

# The Revelation

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~ Introduction ~

## I. THE WRITING OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

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THE AUTHOR: God the Holy Spirit. II Peter 1:21

THE WRITER: John, the "beloved disciple."

THE TITLE: This Book has two titles:

1. "The Revelation of St. John the Divine" — the title by men which identifies the human writer.
2. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1) — the title by God, identifying the divine Author.

THE DATE OF WRITING: The commonly accepted date is 96 A.D.

Tradition has John exiled to Patmos during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian who ruled between 81 and 96 A.D. He also wrote the Gospel of John, I John, II John, and III John. The Revelation is the last of John's writings. and therefore, it is the finale to God's Word.

THE NATURE OF THE BOOK: This is a Book of PROPHECY.

It is the only prophetic Book in the New Testament. The Greek word translated "revelation" is apokalupsis which means "unveiling" (lifting of the veil) or a revealing.

THE SUBJECT OF THE BOOK:

Revelation declares this to be the "Revelation of JESUS CHRIST. The Lord Jesus Christ is the subject of this Book. Thus, we are to look for Him not prophetic suppositions. Too many students of the Word have gone off on some tangent by attempting to find present-day fulfillments for much of the Book, or by developing their own "conspiracy theories" — usually to the neglect of the One Who is central. Three outstanding facts about the Lord Jesus Christ are revealed to us in Revelation:

1. The PERSON Of Christ. There are five portraits of Jesus Christ given in the Book:
  - a. A Doctrinal Portrait in Chapter 1.
  - b. A Symbolic Portrait in Chapter 1.
  - c. A Relative Portrait in Chapters 2 and 3.
  - d. A Heavenly Portrait in Chapter 5.
  - e. A Royal Portrait in Chapter 19.

2. The POWER of Christ

3. The PURPOSE of Christ

**THE KEY VERSE IN THE BOOK:** Revelation 1:19 is the key to interpreting the Book.

**THE THEME OF THE BOOK:** Rev. 11:15b gives the theme of the entire Book. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

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## II. THE BLESSING OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

Most people consider the Book of The Revelation to be a closed Book, a mystery, something too difficult to really understand. While it does belong to the "strong meat" section of the divine library (Hebrews 5:14) and certainly has some "things hard to be understood" (II Peter 3:16), there are FOUR good reasons why we CAN expect to understand the Book and why we SHOULD study it:

1. 2 Timothy 3:16 - "All scripture ... is profitable ..." Although The Revelation is not milk (I Peter 2:2; I Corinthians 3:2), the whole Bible is intended to be read and understood. Why would God give man His Word, then make it impossible for any man to know what it meant?
2. The Addressees of the Book. Revelation says the book is given "unto his servants." The word "servants" means "bond servants" and applies to all who serve the Lord. Rev. 1:4 says the book was given to the seven churches. Baptist churches are usually made up of ordinary folk (baptized believers) not the intelligentsia from academia. It is a book for all who love God and serve Him.
3. The Immediateness of the Book.

Revelation 1.1 — "must shortly come to pass"

Revelation 1.4 - "the time is at hand"

Revelation 22:10 — "seal not the sayings for the time is at hand"

Compare these statements with Daniel 12:4a — "seal the book, even to the time of the end." Note: The expression "the time is at hand" has reference to sequence more than measurement. The events prophesied in the Book are NEXT in God's order of events — even though the time of their fulfillment (at least in John's day) was many centuries away.

4. The Blessing of the Book. This is the ONLY Book in the Word of God which gives a specific promise of a blessing — Revelation 1:3; 22:7. Would God so mock man by making this promise, then preventing his understanding of it? No. This special blessing is for those who READ (public reading), HEAR (discern), and KEEP the words of the Book.

For these reasons, then, we can enter into a study of the Book of The Revelation EXPECTING to receive a special blessing AND to understand its teaching. The Book may be dark and mysterious to some, but certainly not to those who:

1. Will STUDY it -- 2 Timothy 2:15.
2. Will SERVE the Lord — Revelation 1:1 ("unto his servants")
3. Are SITUATED in a New Testament church — Revelation 22:16.
4. Will STORE it in their heart — Revelation 22:7.

### III. A HARMONY OF REVELATION WITH THE REST OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Book of The Revelation is the capstone of scripture — the completion of the circle of Truth. Without this Book, the Bible would be incomplete, the prophecies of the Old Testament would be left hanging, and the plan of the ages would appear stalled. To illustrate this, consider comparing and contrasting the Book of Genesis with The Revelation.

Genesis	the Book of Beginnings
Revelation	the Book of Endings (consummation)

Genesis	the creation of the heavens and the earth
Revelation	the new Heaven and the new earth

Genesis	Paradise lost
Revelation	Paradise anew

Genesis	the entrance of sin and the curse
Revelation	the end of sin and the curse

Genesis	the beginning of sorrow and pain
Revelation	the ending of sorrow and pain

Genesis	the dawn of Satan
Revelation	the doom of Satan

Genesis	the rise of Babel
Revelation	the fall of Babylon

Genesis	the cities of men
Revelation	the City of God

Genesis	the tree of life relinquished
Revelation	the tree of life restored

Genesis      the entrance of death  
Revelation   the exit of death

It is also of value to compare and contrast the beginning and ending of the New Testament.

Gospels      the Lamb upon the cross  
Revelation   the Lamb upon the throne

Gospels      the Lamb amidst His foes  
Revelation   the Lamb amidst His redeemed

Gospels      the suffering Servant  
Revelation   the reigning King

Gospels      the rejected Lord  
Revelation   the King of kings and Lord of lords

The Book of Daniel has been called the "Key to the Book of The Revelation" because it provides a prophetic framework upon which the teachings of The Revelation can be built.

1. Daniel Outlines The Course Of The Nations. Daniel 2, 7, and 8 give overall details of "The Times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) — including the time of the end which is detailed in The Revelation.
2. Daniel Outlines Events Between The Rapture & Christ's Return. The great prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 is probably the single-most important prophetic statement in the Bible — at least so far as giving an outline of future earthly events is concerned. Daniel's 70TH Week is expanded by Revelation chapters 6 through 19.
3. Daniel Introduces The Antichrist. This same personage is seen in Revelation 6 & 13.
4. The Book Of Daniel Was Sealed. The Revelation unlocks those seals to reveal what Daniel could not write. See: Daniel 12:4; Revelation 5:1.

