessary". Dei suggests necessity based upon moral and ethical reasons. Here it is a necessity because God wills that it shall be so as a part of His divine plan.

To be loosed represents the reverse of the binding of the devil at the second coming of Christ. Satan is once again in the position to deceive men and work his will in opposition to God. It was the depopulation of the earth that terminated his deceptive work. His loosing will therefore be accomplished by a repopulation of the earth. An event brought about by the resurrection of the wicked at the close of the thousand years. These newly resurrected ones will be subject to his deceptions as he plans his final test of strength with Jehovah.

A little season or a little time - how long this little time will be we are not informed but it will be time enough for Satan to organize the resurrected wicked for an assault upon the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 20:4 *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."*

Thrones are symbols of authority to exercise and rule as a king (Revelation 13:2) or as a judge (Matthew 19:28).

Now we see that Judgment was given to those who sat upon these thrones, Greek "*krima*", meaning "sentence", "verdict", "a decision rendered". Here "*krima*" seems to mean the authority to pass sentence. The passage does not refer to a verdict in favor of the righteous. The saints sit upon thrones, which indicates that they are the ones who will pronounce sentence. The passage is no doubt an allusion to Daniel 7:22 where the prophet notes that "judgment was given to the saints of the most High".

The work of judgment referred to by the revelator is no doubt that spoken of by Paul:

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 *"2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"*

The work of judgment will no doubt involve a careful investigation of the records of evil men so that every man will be convinced of the justice of God in the destruction of the wicked. These souls/people (Revelation 6:9; Psalms 16:10) have been beheaded - Greek "*pelekizo*" - meaning literally "to cut off with an ax", specifically "to behead". The word comes from the Greek "*pelekus* - "an ax". The ax was the usual instrument used in executions in ancient Rome. Later it was replaced by the sword and later by the guillotine. They were killed because of their witness their testimony of Jesus, the Word of God (Revelation 1:2, 9).

These people had not worshipped the beast or his image. In other words they heeded the warning of the third angel message in Revelation 14:9-12 and refused to bow to the power represented by the beast even though threatened with boycott and death (Revelation 13:15-17). Only two classes of saints are mentioned in this verse. Martyrs and victors over the beast. This does not mean that they are the only ones to share in the millennial reign, for it has been shown that all the righteous dead (not only the martyrs) come forth in the first resurrection (Revelation 20:6; Daniel 12:2). Perhaps the martyrs and the victors over the beast are singled out because they represent those who have suffered most.

So who will the saints reign if all the wicked have been destroyed? They are said to reign "with Christ". When the seventh angel sounds, "the kingdoms of this world ... become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Revelation 11:15). Daniel speaks of the "kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom" being "given to the people of the saints of the most High" (Revelation 7:27). The saints have been under the oppressive rule of kings who had drunk with the wine of Babylon's fornication (Revelation 18:3). Now the tables have been turned.

Yes the wicked are dead, but they will return to life at the end of the millennial period. They are shut up as it were, to later receive their punishment. In the meantime the saints assist in the work of judgment that determines the punishment to be meted out. After the wicked return to life they go down in utter defeat, receive their punishment and are destroyed (Revelation 14:10; 20:9).

The millennial reign as the Bible clearly shows is with Christ in heaven, not on earth as many Bible interpreters assert.

Revelation 20:5-6 *"5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."*

The scripture tells us clearly that the thousand years begins with the first resurrection - the resurrection of the righteous - we know it's the resurrection of the righteous because it says "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection". All the righteous, all those that have accepted Christ, all those that have given their lives to Him, all those that have walked with Him, they will come forth from the grave first.

If all the righteous have been resurrected in the first resurrection and have come forth from the grave, then who is left? The wicked. They're the only ones left. So when it says "the rest of the dead" that can only refer to the wicked. So this is telling us that there is a thousand years between the first resurrection and a second resurrection. And in John it clarifies this further:

John 5:28-29 *"28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

So there are two resurrections. There is the resurrection of life, in which the righteous are resurrected, and there is the resurrection of condemnation, in which the wicked are resurrected. And these two resurrections are separated by a thousand years.

Five Events That Begin The 1000 Years

Now the scripture reveals that there are five events that take place at the beginning of this thousand years.

1. The second coming of Christ.

Nothing is going to happen concerning the thousand years until Jesus returns. But with the coming of Christ, then the thousand years will begin. Christ is coming back to claim his people, all the righteous, and to set up His everlasting kingdom that will last for eternity. And the coming of Christ initiates the remaining events.

2. The righteous dead are resurrected.

Christ returns, and as He returns the scripture says He will shout and His voice will roll through the earth like peals of the loudest thunder, and all those that are in the grave that have died in Christ will hear His voice and come forth:

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"*

So the righteous dead will come forth from the grave at the call of Christ. When you accept Christ as your saviour, He gives you a new nature, a spiritual nature that is in tune with Him, so when He returns and calls, that new nature responds to His call. And the righteous come forth from the grave in perfect health, with no sickness or pain, no sorrow or death – all those things have gone forever.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 *"51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*

To be raised incorruptible means to be raised perfect, with nothing wrong, and immortality will be bestowed upon all the righteous.

3. The righteous living are translated.

All those who have died in Christ have been resurrected, but now the living righteous that are alive in the earth at the time Christ comes back, it says all those people will be translated. This means that they will be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 *"Then we which are alive and remain [the living righteous] shall be caught up together with them [the resurrected righteous] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

So the resurrected righteous will come forth from their graves and rise to meet Christ , and the righteous who are alive when Christ returns will be changed and caught up together with the resurrected righteous, and they will all meet Christ in the air. So God has gathered together all of His children to meet Him.

4. The wicked living are slain.

What about the wicked who are living on the earth when Christ returns? Well this is what the scripture says will happen to them:

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

The Bible does not teach anything about the righteous being raptured away without anyone knowing about it - that's not scriptural. If the sky rolls back like a scroll, if islands start disappearing and mountains are moving around, do you think people will realise that something is happening? It's not very secret!