The Book of the Revelation completes the canon of Scripture. The warnings of Revelation apply to more than just the Book itself because it is the last Book to have been supernaturally written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Any subsequent claims to divine revelation (e.g., The Book of Mormon, Science and Health: The Key to the Scriptures, Drama of the Ages, or visions, charismatic revelations, near-death experiences, etc.) are extra-biblical.

#### IV. INTERPRETING THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

Among those who claim to accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God there are four basic "schools" of interpretation when it comes to the Book of The Revelation. These are:

1. The Præterist View. This method of interpretation sees the events predicted in the Book of The Revelation as having ALREADY BEEN FULFILLED in the time period immediately following its writing — i.e., over the first three or four centuries, or to the triumph of Catholicism in the Middle Ages. There are a number of variations, but this method of interpretation might propose:
  - a. The emperor Nero (or Domitian) as the Antichrist.
  - b. Chapters 4-11 as representing the conflict of 'The Church' with Judaism.
  - c. Chapters 12-19 as representing the conflict of 'The Church' with Islam.
  - d. Chapters 20-22 as representing the present (Middle Ages) glory of 'The Church.'

This interpretive view was predominantly Roman Catholic. It requires a lot of imagination but sees the Book as merely one of literary interest.

2. The Continuous-Historical View. This method of interpretation sees in the Book of the Revelation the whole history of 'The Church' laid out from the days of John the apostle (the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.) to the eventual coming of Christ. Such a theory of interpretation requires the "fitting of facts" — or more accurately, the fitting of the Word of God into the mold of history. Because this is a subjective method of interpretation, there will be many variations of what the statements mean and left up to the interpreter. An idea of what this kind of interpretation leads to is as follows:

- a. The first four trumpets represent the overthrow of Rome.
- b. The fifth and sixth trumpets represent the overthrow of the Saracens and the Turks.
- c. The Antichrist is the Pope of Rome.

3. The Spiritualizing View. This is perhaps the most popular method of interpreting Bible prophecy in Christendom. It is somewhat like the continuous-historical method, except that it sees principles rather than actual events. This form of interpretation spiritualizes direct statements. Thus:

- a. Revelation 13 speaks only of the opposition of all secular powers to the True Church throughout all ages.
- b. The 1,000 years of Revelation 20 are not literal, but speak of the indeterminate "age of salvation" — the 1,000 simply being symbolic of its completeness.

4. The Futurist View. This interpretive approach accepts the majority of the Book as being yet future. Why do we believe the literal, futurist interpretation is right?

- a. The Præterist hermeneutic is rejected because the facts do not fit the theory, and because the subjective use of historical facts gives rise to endless interpretations.
- b. The Continual-Historical view is rejected for the reasons just stated, and also because it requires a full understanding of Christian history. Fourth century Christians (for example), who are told to read, hear, and keep the words of the prophecy (Revelation 1:3) certainly did not have that understanding.

- c. The Spiritualizing method is rejected because this, too, is subjective. The interpreter becomes the authority.
- d. Amillennial interpretation of The Revelation is inconsistent because its spiritualizing-continuous-historical approach is only applied to Bible prophecy — and then really just to the prophecies relating to the second coming of Christ. They do not use this approach when it comes to other doctrines — salvation, for example.
- e. The Book of The Revelation is said to be a Book of prophecy that has as its focus the second coming of Jesus Christ. To make the Book merely an allegory of the "struggle and triumph of Christianity" is to ignore this fact.
- f. The literal futurist method of interpretation is right because it is by this same method that the rest of scripture is interpreted. We do not allegorize the Gospels or the Book of Acts, for example. However, we do accept that much scripture also has a secondary, spiritual application. Remember the rule: "ONE INTERPRETATION, MANY APPLICATIONS."
- g. Prophecies of the first coming of Christ were fulfilled literally – birth, life, death
- h. A literal, futurist interpretation is the only method which allows scripture to be the authority. The GOLDEN RULE of all Biblical interpretation is: "Let Scripture interpret Scripture."
- i. The literal, futurist interpretation takes words at their face value. It is consistent with the Grammatical-Historical method of interpretation.

The language of the Book is replete with symbolism. This fact usually gives rise to an argument FOR spiritualizing, because symbols mean something else. However, consider the following:

1. The Book Has Much Symbolic Language. Revelation 1:1 — "he sent and SIGNIFIED it"
2. A True Literal Interpretation Accepts Symbolic Language. J. D. Pentecost wrote in his book "Things to Come" — "The literalistic approach does not blindly rule out figures of speech, symbols, allegories, and types; but if the nature of the sentence so demands, it readily yields to the second sense." It is the literal interpretation of Revelation 1:1 (above) that enables us to see that there is symbolic language in the Book.
3. Symbols Are Explained. They are explained or alluded to elsewhere in the Book or elsewhere in the Bible. Even the correct interpretation of symbolic language is not left to the whim of the interpreter. For example:

## SYMBOL

Seven stars (1:16)  
Seven candlesticks (1:13)  
Stars of Heaven (12:4)  
Great Red Dragon (12:3)  
Time, times, & half a time (12:14)  
Waters (17:1)  
Ten horns (17:3)

## INTERPRETATION

Seven angels (1.20)  
Seven churches (1.20)  
Fallen angels (12:9)  
Satan (12:9)  
3-½ years (Daniel 9:27)  
Nations (17:15)  
Ten kings (17:12; Daniel 2:44)

4. The General Rule Of Interpretation - Interpret literally unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. For example, in Revelation 1:20 we are told that the seven candlesticks are symbols, but in Revelation 2 and 3, each of the seven churches (so symbolized) were real.

5. The Use Of Numbers In The Revelation.

a. Numbers figure greatly in this Book such as 2, 3, 3 ½, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 24, 42, 144, 666, 1,000, 1,260, 1,600, 7,000, 12,000, 144,000, and 200,000,000 are to be found.

b. The same rule of interpretation should apply to numbers as for symbols.

c. Numbers are often literal AND symbolic. The number seven is a good example. Seven is God's number — the number of perfection. This is its symbolic sense, but the seven churches were seven actual (literal) churches.

d. The number seven is found 54 times in The Revelation, and also figures in the overall structure of the Book. e.g., there are:

Seven beatitudes (blessings)

Seven visions

Seven seals

Seven trumpets

Seven vials Seven personages

Seven dooms

Seven hills

Seven churches

Seven-fold description of Christ

Seven times the name 'Jesus'

Seven times the words "Jesus Christ"

Seven mentions of vengeance and God's wrath

Seven candlesticks

Seven angels

Seven (seven-fold) Spirits of God

Seven new things

The "key verse" to interpreting the book is Rev. 1:19. It gives us a three-fold division of the Book:

THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN — PAST

THE THINGS WHICH ARE — PRESENT

THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE — PROSPECTIVE (future)



## V. THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

The simple outline on the next page is based upon the key verse, Revelation 1:19.