Revelation 6:15-17 *"15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"*

So it's clear that the wicked know exactly what's happening, they're fully aware of it.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 *"7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;"*

So it makes it clear that the living wicked will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming, as if a fire covered the whole earth.

But what about all the wicked who are dead?

5. The wicked dead are not disturbed.

When Christ comes, and He shouts, and His voice rolls through the earth, the righteous dead hear that voice and respond and come out of the grave, but the wicked dead don't hear a thing, they're not disturbed in the grave! And in fact they don't appear again for another thousand years.

Revelation 20:5 *"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."*

So a thousand years will elapse before the wicked dead come up again out of the grave in the second resurrection - the resurrection of condemnation.

Satan Bound

When Christ comes, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous meet Christ in the air and are all taken to heaven together. The wicked that were living are slain. The wicked that were dead are not disturbed. And so the devil is bound.

So with all the righteous in heaven, and all the wicked dead, the devil no longer has anyone to tempt, and this is how he is bound. It doesn't mean he is literally bound with chains – no physical chain could hold Satan. But yet it says he is bound or chained for a thousand years.

It's like if a friend came to your house and asked you to go somewhere with them, but you said; “I'd really like to but I'm just tied up right now". What would you mean? You would simply mean that circumstances are preventing you from going. And it's the same with Satan – he is bound by circumstance, because there is no one left for him to tempt, and he remains like that for a thousand years.

The righteous are in heaven, the wicked are dead, the earth is empty, it's desolate, and the devil and his angels are bound here for a thousand years. The Bible describes the earth at this time with these words in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 25:33 *"And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground."*

When Christ comes the living wicked will be slain, they will fall, and there they will remain until the end of the thousand years.

Judgment Given to the Saints

At this point the Bible says that judgment is given to the righteous. Note that we do not have it now; it's given to the saints during the thousand years, so we have no right to judge one another now.

Revelation 20:4 *"4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."*

So the righteous are given judgment during the thousand years.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 *"2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"*

Why is judgment given to the righteous? Isn't God's judgement good enough? Well the Bible tells us that the problem of sin is not going to arise a second time.

Nahum 1:9 *"What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time."*

God does not intend that sin will rise a second time, and so God will answer every question that the righteous might have. Have you ever thought about what will happen when you get to heaven? Is God going to turn a key and we will all become mindless obedient servants? No, God is going to let each one of us use our mind, in fact we will use it more than we do now!

Let's say that you get to heaven, and there is someone who you thought for sure would be there but who isn't there. What would you do? Would you be happy to just keep quiet and not say anything? Would you keep wondering why that person wasn't there? God does not intend to get 10,000 years into eternity only for you to suddenly turn round and ask Him why that person isn't there who you thought should be there. God is going to answer that question during the thousand years, He is going to answer that question for every person and show exactly what happened to each individual and show exactly the reasons why they are not in heaven. That's why the books will be opened and the righteous will go through them, and they are going to see that God was perfectly loving, kind, merciful and just in everything that He did. And this is how judgment is given to the saints.

If you or I don't make it to heaven, it won't be God's fault, because He is doing everything He can to see that each one of us makes it into the kingdom of heaven.

Revelation 21:4 *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."*

What is this verse telling us? It's telling us that there have to be tears in order for God to wipe them away. And this is what the thousand years is for, to settle things once and for all, so that there will be no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain – all the questions will be answered. Everything will be settled so that sin will never rise again.

Five Events That End The 1000 Years

The righteous have spent a thousand years in heaven, living in the city of New Jerusalem, the place that Jesus went to prepare for His bride.

Now just as there were five events that marked the beginning of the thousand years, there are also five events that mark its close.

1. New Jerusalem descends.

At the end of the thousand years, the city of New Jerusalem that Jesus prepared and in which the saints have lived during the thousand years, will descend back to this earth.

Revelation 21:2 *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

This earth will become the place where God dwells. We will look at this more in our study of chapter 21.

2. The wicked dead are resurrected.

When the New Jerusalem descends to earth, at that point the wicked dead, who have been in the grave for a thousand years, are resurrected. This is the second resurrection, the resurrection of condemnation. And what a difference this second resurrection is to the first. Those in the first resurrection, at the beginning of the thousand years, are resurrected incorruptible, immortal, with no sickness, no pain, no sorrow, everything is absolutely perfect. But for those in the second resurrection, there is no change, they come out of the grave exactly as they went in – if they went in blind then they come out of the grave blind. If they went in sick, they come out with the same sickness. So for those in the second resurrection there is no change in their physical condition and there is also no change in their character.

It's now, at this time, that our character is to be developed – this does not happen after the resurrection. If you think that at the resurrection God is going to miraculously change you into being patient, kind and loving, then you're deceiving yourself – that is not going to happen. We must learn to love others before the resurrection – it will be too late to do that after.

3. Satan released from his prison.

How is Satan released from the prison that he has been in for a thousand years? Because now there are people again. All of the wicked have been resurrected and they are as numerous as the sand of the sea, and so now Satan has people to work with and deceive once again.

Revelation 20:7-8 *"7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."*

The names Gog and Magog were associated with the enemies of Israel, who were to attack God's people and Jerusalem after the exile (see Ezekiel 38:2, 14-16). Various of the Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel were not fulfilled. They will meet their in spiritual Israel. So the mighty enemy confederation Ezekiel spoke of as coming against Jerusalem will find its fulfilment when God allows Satan, with his armies of the unsaved, to come against His people and His beloved city for the final battle of the great controversy.

Another great event which marks the close of the millennium is the resurrection of the wicked:

Revelation 20:5 *"But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished."*

The raising of the wicked dead also explains Revelation 20:7:

Revelation 20:7 *"And when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison"*

Satan now has people in whose lives he can operate. And he begins to work feverishly to mobilize all those countless wicked ones who had been resurrected. Verse 8 tells us that he "shall go out to Gog and Magog to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

The Bible often uses typology and we find this when we read of Gog and Magog. Gog and Magog are referred to in Ezekiel 38-39 and in Revelation 20:7-8. While these two instances carry the same names, a close study of Scripture clearly demonstrates they do not refer to the same people and events. In Ezekiel's prophecy, Gog will be the leader of a great army that attacks the land of Israel (God's people). Gog is described as "of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" (Ezekiel 38:2-3).

When Gog and Magog are mentioned again in Revelation 20:7-8, it is to show that these people demonstrate the same rebellion against God and antagonism toward God and His people as those in Ezekiel 38-39. It is similar to someone today calling a person "the devil" because he or she is sinful and evil. We know that person is not really Satan, but because that person shares similar characteristics, he or she might be referred to as "the devil."

The book of Revelation uses Ezekiel's prophecy about Magog to portray a final end-times attack on the city of God (The New Jerusalem - Revelation 21:1-2, 20:8-9). The result of this battle is that all the wicked are finally destroyed with Satan and will find their final place in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

For those who say Gog and Magog are literal places such as Israel, Russia etc. (people have many different ideas) the Bible clearly says in Revelation 20:7-8 that Gog and Magog (typology) gather together after the 1,000 years, therefore this is clearly not any literal nation.

We may ask, why don't Satan and the wicked just decide to leave those in the New Jerusalem alone? Why don't they decide to simply live in another part of the earth and not bother God and His people? Remember, the wicked are resurrected exactly as they went into the grave – that means they do not have immortality. So there's something in the city of New Jerusalem that they desperately need. To see what this is, let's go back to the beginning, in the garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:22-24 *"22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: 23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was*

taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

If man had been allowed to continue to eat from the tree of life, he would have had immortality, he would have lived forever in a sinful state, so God had to put an angel at the entrance to the garden of Eden to guard the tree of life, to prevent man having any access to it. And where is the tree of life now?

Revelation 22:1-2 *"1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."*

The tree of life is inside the city of New Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem has now descended to earth. So Satan tells the wicked; if we can just get inside the city and eat from the tree of life, we'll live forever.

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

Satan deceives the wicked one last time, and they go up and try to take the city, thinking that maybe they can just get inside, eat from the tree of life, and live forever.

Revelation 20:10 *"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."*

Many people like to use this verse to prove the existence of a literal hell where the wicked of all ages, including Satan and his angels, will be tormented forever in fire. Is that what this verse really teaches? As always, we must compare scripture with scripture. On one side you can stack quite a few scripture verses that talk about the wicked being mortal, not immortal, that they perish, they die, they're consumed, they are no more. Then there are some verses like Revelation 20:10 that are more nebulous, where it talks about Satan being tormented day and night forever and ever in the lake of fire, but when you put all these verses side by side and compare them, the weight of evidence is on the side that the wicked are not immortalized in hell.

There are two choices for the Christian: life and death. Satan said to Eve, 'you will not really die.' God said, 'you will die.' How many Christians, even Preachers, have taken the devil's side? They say you don't really die – you live forever in heaven or you live forever in hell. But the Bible is clear that eternal life does not go to those who are thrown into the lake of fire, eternal life is only for the righteous. Here are a few examples:

Malachi 4:1,3 *"1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."*

These verses tell us that the wicked will be burned up, burned to ashes. In Psalms the Bible says:

Psalms 37:10-11 *"10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."*

Jude 7 makes this subject very plain:

Jude 7 *"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."*

Sodom and Gomorrah are not burning today, yet the Bible says they suffered the vengeance of eternal fire. How can this be explained? It means that these cities were completely burned, until there was nothing left.

There is another way to determine the meaning of the word eternal or everlasting. In English these words mean that the fire will go on forever, but in the Greek it has a different meaning. Dr. Basil Atkinson explains it this way:

"When the adjective aionios, meaning everlasting is used in Greek with nouns of action it has reference to the result of the act, not the process. The phrase everlasting punishment is comparable to everlasting redemption and everlasting salvation, both Scriptural phrases. No one supposes that we are being redeemed or saved forever. We were redeemed and saved once for all by Christ with eternal results. In the same way the lost will not be passing through the process of punishment forever but will be punished once and for all with eternal results. On the other hand the noun 'life' is not a noun of action, but a noun expressing a state. Thus life itself is eternal." ***Basil F. C. Atkinson, Life and Immortality. An Examination of the Nature and Meaning of Life and Death as they are revealed in the Scriptures (Taunton, England, n. n.), p.101.***

The Bible says, God is love:

1 John 4:8 *"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."*

God loves even His enemies. As the soldiers were nailing Jesus to the cross, He prayed:

Luke 23:34 *"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..."*

God is not willing that anyone should perish, but wants all people to be saved:

Ezekiel 33:11 *"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"*

2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

As loving and patient as He is, God cannot allow sin, crime and violence to continue to cause suffering and death in this world indefinitely, there will come a time when He will bring it all to an end. But He is not one to torture His children, that would be contrary to His nature. So He does the most loving thing He can do, He destroys them eternally. The Bible says:

Nahum 1:9 *"What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time."*

4. Great white throne judgment takes place.

It's at this point that God's final judgment takes place. Inside the city are all the righteous that have ever lived. Outside the city are all the wicked that have ever lived. So at this time all humanity stands before God - all through the ages, all who have ever lived.

Revelation 20:11-13 *"11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."*

Here God is before all of humanity, and mankind realises and understands that God has been just in all of His dealings.

The Scriptures present both Christ (Romans 14:10) and the Father (Hebrews 12:23) as sitting in judgment. In Revelation 4:2, 8-9; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 19:4 and 21:5, it is the Father who is seated on the throne as the divine Judge. The Father and Son work in closest unity (John 10:30). The official acts of one become the official acts of the other.