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### THE REVELATION

#### I. THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN -- chapter 1

- A. Introduction.
- B. The Subject of the Book.
  - 1. Doctrinal Portrait of Christ
  - 2. Descriptive Portrait of Christ

#### II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE — chapters 2 & 3

- A. Seven Churches.
- B. Seven-fold Analysis.

#### III. THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER— chapters 4-22

- A. The Rapture.
- B. The Seven Seals.
- C. The Seven Trumpets.
- D. The Seven Personages.
- E. The Seven Vials.
- F. The Seven Dooms. G. The Seven New Things.
- H. Epilogue.

Note: There are several Introductory and Parenthetical passages in The Revelation. These should be seen as "pauses" in the progress of unfolding events for the purpose of supplying more detail.

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## I. THE PROLOGUE TO THE BOOK — vv. 1-3

READ vv. 1-3. This portion has been covered more fully in the previous chapter, the Introduction.

- A. THE TITLE OF THE BOOK: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ"
- B. THE INSPIRATION OF THE BOOK: which God gave. .. "
- C. THE WRITER OF THE BOOK: unto his servant John: who bare record.
- D. THE BLESSING OF THE BOOK: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein. "
- E. THE NATURE OF THE BOOK: this prophecy... "

## II. THE SALUTATION FROM THE TRIUNE GOD — READ vv. 4,5a

READ v. 4, 5a. Initially this Book was addressed to seven churches, from whence it was to be circulated to other churches and believers. "Grace" and "peace" — a familiar greeting found in other Books of the New Testament, especially in all of Paul's church and pastoral epistles. Grace comes before peace. You experience the grace of God in salvation before you can have peace with God.

The Godhead (Trinity) is seen in the salutation.

1. God The Father verse 4 - ... *from Him which IS, and which WAS, and which IS TO COME...* This speaks of the Father. Our God is an everlasting God.
2. God The Holy Spirit — verse 4 - *and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.* There are two opinions as to who or what the "seven Spirits" are:
  - a. Some think they are seven angels because elsewhere in the Book the Holy Spirit is referred to in the singular (3:1; 22:17). The difficulty is that the word "Spirit" here is capitalized, thus suggesting deity.
  - b. The Expression Refers to the Perfections of the Holy Spirit. This expression also occurs in Revelation 4:5. In Isaiah 11:2,3 we see a seven-fold description of the Holy Spirit:

The Spirit of the LORD	The Spirit of Might
The Spirit of Wisdom	The Spirit of Knowledge
The Spirit of Understanding	The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord
The Spirit of Counsel	

While both opinions would not wrest the text, it appears the latter has more merit because of the capitalization, and because the expression is sandwiched between the Father and the Son.

3. God The Son — verse 5a. - and from Jesus Christ... "

### III. THE PORTRAITS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST — verses 5-8; 11-18

This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ and in this chapter we find two portraits of Him.

READ vv. 5-8. The first, doctrinal portrait.

1. His Unique Name — verse 5. "Jesus Christ"
  - a. Jesus Jehoshua (Joshua) --- meaning "Jehovah Saviour" (Matthew 1:21).
  - b. Christ = Messiah, the anointed One.
2. His Unique Character — verse 5. "Faithful witness"
3. His Unique Privilege — verse 5. "First begotten of the dead". This means that the Lord Jesus Christ was the first among those who will be raised from the dead never to die again.
4. His Unique Position — verse 5. "Prince of the kings of the earth". This is His office by right, though not yet in fact. All that is needed to vanquish Satan and his kingdom was accomplished at Calvary, but the realization of this will not be until Revelation 19.
5. His Unique Affection — verse 5. "Unto Him that loved us"
6. His Unique Work — verse 5. "And washed us from our sins in His own blood"
7. His Unique People – verse 6. Here we learn something of the kingdom of God (and our part in it) during this present age.
  - a. The Kingdom of God is universal (world-wide), consisting of all the saved.
  - b. The Kingdom of God is intangible
  - c. The Kingdom of God is invisible
  - d. The Kingdom of God is spiritual, not political
  - e. The Kingdom of God is personal. The great distinguishing feature of the Kingdom of God is the "Priesthood of Believers." This means every believer has a direct relationship with God through Jesus Christ, I Timothy 2.5.

We see here the elevation of the Gospel. We, who were once enemies of God are MADE kings and priests. What a holy relationship. One day, the Kingdom of God will come on earth (visible, tangible, political, centered at Jerusalem, etc.).

8. His Unique Glory – verse 6b.
9. His Unique Future – verse 7. This verse refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth, not the Rapture of the saints. Notice:
  - a. A certain return – "he cometh " - See: Acts 1:11 – "shall so come. "
  - b. A personal return – "He" - See: Acts 1:11 – "this same Jesus,
  - c. A visible return – "every eye shall see Him" - see: Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27.
  - d. A convicting return – "they also which pierced Him". This event will trigger the national conversion of Israel. See: Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:26.
  - e. A judgmental return – "all kindreds...shall wail" See: Matthew 10:31,32.
10. His Unique Title - v. 8. "I AM" - the Name of Jehovah God. It means the "self-existent One." Jesus used this Name in John 8:58. The Jews knew exactly what He meant by it He was saying He was Jehovah. The Gospel of John contains SEVEN "I Ams of Jesus Christ.

READ vv. 11-18. The second, symbolic portrait.

1. The Description of His Garment – v. 13. No doubt His high priestly garments.
2. The Description of His Head And Hair – v. 14. This would seem to be symbolic of His eternity.
3. The Description of His Eyes – verse 14. Eyes speak of perception; fire speaks of judgment. This description shows the omniscience of Christ, the One Who knows the thoughts of men.
4. The Description of His Feet – v. 15. Brass pictures judgment. His feet speak of divine judgment.
5. The Description of His Voice – verse 10b, 15. This is the majestic voice of divine authority.
6. The Description of His Right hand – verse 16. The right hand speaks of power and ability and, for the believer, security. The stars symbolize the angels (messengers) of the seven churches, verse 20, and the churches themselves are bought by the Lord.
7. The Description of His Mouth – verse 16. The sword symbolizes the Word of God.
8. The Description of His Countenance – verse 16. This speaks of His great glory.
9. The Description of His Victory - verse 18. His great victory (and in Him, ours) was His resurrection. We serve a living Saviour!
10. The Description of His Sovereignty – verse 18. Keys speak of authority. By His death and resurrection, Christ destroyed the authority of Satan.