Every one of us will come forth in a resurrection, but the righteous will live while the wicked will die.

2 Peter 3:10-11 *"10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."*

The earth is going to burn. And all the wicked, and all their works, will be burned up. The New Jerusalem will ride those waves of fire, just like Noah's ark rode the waves of the flood. The righteous will all be inside the city, they will be cared for by God. And then after the fire has purified this earth, there will be no signs left of sin and degradation, it will all be gone.

2 Peter 3:12 *"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"*

Revelation 20:14 *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."*

The righteous may die the first death, but they don't have to die the second death. The wicked die twice. They die the first time, and then they die again here at the second death. Some of the wicked will even die three times.

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

Those who were mainly responsible for the death of Christ will be raised to see Him come in all His glory, not as the humble crucified Saviour but as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Revelation 20:15 *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

This is the cleansing of the universe, the cleansing of sin; it will be eradicated from the earth.

2 Peter 3:13 *"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

We must not pass up the opportunity. This is the time God has given us to have the opportunity of eternal life.

5. Earth made new.

The earth will be made brand new. All the things that we put up with now, things like pollution etc. *will all be gone never to rise again.*

Matthew 25:34 *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"*

God says to His people; Come, I've prepared a place, a kingdom, just for you.

There will be no more sin. God will have been justified in the eyes of the universe. It will be settled that He is just, that He is righteous, that He is merciful, kind and loving.

God simply says to you and me; Come, enjoy the things that I have prepared for you.

1 Corinthians 2:9 *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*

Down through the ceaseless ages of eternity, all the righteous will be able to live, enjoy and rejoice in all the wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love Him.

Revelation - Chapter 21

The New Jerusalem

In chapter 21 we are going to take a look at the wonderful city that God has prepared for you and me. This chapter is the culmination of all that God has promised.

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

Christ is the bridegroom and He has prepared a place for His bride. And now this city is coming down to the earth, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Verse 3 proceeds with Christ reaffirming a commitment He made to Hs people. Years ago He said this to His people.

Hebrews 8:10 *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."*

So God made a covenant with His people, all those down through the ages that have accepted Him, walked with Him, followed Him - these are His people, and He makes that covenant with you and me. So the 21st chapter opens with God restating that covenant, because He says:

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

Sin is no more, it has been done away with, a sinless eternity is beginning, and God says; these are My people and I will be their God and I will dwell with them.

We see that the City is also called the Temple of God, but not until the saints are raised, and gathered up into the City, where they will serve God "day and night". Then the Holy City alone, will be the Tabernacle, or Temple of God.

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

Just as the most holy place in the earthly sanctuary was where God dwelt and was where His throne was, so the New Jerusalem will be where God dwells and will be where His throne will be. So there is no need of a temple there because the New Jerusalem is the temple.

God promised something to the children of Israel, but unfortunately they never got hold of it, they never really saw what God wanted them to do. In Ezekiel chapter 47, God gave Ezekiel a vision of the temple, and outlined in detail how it was to be built. But it was never built; it was never done, because they couldn't grasp the vision that God had in mind. They were to be a kingdom of priests, and God had given them the privilege of taking the message of God's love and sacrifice for them to the whole world. And the temple that God described to Ezekiel was to be the place where all the nations would come into. So, just as the sanctuary on earth was a type of the sanctuary in heaven, so the temple shown to Ezekiel was a type of the New Jerusalem.

Notice the similarities between the visions given to Ezekiel and to John:

Ezekiel	John
Ezekiel's vision of the temple	**John's vision of the New Jerusalem**
Taken to a high mountain (40:2)	Taken to a high mountain (21:10)
A heavenly being is there to measure the temple (40:3)	A heavenly being is there to measure the temple (21:15)
Great and high wall (40:5)	Great and high wall (21:12)
Twelve gates with the name of a tribe of Israel over each (48:31-35)	Twelve gates with the name of a tribe of Israel over each (21:12)
City is a square (48:20)	City is a square (21:16)
In the city is the throne of God (43:7)	In the city is the throne of God (22:3)
Most holy place is a cube (41:4)	New Jerusalem is a cube (21:16)
River flowing out of the temple (47:1)	River flowing out into the city (22:1)
Trees bear their fruit each month (47:12)	Tree bears its fruit each month (22:2)
Leaves are for healing (47:12)	Leaves are for healing (22:2)

All these things are exactly the same, because God intended Israel to take the gospel to the whole world. Unfortunately that earthly city was never built. But we can look forward to one that has been built.

Revelation 21:4 *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."*

Sin has ended, there is no more sorrow or pain, all those things have passed away. This is how the chapter begins, with God saying that you and I can rejoice because the sin that has existed for 6,000 years has come to an end, and now eternity can begin, in which righteousness, peace and joy will reign.

Revelation 21:5 *"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."*

God is emphasising for you and me the fact that He will make all things new, He's saying; this is true, you can depend upon it.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 *"51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*

Age certainly has an effect on each one of us, but a day is coming when we will be made new, and ageing pain and suffering will no longer be a problem.

1 Corinthians 15:53 "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Never again throughout eternity will death ever be a problem or ever even be thought of – it will be no more.

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 *"54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"*

God will take our bodies and make them brand new. There will not be such a thing as age. Age only comes to us because we have an end, but when we get to eternity there will be no end and so there is no ageing. No longer will we have the sad experience of growing older and seeing our friends and loved ones grow older and pass away.

Not only that, but God is going to take this old earth and make it brand new too, and it will be like something that we have never seen or that we could imagine.

Isaiah 65:21-22 *"21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."*

Isaiah 35:1-2 *"1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. 2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."*

It will take a miracle of God to make a desert blossom like a rose – but it will!

So our bodies will be made brand new, the earth will be made completely new, God will recreate it and everything will be perfect and will work as it should, there will be nothing that interferes with or disrupts that perfection. This is what God has promised.

1 Corinthians 2:9 *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*

Sometimes we imagine how things will be, then when we experience the reality it often turns out to be less impressive than we thought, but, that is not the way it will be in the heaven and earth made new, it will be greater and more glorious than we could ever dream of.

Revelation 21:6 *"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."*

"I have become the Alpha and the Omega" - What God had promised through His holy prophets and which His righteous people have looked forward with eager anticipation will finally become an accomplished fact. The preview given to John is a guarantee of the final accomplishment yet to be carried out.

The true believer is not eager to amass the things of this world, to be rich in worldly goods. Rather he is eager to drink deeply of the spiritual riches from God.

Revelation 21:7 *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."*

According to the Greek it means continually conquers or habitually conquers. The Christian lives the victorious life by the power of the Holy Spirit. He may make mistakes, (1 John 2:1) but his normal life presents a picture of spiritual growth (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

His God, My son - Compare Genesis 17:7; 2 Samuel 7:14. The promise of intimate family connection is set forth here. The sinner saved by grace will be received into the family of God and be brought into a relation as close as if he had never sinned. The inhabitants of unfallen worlds cannot be closer to God and Christ than will be the redeemed sinner.

Revelation 21:8 *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

A strong contrast is now presented to what we saw in the previous verse.

Fearful - Greek "*deiloi*" - Meaning "cowardly", "fearful". The word is always used in the sense of cowardice or unwarranted timidity. Compare its use in Matthew 8:26; Mark 4:40, the related verb in John 14:27 and the related abstract noun in 2 Timothy 1:7. In each instance cowardice is the basic meaning. Owing to cowardice, moral faintheartedness, many fail to overcome in the Christian warfare. They give up in the time of trial. Compare Matthew 24:13.

Unbelieving - Those who lack faith in the sense of not remaining faithful. They do not trust God to the end. They prove to be untrustworthy.

Abominable - Greek "*bdelusso*" - Meaning "to make foul", "to turn away in disgust from", "to detest", The noun bdelugma occurs in Luke 16:15; Revelation 17:4-5; 21:27.

Murderers - These include the persecutors and murderers of God's faithful children throughout history.

Whoremongers - Greek "*pornoi*" - Meaning "fornicators" (1 Corinthians 5:9-10 etc). The feminine form is translated "harlots" in Matthew 21:31-32; Luke 15:30. Compare Ephesians 5:3,5.

Sorcerers - Greek "*pharmakoi*" - Meaning "practicers of magical arts". The root refers to magic, enchantment, sorcery and to the use of drugs to produce a stupefied condition. A modern counterpart of the ancient practice of sorcery is spiritism.

Idolaters - A reference to heathen people as well as to Christians who practice heathenish rites. Compare 1 Corinthians 5:10; 6:9; 10:7.

Liars - Including those who preach false doctrines. See Exodus 20:16.

Second death - Revelation 20:6.

Revelation 21:9 *"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."*

One of the seven angels - One of the plague bearing angels had already shown John the judgment of the great harlot. (see Revelation 17:1) Now one of them (possibly the same angel) directs John's attention to the New Jerusalem being the center and seat of the eternal kingdom. It is of interest to note that in the first instance it was a plague bearing angel that presented mystical Babylon to the prophet. Whereas now it is one of them who shows him the New Jerusalem. Historically, ancient Babylon and Jerusalem were traditional enemies and figuratively they represent the two sides of the

great controversy between good and evil. The one is represented as a fallen woman, (Revelation 17:5) the other as an honorable woman (Revelation 19:7; 21:2)

The Lamb's wife - Revelation 19:7; Revelation 21:2.

Revelation 21:10 *"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,"*

In vision John seemed to be placed upon a "great" and high mountain. From this vantage point he beheld the details of the city.

Ezekiel 40:2 *"In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south."*

Revelation 21:11 *"Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;"*

The glory of God; His abiding presence with His people throughout eternity. The glory that denotes His presence will never leave the New Jerusalem. Compare Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 8:11.

So let's take a look at this city.

Revelation 21:12-13 *"12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates."*

In the wall that surrounds the city there are twelve gates. At each gate is an angel, and over the top of each gate is the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

So the city has three gates on each side, and the names written on the gates are the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. And yet the city is supposed to be a city for all people. So which gate will you go through? Each of us must go through one of the gates; we can't crawl over the wall! To make sense of this we must understand that each one of the 12 sons of Jacob was different in character, and in Genesis chapter 49 we see Jacob foretelling the character of each of his sons, and there are other places in scripture where it details the characteristics of his sons. So our character, our personality, will determine which of the 12 gates we will go through to enter the city, as all of us will fit into one of the character patterns represented by the 12 gates. This is showing us that God has made provision for every one of us to be saved there are no human characteristics that God in His grace can't change – He can change any of us.

Revelation 21:14 *"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."*

The number "twelve" is given five times in verses 12-14. For twelve as a significant number, Revelation 7:4 (12x12).

The New Testament church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. (Ephesians 2:20)

Revelation 21:15 *"And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof."*

Compare Ezekiel 40:3; Revelation 11:1. Here the act of measuring and the stating of measurements are no doubt to give assurance of the adequacy and sufficiency of the heavenly home. (John 14:2)

Revelation 21:16 *"And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."*

Foursquare - There is beauty inherent in right proportion, perfect balance and congruity. For various foursquare items, see:

Exodus 27:1; 28:16; 30:2; 39:9; 2 Chronicles 3:8; Ezekiel 41:21; 43:16; 45:2; 48:20.

Whatever uncertainty there may be as to the exact proportion or size of the city, it is certain that the glories of that celestial city will far exceed the fondest imagination. No one should be concerned, for there will be room enough for all who desire residence. In the Father's house there are "many mansions." (John 14:2) There is room in this city for every man, woman and child that has ever lived. There is room enough there for you and me.