#### IV. THE STORY OF THE APOSTLE JOHN — verses 4, 9-11, 17

- A. HIS TASK - READ vv. 1, 2, 4. God used John as the human instrument to record the Book.
- B. HIS "AMENS" – READ vv. 6, 7. Here, John inserts his own "amen." The word means "so be it."
- C. HIS TITLE – READ v. 9. Whereas John might have called himself an "apostle," "a member of the inner circle," or as the "one whom Jesus loved," instead he identified with his fellow believers as:
1. Brother — we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.
  2. Companion — no self-pity here. John wasn't the only one undergoing persecution.
- D. HIS LOCATION (v. 9). The island of Patmos is a small, rugged island located close to the present-day Turkish coast. Tradition says that the aged apostle was exiled and forced into hard labor in the salt mines located there.
- E. HIS TESTIMONY (v. 9). "For the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ".
- F. THE LORD'S DAY – READ v. 10. There are two opinions here:
1. John was projected into the Day of the Lord — the future period which begins concurrently with the Rapture (I Th. 5:2) and ends with the destruction of the present creation (2 Pet. 3:10).
  2. It is a reference to the first day of the week (Sunday), when the aged apostle met with the Lord.
- G. HIS CHARGE – READ v. 11. Write it, then send it.
- H. HIS REACTION – READ v. 17. The vision of the glory of the Lord has produced similar effects upon men throughout the pages of scripture, like Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and Daniel.

#### V. THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA — vv. 4, 11, 19, 20

READ vv. 4, 11, 19, 20. These churches are the subject of Revelation chapters 2 and 3. In these introductory verses, we see considerable church truth demonstrated. These seven churches were local, visible, and organized assemblies. We see no hint of any "universal, invisible, mystical, Body of Christ" Church here. All seven of these churches were:

1. Local. They were in seven definite cities. Note they are called "churches," not, "The Church."
2. Visible. The Lord could see what was going on in them. Antipas was a real person.
3. Organized. John was to send the letters to these churches (verse 11). There must have been something tangible to send them to!

Remember: A New Testament Church is an "organized assembly of baptized believers."

Furthermore, these seven churches are:

1. Symbolized by candlesticks. Churches are not the Light (John 8:12), but the light bearers. They are the divinely appointed agents of the Gospel. They have the keys of the kingdom committed to them, Matthew 16:19, the "key" that unlocks the door of salvation is the Gospel.
2. They have Christ in the midst of them. Christ is the Head of every true New Testament Baptist church. Christ dwells in the midst of all His churches today through the Holy Spirit.
3. they are identified with Christ despite their imperfections. There is no such thing as a "perfect church" here on the earth. Most of these seven churches had serious deficiencies and problems — yet the Lord still called them churches and was pleased to dwell in the midst of them!

Likewise, the church at Corinth had numerous moral and doctrinal problems — yet the Lord addressed it as a church. Sometimes Baptists narrow the parameters far more than the Lord does. The fact that we do not agree with everything a Baptist church does (or, in some cases, believes) does not mean it is not a true church in the Lord's eyes — even if we have written it off!

This is not to say that doctrine, morality, order, and practice are insignificant — they are extremely important. The Lord's stern warnings prove that there is no license given here for laxity. There comes a point when Christ will remove the candlestick!

4. They each had "angels". The seven stars symbolized the seven angels. The word "angel means "messenger." There are three opinions as to who or what these angels were:
  - a. They Are Guardian Angels Assigned To Watch Over Churches. Why would Christ address His message to celestial beings through John?
  - b. They Were The Pastors Of These Seven Churches. Pastors are indeed messengers — they are to feed the flock by delivering the Word of God through preaching. However, the church at Ephesus had many pastors (Acts 20:17), so we might expect the letters would be addressed "to the angels." and not to the angel. I suppose the counter-argument would be to the presiding or senior pastor, but then still there were probably multiple churches in Ephesus.
  - c. They Were Messengers Sent From The Churches To John. We know the apostolic churches used messengers, 2 Corinthians 8:23. They may well have also been pastors. This would seem to be the logical understanding.

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## I. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA

Here is an excellent example of the various ways in which the Word of God can be applied. The Law of Application states: "there is [always] ONE interpretation — but [often] MANY applications. " In studying the letters to the seven churches we note the following:

1. The Primary, Historical Interpretation. Revelation 2 & 3 are addressed to seven literal, historic New Testament churches.
2. The Secondary, Universal Application. Revelation 2 & 3 are of immense value to all Baptist churches today.
3. The Secondary, Practical Application. These letters may also be applied to individual believers, with much personal benefit.

Many hold that there is a prophetic interpretation to be found in these two chapters in that the seven churches represent seven stages in church history, or the past 2,000 years. For example, the Scofield Reference Bible teaches this interpretation as follows:

- a. Ephesus — The apostolic Church, to A.D. 100.
- b. Smyrna — The persecuted Church, A.D. 100-316.
- c. Pergamos The settled Church, under imperial favor.
- d. Thyatira — The idolatrous church, Middle Ages.
- e. Sardis — The dead Church, with a reforming remnant.
- f. Philadelphia --- The revived church, post-reformation.
- g. Laodicea — The apostate church of the last days.

This interpretation has some appeal, in that Revelation 2 & 3 cover the period "The Things Which Are," i.e., the present. However, the scheme fails when placed alongside the actual events of history. This interpretation makes no allowance for an imminent return of Christ, since He could not come until the Laodicean age!

The facts of history are that there have always existed real New Testament churches in every age. We identify with them as our Baptist forbears — although they have been called by many names over the centuries: Montanists → Novatians → Donatists → Paulicians → Albigenses → Waldenses → Anabaptists → Baptists. This teaching of the "perpetuity of New Testament churches" is not, however, a doctrine based upon historical facts. The Bible teaches it — history merely confirms it. References such as Matt. 16:18; 28:20; 1 Cor. 11:26; Eph. 3:21; show that real churches would be in existence from the days of Christ until His blessed return.

The seven churches are indicative of the state of various churches at different times of history. There is a pattern, an apparent downward slide from the Ephesian to the Laodicean state, but this cycle has been generally evident in all stages of history. Among Baptists today, you could find every one of the seven kinds of churches.