Revelation 21:17 *"And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel."*

So the city has a great wall all around it. On the basis of the New Testament cubit, which was about 17 1/2 inches (44.5 cm), 144 cubits, would be about 210 ft (64 metres). John does not say that this measurement represents the height of the wall. Some have conjectured that it may be that of its thickness.

Revelation 21:18 *"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass."*

Human beings do not understand how gold can be refined until it becomes clear, but evidently God does, because it says that the streets of the city are pure gold, and its walls are pure gold, like clear glass.

Revelation 21:19-20 *"19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst."*

Twelve kinds of precious stones are listed as being in the foundation. Not all of these can be identified by the modern jeweller, nor is much to be gained by making a comparison with the jewels of the high priest's breastplate. (Exodus 28:17-20) Neither ancient sources nor modern scholars agree as to the identification of all the stones and even if they could these will far outweigh anything we see here on earth, suffice to say the foundations of the city are made of precious stones, and these stones have all the colours of the rainbow.

Revelation 21:21 *"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."*

Each individual gate is one pearl. Considering the size of the wall, these gates must be huge and yet each gate is made out of one pearl. What you and I consider of great value today will have no value there, because even the streets of the city are made of pure gold, all these things are way beyond anything that we have ever seen here on earth.

Revelation 21:22 *"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."*

So in the New Jerusalem there is no temple. John does not tell us what had become of the heavenly temple; but he is saying that he saw no Temple therein at that time, indicates that he had seen one there before. The Holy City is called the Tabernacle of God in Revelation 21:3.

When sin has been removed, the church will again be able to dwell in God's presence and no structure will be required to symbolize the dwelling of God.

Revelation 21:23 *"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."*

Now this verse does not say that there is no sun or moon. It simple says that the sun and moon are not needed to provide light for the city. Light giving bodies will not be imperative for the illumination of the city. The glorious radiant splendour of the presence of God will give more than sufficient light (Isaiah 60:19-20). Material things are not indispensable in God's plan. In His presence they are put to shame (Isaiah 24:23). Created light cannot outshine the uncreated glory of the divine presence.

Revelation 21:24-25 *"24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."*

Here is a description of the redeemed from "all nations, kindreds, people and tongues". (Revelation 7:9; Isaiah 60:3, 5) This picture is drawn from the Old Testament (see Isaiah 60:11).

Revelation 22:5 *"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever."*

So we have this marvellous city that God has prepared for you and me to live in. The righteous will live in that city for a thousand years, before they come to this earth. At the end of the thousand years, that city of New Jerusalem will come to this earth, and then the righteous will be able to live in the city, or will have the privilege if they wish of living out on the earth, the earth that has been made brand new, and the scripture says that the righteous will build houses and live in them.

Isaiah 65:17-22 *"17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."*

Christ built each of us a dwelling place in the city, but we will also be able to build one out in the country. Unlike now, resources will not be a problem. Anything that you can imagine, you can do. Also time will not be a factor. If you want to take a thousand years to build your house then that will be your privilege. You can build it however you want to, and that will be your home in the new earth, and it will be your home for eternity.

There will also not be the need of shut gates which are used as protection, because there will be no more sin and there will not be any night there because God is its light.

Revelation 21:26 *"And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."*

All the saved from all nations will come into the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:27 *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

Anything that defileth - No doubt an allusion to Isaiah 52:1.

Isaiah 52:1 *"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."*

Much of the imagery in John's description of the Holy City is borrowed from the writings of ancient prophets who described the glories of the Jerusalem that might have been. John is describing the city that will be.

So all these people down through the ages that have followed the Lord and walked with Him, they will make up God's people and they will come and live in the city, and they will live in that city throughout eternity. And we will be kings and priests to God, and the New Jerusalem will have a special name:

Ezekiel 48:35 *"... and the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there."*

God will come and dwell with His people, He will be their God, and we shall be His people.

Revelation - Chapter 22

The Victory Is Won

We have now reached the closing chapter of the book of Revelation. The beast, the dragon and the false prophet have all been destroyed, Babylon is no more and God has come and has set up His everlasting kingdom. Christ is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and He is ruling over all.

This last chapter of the book of Revelation contains a lot of admonition about the book as a whole, admonition that God has given to us about how we are to relate to the book of Revelation, that's what this last chapter 22 primarily contains.

Revelation 22:1 *"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."*

A pure river of water of life - An image often used in the Scriptures to represent salvation. It is compared with a fountain that flows in abundance where all may freely quench their thirst. Compare Ezekiel's description of the river:

Ezekiel 47:1 "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar."

Revelation 22:2 *"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."*

Tree of life – eternal life from the source of life. Twelve manner of fruits - There will be a constant abundance sufficient to meet the needs of the saved throughout eternity:

Ezekiel 47:12 *"And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."*

Revelation 22:3 *"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:"*

No more curse - Because sin is no more.

Revelation 22:4 *"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."*

How amazing to see the face of God our Creator and His Son our Saviour.

To see his face is an expression denoting intimate relations with another person and mutual confidence. It is an awesome priviledge that will be enjoyed by all the redeemed:

Psalms 17:15 *"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."*

Matthew 5:8 *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."*

Hebrews 12:14 *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"*

1 John 3:2 *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."*

1 Corinthians 13:12 *"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."*

Also compare the experience of Moses:

Exodus 33:20-23 *"20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. 21 And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: 22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: 23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."*

In their foreheads - Rather "upon their foreheads". God's name is synonymous with His character, so God's people, though their surrender, faith and obedience, have had their characters fashioned after His character. The divine name in the forehead is also a symbol of ownership and authentication. The saints' entire consecration in a life of worship to God is stressed here.