## Slide 8 - Map

The Biblical "Asia" refers to the western part of Asia Minor, (the modern-day country of Turkey).

1. Ephesus. Ephesus was a major seaport, called the "Metropolis of Asia," and the "Gateway to Asia." It was a large city. Ephesus was also the seat of Diana (Artemis) worship, and the great temple dedicated to her there was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The account of the founding of the church at Ephesus is found in Acts 19 & 20:17-38.
2. Smyrna. Called the "Crown of Ionia," Smyrna was another seaport, second only to Ephesus in wealth and activity. The name "Smyrna" comes from the word 'myrrh,' an embalming perfume. It has been called Smyrna the "city of life" because it had survived destruction and was rebuilt twice. A faithful ally of Rome, it had erected there a temple dedicated to emperor worship.
3. Pergamos. An ancient city-state reaching back beyond 500 B.C. Pergamos was the political capital of Asia. It was a cultural center (possessing a library of 200,000 volumes and noted for the invention of a parchment type paper), a religious center (with magnificent temples to Zeus, Dionysius, Athena, and Asclepius, along with the required emperor worship), and a medical center. After being replaced as the provincial capital, it continued on as a center of religion.
4. Thyatira. A small but wealthy city given over to the manufacture of cloth. It is best known for the manufacture of a purple dye (Acts 16:14-15 – Lydia a seller of purple). Pagan worship in the town was directed toward the Sun-god (Thrimnos) and Sambethe.
5. Sardis. The oldest of the seven cities, having once been the capital of the Lydian empire (c.550 B.C.) It was a very idolatrous city, given over to Artemis and later Cybele (the "mother goddess"). The pagan worship of this city was particularly vile and immoral.
6. Philadelphia. A city located in a rich agricultural area subject to volcanic activity. It was known for its grapes and the consequent worship of Dionysius.
7. Laodicea. This city was founded about 250 B.C. by Antiochus II and named in honor of his wife, Laodice. It came to prominence under Roman rule, becoming extremely wealthy through the production of wool cloth. The only other mention of this place in the Bible is in Colossians.

The ruins of these ancient cities can still be found in modern Turkey.

## Slide 9

Chapters 2 & 3 cover the second section of the Book as outlined by Revelation 1:19. This is the PRESENT aspect and is basically the Revelation of Jesus Christ relative to His Churches. There are recurring phrases in each of the seven letters that we will use to provide an outline for studying the messages. The outline is as follows:



1. **CHRIST** — "These things saith He". The combined descriptions of our Lord give us the third "relative Portrait" of Jesus Christ.
2. **COMMENDATION** — "I know thy works". A fantastic, yet sobering, thought!! The risen Lord has intimate knowledge of all His Churches.
3. **CENSURE** — "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee"
4. **COUNSEL** — "I counsel thee"
5. **CHASTISEMENT** "or else"
6. **CHALLENGE** — "He that hath an ear, let him hear"
7. **COVENANT** - "To him that overcometh "

The word "overcometh" has been misunderstood by many to mean either a special group of Christians who live victorious lives, OR the false Arminian view that only those who "hold out faithful to the end" and didn't fall from grace would be saved.

The meaning of the word is defined by Scripture — Revelation 12:11. Every born-again believer IS an overcomer by virtue of the finished work of Christ. (I John 5:5.)

Slide 10

## II. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS — READ vv. 1-7

**CHRIST** (verse 1). This verse tells us three things about the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. He Is The Divine Protector. The 'stars' (angels, messengers) are in His right hand.
2. He Is The Divine Authority. The right hand speaks of authority. The right hand of the Lord holds the seven stars, thus the symbolism primarily has reference to the relationship of Christ and His appointed messengers. Throughout the Word of God, the Lord used men of God to accomplish His purpose. Those messengers who are under His control speak with heaven's authority.
3. He Has A Divine Association. Christ is in the midst of His churches. Through the Holy Spirit, He is the Head of every New Testament Church.

**COMMENDATION** (verses 2, 3, 6). Two things are outstanding about this Church. It was:

1. Active.
  - a. Works — the ministries of the church.
  - b. Labor the performing of these ministries.
  - c. Patience — the steadfast continuance of performance.

## 2. Orthodox.

- a. Separated — “... thou canst not bear . . . evil ...”
- b. Scriptural — thou hast tried them...” - to put them on trial, to exercise church discipline.
- c. Stand — thou hatest . . . which I also hate.

Note: The 'Nicolaitans' have not been positively identified:

- (1) Some tradition holds they were a sect founded by the Nicholas of Acts 6:5.
- (2) Some believe the name is derived from two Greek words, "nikao" ('to conquer') and "laos" ('the people'), and that the Nicolaitans represent the rise of priestly assumption — the division of God's people into a clergy class and a laity class. Diotrophes is an example of this — 3 John 9, 10.
- (3) Some believe them to be a wicked sect, alluded to in Ephesians 5:3-7.

Whoever they were, the Church at Ephesus had been warned about them earlier — Acts 20:29, 30.

CENSURE (verse 4).

The church at Ephesus was backslidden. They had departed from their first love – Jesus Christ and their first works – the Great Commission. This second departure naturally follows the first (John 14:15). What a lesson to be learned here!! A church that is active and Orthodox, yet backslidden. Yet this is the way of backsliding, both on a church level and a personal level. It is a gradual, almost imperceptible process. We begin to love the work of the Lord more than the Lord of the work.

Backsliding is often thought of as missing Church services, quitting in areas of service, etc. — but these are the end of backsliding, not the beginning. A Christian can be backslidden and yet attend every church service and be actively involved in church ministries.

Many churches have been sidetracked from their primary mission as a soul-winning agency for the Kingdom of God. They have diverted their focus and energies toward other things — abortion, deeper-life, counseling, Christian schools, social welfare, etc. — all which may have a place, but must be centered around the real mission of every church which is to preach the Gospel to every creature.

COUNSEL (verse 5)

1. Remember. The Lord takes every backslider back to the place where he left off.
2. Repent. Repentance is always a "change of mind which results in a change of action." In this case, the church needed a change of mind with respect to their sin.
3. Return. A right love for the Lord will motivate a church and believers to the right service.

CHASTISEMENT (verse 5)

1. Sudden Judgment — " I will come unto thee quickly... "
2. Certain Judgment — "...remove thy candlestick..."

A 'church' continued in Ephesus until the end of the 5TH century. The 3rd Ecumenical Council was held at Ephesus in 431 A.D. It was there that the doctrine of Mariolatry was formulated. Somewhere between 96 A.D. and 431 AD. this New Testament church CEASED to be such — even though it continued in name.