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

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

Revelation 22:5 *"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."*

No night - This verse draws a word picture emphasizing the insignificance of created luminaries in the presence of God. These will pale into nothingness in the presence of the glory of the divine person.

They shall reign - Compare Revelation 5:10:

Revelation 5:10 *"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."*

This does not mean they will reign over one another, nor over other worlds. It is probably a symbol of the happiness, contentment and prosperity of the redeemed. No longer will they be under the oppressive hand of some persecuting power, but they will enjoy the freedom and abundance of kings.

Revelation 22:6 *"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."*

What words are being referred to here? The words of the book of Revelation. It is these words that are faithful and true – these are words upon which you can build your faith.

Here it reaches back to the first part of Revelation where it says that what John was about to be shown are things that would shortly take place. Now as the book is ending, it confirms that John has been shown things that would shortly take place. This confirms for us that those of us who see the prophecies given in Revelation being fulfilled can know that the Lord is coming back soon. Since we are the ones seeing these prophecies fulfilled, we know that the promise that the Lord will return shortly applies to us in a very special way.

Revelation 22:7 *"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."*

The book of Revelation began with the promise; Blessed is he who reads, he who hears and he who keeps the words of this prophecy. The book ends by repeating the same promise. So if we want to receive a blessing we must study the book of Revelation, because God has pronounced a blessing upon anyone who reads and understands the book. Unfortunately, very few people know anything about this book. To most people the book of Revelation is a closed book. Most people simply do not understand it. But there is no reason for that, because God has promised to bless us if we read it, and He will help us to understand it. But there are many false beliefs and teachings about this book. To other people, the book of Revelation is simply not important, but actually it's vital that we understand it, especially in this day and in this age.

So where are we in the book of Revelation? Where does our time today fit into the book? Well we can see clearly that the image of the beast is being formed. All you have to do is read the newspaper or watch the television and you can see that the image of the beast is in the process of being set up. We know what this means, we don't have to be in darkness or in doubt. We can see Paganism, apostate Protestantism and Catholicism all coming closer together and joining hands, we can see beliefs being accepted that are absolutely contrary to scripture, we can see all this happening today.

All of this tells us that we today are living in the time of the 17th and 18th chapters of Revelation - the time of the scarlet-coloured beast, the time when the 10 kings are being formed. We can see that we are living not in the first part of Revelation, but in the last part, close to the end. In fact from chapter 19 we have the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and The Millennium, those are the things that will happen next, and after that you have the New Jerusalem and the New Earth.

So from all these things we should be able to get a sense, an understanding, of the time in which we are living today. And the most important thing we can and should be doing now is to prepare ourselves to be in God's kingdom. We need to get ready, because time is short – we don't have a lot of time left.

Revelation 22:8-9 *"8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."*

The central theme all the way through the book of Revelation is; worship. And when it comes down to the end of time, in which you and I are living, it's about worship, and it will always be about worship, all the way to the very end. The dragon, the beast and the false prophet all want worship.

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

Worship belongs only to God, and to His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore we must give to Them alone our allegiance, our adoration, our praise, our worship.

Luke 4:8 *"... for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*

We should take time each day to worship the Lord, to offer to Him our praise, our thanksgiving, our adoration.

Revelation 22:10 *"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."*

In other words, we must not close up this book. Through the preaching of such men as Luther, Knox, Zwingli, Calvin, and all the reformers, if you go back and read what they wrote you will find that they were clear on the prophecies, as best as they could understand them in their day. They understood much of what was being said in the prophecies about their day and their age. And they pointed their finger clearly at Catholicism and said that it was not doing what God wanted them to do and they needed to change their ways – they were trying to get Catholicism to come back to the word of God and to build their faith on it. They were not trying to move away from the church, they were trying to bring about a revival within the church; they were trying to bring the church back to God's word. But the church rejected this, it would not listen to what those men had to say, and so a schism or separation took place.

And then we find that those men began to preach the word of God, they began to preach the prophecies in the book of Revelation, and they pointed clearly at Catholicism and said that this was the beast. And as a result of their preaching, many thousands left Catholicism and joined the Reformation. In fact under Calvin alone, 500,000 Frenchmen became part of the Reformation, by the preaching of God's word and because of the preaching of the prophecies in Revelation.

This shook the Catholic Church to its very foundation. So much so that they called the Council of Trent, the purpose of which was basically to establish whether the church should base its beliefs solely on the word of God, or whether its beliefs should be based on the word of God and tradition. The Pope called in two priests, Francisco Ribera and Luis De Alcazar, and told them to do whatever was necessary to shift focus away from the Catholic Church being identified as the beast of Revelation. So these two priests developed two different interpretations of prophecy. One developed an interpretation called "Preterism", which puts the prophecies of the book of Revelation all in the past and which declares these prophecies to have already been fulfilled, meaning that they have no relevance to you and me today. The other priest developed an interpretation called "Futurism", which takes the prophecies of Revelation from the 4th chapter onwards and places them in the future and declares that these prophecies take place after the coming of Jesus Christ, and therefore as believers in Christ we do not have to be concerned with these prophecies because they do not take place while we are here on earth, they only take place after the rapture.

So what all this means is that by these two interpretations of prophecy, the Catholic church has closed the book of Revelation, people are not interested in it, they see no reason to study it, believing that it has no relevance to them. And so today we find that churches all around the world do not know anything about the book of Revelation, because they have been taught the Futurist interpretation, that it will all take place after the rapture and because they won't be here it doesn't have anything to do with them. They teach that the prophecies of Revelation have been sealed, and that people cannot understand them, which is in direct contradiction of the words of Christ that the book must not be sealed, but that we should read and be blest.

Up to this point in the book of Revelation it has been John who has been talking, but now at this point something happens – Jesus steps to the front, and the rest of the 22nd chapter is Christ's own words to you and me.