At what point in time was its candlestick removed? When does a Baptist church cease to be a real Baptist church? Several of these seven churches had serious problems with false doctrine and morality (as did the church at Corinth) yet (at this point) they are still addressed by the Lord Himself as churches. Somewhere in time, that status ended.

CHALLENGE (verse 7a).

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..." A spiritual inspection of our church and our personal lives is STRONGLY recommended by these words.

- Who or what is my/our first love?
- How do I/we labor for Christ?
- Do I/we hate that which God hates?
- Am I/we patient (faithful) in my service?

COVENANT (verse 7b)

That which sin excluded (Tree of life - Genesis 2:9; 3:22), salvation includes (Revelation 22:2).

### III. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA — READ vv. 8-11

CHRIST (v. 8). This verse tells us two things about the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. His Timelessness — "I am the first and the last"
2. His Triumph — "was dead, and is alive"

This reference to Christ had special significance to the church at Smyrna, which was undergoing severe persecution. Secular literature notes the extreme wickedness of the city and its opposition to the Gospel in the 1st century.

COMMENDATION (verse 9). This church was noted for its:

1. Performance — "I know thy works"
2. Pressures — the literal meaning of "tribulation."
3. Poverty — here we note God's estimation of true riches.
4. Persecution — this was primarily stirred up by godless Jews.

CENSURE: There is no censure of this church. Instead the Lord offers COMFORT in His description:

1. "First and last" — always there — with you always — Hebrews 13:8.
2. "Was dead and now alive" — I've tasted death for every man.

COUNSEL (v. 10):

The Lord rarely removes the thorns from our way instead He gives us grace to live for His glory whatever the circumstances. Three things are given here:

1. Fear Not
2. Further Trials. Tradition tells us the faithful Polycarp, the pastor of the church at Smyrna, was cruelly martyred in 155 A.D. The Jews stirred up the Roman authorities to carry out this deed.

Note: The ten days tribulation forecast here has been understood to mean either:

- a. The 10 major persecutions by Roman Emperors, beginning with Nero (54 A.D.) and ending with Diocletian (284 A.D.).
  - b. The 10 years of persecution under Diocletian (the severest of the persecuting Roman emperors).
  - c. A limited, short duration of local persecution.
3. Faithful Be. At the Judgment seat of Christ, believers will share in the rewards of service, which are presented as crowns. There are five Crowns mentioned in the New Testament:
    - a. The Crown of Life — for being faithful unto death
    - b. The Crown of Glory — for faithful pastors
    - c. The Crown of Rejoicing for faithful evangelists
    - d. The Incorruptible Crown — for victors
    - e. The Crown of Righteousness — for "lookers, lovers, & liverers,"

CHASTISEMENT: There is no chastisement held out to this church, only the promise of CROWNS.

CHALLENGE (v. 11)

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches... " How do we as a church (and as individuals) handle pressure? Often, we equate tribulation with martyrdom, but actually death can prove easier than the relentless pressures often brought to bear by Satan. So many of the Lord's saints are falling by the wayside. Faithfulness to God — a consistent testimony, trusting the Lord in all circumstances of life — is a quality to be desired.

COVENANT (v. 11)

A wonderful facet of a wonderful salvation. "If you're born once, you die twice but, if you're born twice, you can only die once." These severely persecuted believers could only be harmed physically.

#### IV. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS — READ vv. 12-17

CHRIST (v. 12): He has the sharp sword with two edges. This verse tells us two things about the Lord Jesus Christ. The sharp sword speaks of judgment, so He is the Word of God Judging. The two edges speak of discernment (Heb. 4:12), so He is the Word of God discerning.

COMMENDATION (verse 13). The Lord commends this church for two things:

1. Being A Daring Testimony Before The Seat Of Satanic Cultism. "Thou holdest fast my Name..." Pergamos was a center of pagan religion. The 'god of medicine,' Asclepius, was represented as a serpent. Here we observe that Satan's seat is not in Hell (a common misconception not taught in the Word of God). We also observe Satan is behind all false religion. It would have been easy for the church members to have kept silent about Jesus Christ — they were in the minority.
2. Having A Doctrinal Tenacity In The Face Of Satanic Persecution. "And hast not denied my faith...". Antipas ("against all") was evidently the first of probably many martyrs in that city.

CENSURE (vv. 14,15):

The church at Pergamos was troubled by COMPROMISE. There were two areas of compromise:

1. Toleration Of The Doctrine Of Balaam. The story of Balaam is found in Numbers 22 - 25. The King of Moab, asks the prophet to curse Israel. Balaam refuses to curse those whom God has blessed. Balaam succumbs to the offer of wealth to try to curse Israel. Three times God prevents Balaam from cursing Israel. Balaam finally engineered God's curse upon Israel by causing them to sin through intermarriage with heathen women. This is the "doctrine of Balaam".

Within the church at Pergamos were members who advocated the wedding of Christianity to heathenism. The doctrine of Balaam was a breakdown of ecclesiastical and personal separation. This is evident today as those barriers come down resulting in worldly churches and Christians.

2. Toleration Of The Doctrine Of The Nicolaitans.

What was "deeds of the Nicolaitans" in Ephesus (2:6) was now a doctrine in Pergamos. If the sect of the Nicolaitans was a wicked group advocating antinomian life-styles (Romans 6:1), we can see the connection between this doctrine and Balaamism. **WHEN WE LOWER THE STANDARDS, OUR LIFE PRACTICES WILL FOLLOW.**

How often do we hear people say, "If you weren't so strict a lot more people would attend your church!?" But when the standards are lowered, it is invariably the people of God who change for the worse. This is the way of sin (Psalm 1:1).

COUNSEL (verse 16a): "Repent... ". This is a sudden sharp warning. There is nothing else to do but turn from their ways. The commendable things in a church do not negate the cursed things.

CHASTISEMENT (verse 16):

1. Speedy Settlement. Unless the church acted immediately (I Corinthians 5:1-13), the Lord would Himself deal with the problem. Such is the grievous error of compromise.
2. Spiritual Surgery. If the church would not remove the problem, the Lord would. How? By the Word of God – sharp sword with 2 edges. The answer to error is TRUTH.

CHALLENGE (v. 17a): "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..."

1. Do we boldly proclaim the name of Christ?
2. Do I/we hold dear the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God?
3. Do I harbor any compromise? Am I willing to lower the standards to 'get on' in this world? What do I do with my children – encourage them in worldly things or teach them to stand for the right?
4. Does my living match my beliefs?

COVENANT (v. 17)

1. Provision – Hidden Manna. Every child of God is sustained by the grace of God through the Word of God. Here the promise is given in the light of compromise. Manna may also be seen as a picture of the Word of God our spiritual food. It sustained (Ex. 16:35), it had to be taken daily, etc.
2. Pardon – White Stone. The white stone had symbolic significance in four possible ways:
  - a. It signified "acquittal" in a criminal trial.
  - b. It was given as a token of freedom for an emancipated slave.
  - c. It sometimes was carried as a token of citizenship.
  - d. It was awarded to the victors in athletic contests.

Every believer has been given the white stone of acquittal and freedom through Jesus Christ.

3. Position – New Name. In Christ we are brought into a new relationship in the family of God.

## V. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA – READ vv. 18-29

CHRIST (verse 18). The Lord Jesus Christ is presented here as the:

1. Discerning Judge. Eyes - omniscience. The Lord knows all about us and His churches. Fire - judgment. The Lord's judgment is penetrating and all-consuming.

2. Destroying Judge. "Fine brass" speaks of refining judgment. Many times the Lord will judge His churches in order to purify them.

#### COMMENDATION (verse 19)

The Lord commends His church at Thyatira for five qualities, but more so because these qualities were increasing — *"and the last to be more than the first..."*

1. Growing In Works. Twice, the works of this church are mentioned — indicating it was a very active church. In this regard the church at Thyatira contrasts the church at Ephesus, which was decreasing in its works. Many Christians begin serving the Lord with cheerfulness and enthusiasm, but gradually slow down to a standstill. How commendable is it to abound and grow exceedingly in our usefulness to the Lord!
2. Growing In Charity. Charity is "God's love outworked". The church at Ephesus was waning in love and works - the church at Thyatira was gaining in these things.
3. Growing In Service (Ministry). This church was increasing its ministries, and these labors were motivated by love.
4. Growing In Faith. This is the kind of faith that suggests loyalty to the Lord.
5. Growing In Patience. Patience is born out of trial and perfects the Christian character. It is acceptable to God. The church at Thyatira was commended for growing in their resolve.

#### CENSURE (v. 20):

We note a definite trend here, one that is likely to be seen in churches throughout all ages:

- Ephesus — Coolness
- Pergamos - Compromise
- Thyatira — Contamination

The condition of the church at Thyatira is a direct outcome of the kind of compromise seen in the church at Pergamos. The church at Ephesus and the church at Thyatira were exact opposites:

- Ephesus — waning in love & works — would not tolerate evil
- Thyatira — gaining in love & works — tolerating evil

These extremes are seen in many Baptist churches today — some are very traditional, ultra-fundamental, BUT cold, unloving, and lifeless! Others are warm, loving, busy but doctrinally lax. Both kinds of churches have destructive weaknesses - we need to strive for a scriptural balance.

## 1. The Toleration Of Evil.

The Lord faults this church because it has allowed evil and false doctrine to get in. It is evident from verses 23,24 that within the membership of this church were true believers and false professors. It is nowhere said that this Jezebel received any sympathy or encouragement from the people of God. The problem was they let her alone — she was never dealt with.

- a. A church that will not exercise scriptural discipline is in error.
- b. A church that abides wrong associations is in error. This is why Baptist churches should not engage in church fellowship or cooperation with unscriptural organizations or 'churches.'

## 2. The Evil Tolerated.

The church at Thyatira had allowed a woman to influence God's servants. The Lord calls her Jezebel — the most infamous name that could be given to any woman.

- a. The Old Testament Jezebel. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, the Sidonian King. She married Ahab, King of Israel. In this marriage, two things are evident: Jezebel manipulated Ahab. She was the real power behind the throne. Jezebel was responsible for the wholesale introduction of the vile, idolatrous Baal worship into Israel.
- b. The New Testament Jezebel. Evidently she was a real woman in the church who taught and seduced the leadership of the church, leading many to adopt a perverted Christianity. The Bible teaches that women are not to be in positions of leadership in a church.
- c. Without doubt the greatest work of the seducing spirit of Jezebel is seen in the aftermath of the 'Edict of Toleration' in 311 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (288-337 A.D.) and the subsequent development of Roman Catholicism. By making Christianity the official state religion, scores of unsaved pagans came into the 'churches,' bringing their beliefs and practices with them. Over a period of time, 'Christian' terminology was adapted and assimilated into the pagan practices of the realm. Today, much Roman Catholic belief and practice is a perverted, paganized form of Christianity.

COUNSEL (verse 24): Here the all-knowing, all-searching Lord identifies:

1. The Real Church. This is the first time the Lord speaks to a group within the apparent membership of the church at Thyatira. In addition to the initial membership requirements of salvation then baptism (Acts 2:41), there is a continuing membership charge to continue in doctrine. Holding false doctrine is grounds for church discipline.
2. The Real Authority. The real authority in faith and practice is the Word of God — not the babblings of some Jezebel. The Lord says "I will put upon you none other burden..." which reminds us of the attempts of the Judaizers in Acts 15 who wanted to ADD to the Word of God.



## CHASTISEMENT (verses 21-23)

The sin of 'spiritual adultery' is very serious, as seen here in the Lord's judgment. God still hates idolatry.

1. A Judgment Of Condemnation — verse 21. In His grace, God gives heretics space to repent.
2. A Judgment Of Association - verse 22. Spiritual associations are important. God holds all involved in spiritual adultery accountable, not just the leaders.
3. A Judgment Of Finality - verse 23b. 'Killed with death' shows the true end of all apostates. (...“her children...” indicating a second generation.)
4. A Judgment Of Warning — verse 23b. God's judgments upon a church are severe, but serve to warn others of the need to stay pure.

CHALLENGE (verses 25,29): There is but one challenge issued to this church — "hold fast".

## COVENANT (verses 26-28)

We note here a difference to the usual formula, "...he that overcometh.. .," with the additional words, "... and keepeth my works unto the end..." As noted previously, the Overcomer is the believer. With this promise the Lord addresses those believers who remain faithful to Him in the face of mounting apostasy.