Revelation 22:11 *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."*

The verse reads literally, "The one doing unrighteousness, the unjest, let him do unrighteousness still; and the filthy one, let him carry on being filthy still; and the righteous one, let him do righteousness still; and the holy one, let him be made holy still." These words are especially applicable to the time

when each person's future is irrevocably settled. Such a decree comes at the close of the investigative judgment.

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

Some see a wider application in these statements by comparing them with the words of Christ in the parable of the Tares: "Let both grow together until the harvest" (Matthew 13:30). The free will of man is not to be interfered with. Men are to be permitted to live the life of their own choosing so that their true character may become apparent. Each person of each age will be made manifest in respect to the class in which he belongs at the second coming of Christ.

In other words it's simply saying that it's over, it's all finished.

Revelation 22:12 *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."*

It's all finished; there is no more time for anyone to change. We're not going to develop character after Christ comes. Our character will have already been set before Christ comes. So when Jesus utters these words, every case has already been decided.

Revelation 22:13 *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."*

Christ is assuring us that He is the beginning and the end of the book of Revelation. The curtain on human probation has closed. There is no more mercy. Today the door of mercy is still open, but it's not going to continue to remain open, soon it will close, and when it closes it will close for all mankind. Salvation is a completely free gift. We cannot add anything to it. Salvation is something that Jesus has accomplished for you and me, and He gives it to us totally fee, all we can do is accept it. But when it comes to the judgment, man will be judged by his works, and our works should simply be the result of a relationship with Jesus Christ, because our works are an indication of where we are and what we believe.

However, our works can't save us, but:

James 2:17 *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."*

James 2:26 *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."*

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

That do his commandments - A few manuscripts read "that washed their robes." Most of the manuscripts read "that do his commandments." The two clauses are very similar in the Greek and it is easy to see how a scribe may have mistaken the one clause for the other. The following transliteration will show the similarity:

"*hoi plunontes tas stolas auton*" - "wash their robes".

"*hoi poiountes tas entolas autou*" - "that keep his commandments".

Considering passage context, the latter "that keep his commandments" is more likely, also the fact that this statement is found all through the Bible (see Revelation 12:17; 14:12; John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3-6). On washing robes, see Revelation 7:14:

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

Our title to heaven is the righteousness of Christ imputed, represented by the washed robes. The outward evidence of the righteousness of Christ imparted is perfect compliance with the commandments of God. Hence the two ideas of washed robes and obedience to commandments are closely related. We see that the Commandments are the dividing line, because it says:

Revelation 22:15 *"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."*

For without are dogs - The word "without" means that they will not be in the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:8, 27). The wicked, the depraved and the vile are such characters referred to as dogs, which is an unclean animal among the Jews and was regarded as a symbol. (Deuteronomy 23:18) See Philippians 3:2 for the meaning of the expression.

Sorcerers - For the category of sinners here enumerated, see Revelation 21:8:

Revelation 21:8 *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

So there are two camps. Those who keep God's Commandments and those who don't.

John 14:15 *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

Worship is shown by obedience. If we love the Lord then we are going to obey Him.

Revelation 22:16 *"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."*

How can Jesus say that He is both the root and the offspring of David? This is basically what Jesus asked the Pharisees, and it stumped them, they didn't know how to answer Him. Jesus is the root of David because He existed before David. He is also the offspring because of His genealogy; He was a descendant of David.

Revelation 22:17 *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*

Here is the invitation. The Holy Spirit, the one who energizes the Christian life of the believers, who gives them the strength to live the victorious life to overcome the devil and to go safely through the time of trouble. We all need to drink the water of life abundantly, which is given freely to anyone who wants it, so that no one needs to miss out.

Revelation 22:18 *"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:"*

God is protecting the word that He has given and it is vital that we ask His guidance when reading and sharing His word with others, also, applying it to our own lives.

Revelation 22:19 *"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

Take away from - The one who takes away from the words of the Revelation is equally guilty with the one who adds to the words.

The guilty one in this case will suffer three major losses:

(1) The loss of immortality, and the consequent suffering of eternal death.
(2) Loss of any part in the corporate life of the city of the new earth.
(3) Loss of all the blessings and promises of Revelation.

A complete and staggering loss is here presented that nothing in this life can even remotely compensate for. So we must ensure that we do not add to or take away from God's word. We must follow exactly what the Lord says.

Revelation 22:20 *"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*

"**He which testifieth**" being Christ. The specific reference is to the testimony in verses 18-19.

Surely - Greek "*nai*" - A term of strong affirmation like the Old English "verily."

I come quickly - The Master reaffirms the surety and imminence of His second coming.

Revelation 1:1 *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; ..."*

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

Revelation 22:7 *"Behold, I come quickly: ..."*

Revelation 22:12 *"And, behold, I come quickly; ..."*

Even so come, Lord Jesus - Textual evidence may be cited for the reading, "come, Lord Jesus Christ." This exclamation is John's response to the testimony of Jesus who assures the apostle that He is coming quickly.

John was probably reminded of that night in the upper room more than half a century before when he heard Jesus declare:

John 14:3 *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, ..."*

And of that day a few weeks later on the Mount of Olives when he had heard the angels say:

Acts 1:11 *"... this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."*

While in holy vision, John is given one last assurance that his blessed Lord is to return and quickly. This assurance comes from the lips of his Master Himself being the faithful and true witness. His heart thrills at the words and with eager anticipation he looks forward to the day when in reality and not in vision he will see his blessed Lord face to face.

Revelation 22:20 *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."*

This verse is a benediction deep from the heart of the apostle reaching out to all who read the words of his visions. The benediction is similar to that so often used by Paul in concluding his epistles.

Romans 16:24 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

1 Corinthians 16:23 *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."*

2 Corinthians 13:14 *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."*

The words form a fitting climax to the canon of Scripture, appearing as they do at the end of the collection of sacred books as we know them.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.
And let him that heareth say, Come.
And let him that is athirst come.
And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.