1. A position of responsibility — verse 26.
2. A position of rulership – verse 27.

The "morning star" refers to Christ and establishes the time when the faithful will reign with Christ as during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

Slide 11

## I. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT SARDIS — READ vv. 1-6

CHRIST (verse 1). The Lord Jesus Christ is presented as the:

1. Administrator Of Life. Christ has the "seven Spirits of God," meaning the seven-times perfect Holy Spirit. The Spirit proceeds from the Son; on the day of Pentecost, Christ baptized His church with the Spirit, and it is the Spirit Who inhabits the Lord's churches today --— giving them life and power. By presenting to the church at Sardis (the "dead church") this description of Himself, the Lord was indicating the need for Holy Spirit revival.
2. Administrator Of Leadership. Christ also has the 'seven stars,' which represent the angels (messengers) of the churches. The Bible teaches that pastors are "shepherds" who are under the leadership of the Chief Shepherd (I Peter 5:1,4), but the statement here reminds us that the Lord holds ALL leadership in His churches primarily responsible for their spiritual well-being, and that revival must begin with them.

COMMENDATION (verse 4)

There is a notable difference between the church at Sardis and those mentioned hitherto in chapter 2. In the previous churches evil seemed to be an exception, and the Lord was able to commend before censure. With this church, there is little to commend — and that only comes after His censure.

CENSURE (verses 1,2). The church at Sardis was dead in the eyes of the Lord. It had:

1. A Deceptive Reputation — verse 1.

- a. "A Name That Thou Livest". In the eyes of others, especially other churches, this church was considered 'alive' and thriving. No doubt it had every conceivable activity and ministry possible, large crowds, magnificent, etc.

Note: Baptists have a "name that liveth" also. It is a God-given name, it is an historic name, it is a blessed name. However, simply having the name does not guarantee the blessings of God. After all, the church at Sardis was a Baptist church which died!

- b. "And Art Dead". In God's sight, the church was dead. The fire had gone out. It is not the size of a church or the number of activities in a church that measures its spiritual life. This fact needs to be understood by many Baptists who tend to measure spirituality by "success" (i.e. numbers, ministries, staff, etc.) All these things are good (and to be desired) — provided God is in it.

2. Defective Results — verse 2b. " ....I have not found thy works perfect before God...". This word "perfect" carries the sense of fulfillment. This church had stopped short of God's will. This is true of many churches today — "ministry without a mission" — a youth group that seeks only entertainment, preaching that tickles itching ears, missions to reach the body but not the soul, etc. They are ministries that do not reach souls for Christ.

#### COUNSEL (verses 2,3)

Even in this dead church there is a flicker of light coming from the faithful few. Notice it is to this group that the Lord directs His counsel. His counsel is 5-fold:

1. Regard. "be watchful..." verse 2. We must be alert to the subtleties of Satan. Unlike the churches at Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira, (which sustained direct Satanic confrontation), this church was seemingly free from outward opposition — the rot was in the inside!
2. Reinforce. "strengthen the things which remain..." verse 2. God's people need sound doctrine in order to resist the rot.
3. Remember — verse 3. The Lord takes these faithful few back to the days when this church had life — back to the things it had received and heard.
4. Retain — "hold fast..." verse 3. In these days of dead churches, how much more is it imperative for God's people to hold fast to the faith?
5. Repent — The only course of action when a church or a believer departs from the Word of God.

#### CHASTISEMENT (verse 3b):

1. Unexpected Thief.
2. Unexpected Time.

The Lord's judgment upon this church is likened to His sudden judgment upon the world known as the Day of the Lord – the Tribulation period that begins after the Rapture.

Sardis was situated above a valley and surrounded by high cliffs which were almost impossible to scale. It was a city ideally defended, yet on two occasions (549 B.C. by Cyrus & 214 B.C. by Antiochus) it was captured when the enemy scaled the cliff under cover of darkness. Overconfidence and failure to watch were the death of the city — and of the church there.

## CHALLENGE (verse 6)

How am I, or we as a church, seen by others? More importantly, how am I, or we as a church seen by the Lord? Are we alive? Or are we a spiritual corpse? Evidences of spiritual life:

1. Birth - am I, are we, reproducing? Are souls being saved?
2. Growth - am I, are we, growing in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ?
3. Activity - am I, are we, busy serving the Lord in the way He sets forth?
4. Maturation - am I, are we, maturing as we are grounded in the doctrines of the Word of God?
5. Compassion - do I, do we, have a God-given love for others?
6. Harmony - do I, are we, working in harmony with the other members of this body of Christ?

COVENANT (verses 4b,5). The Lord reminds each child of His of three privileges:

1. Raiment.
2. Record. This statement confirms two blessed truths:
  - a. Through faith in Christ our names will remain in the Lamb's Book of Life.
  - b. We can never have our name erased
3. Recognition. All who belong to Jesus Christ through faith will have a holy introduction in heaven.

## II. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA — READ vv. 7-13

CHRIST (verse 7). The Lord presents Himself to this church both in His:

1. Divine Attributes.
  - a. Holy — right in Character.
  - b. Truth — right in Conduct.
2. Divine Activity
  - a. Hath the Key of David. This has reference to Isaiah 22:15-22, where the LORD replaces Shebna with Eliakim. The 'key of David' is apparently the key to the treasury. This activity of the Lord may be seen as the bestowing of treasures (blessings) upon the church.
  - b. Openeth and Shutteth. The Lord has the keys, thus the authority, to open and shut. The "keys of the kingdom" (i.e., the Gospel — which unlocks the door of Salvation to men), has been committed to the Lord's churches. The "Great Commission" was given by Christ to His church[es]. Though we as a church use the Gospel key to unlock the door of salvation, it is the Lord who actually does the work.

## COMMENDATION (verses 8,10)

Like the church at Smyrna, this church is highly commended. There are three things the Lord notes:

1. Perception — "I have set before thee an open door." The Lord evidently could entrust this assembly with a task, for he opened doors of opportunity for them. The Lord always blesses a 'mission-minded' church — one which has the spiritual vision of fields white unto harvest.
2. Purity.
  - a. Doctrinal purity — .. kept my Word..
  - b. Testimonial purity "...not denied my Name... "

Note: "... thou hast little strength..." It does not require a large, active church to have a great witness for Christ and the Word of God.

3. Patience — verse 10. The "keeping the word of my patience" has to do with patiently serving the Lord while waiting for His return.

CENSURE: With this church, there is NO censure, only a COMMITMENT from the Lord Himself:

1. A Commitment To Victory — verse 9. One day the enemies of the Gospel will be vanquished. Faithfulness has its reward.
2. A Commitment To Vindication --- verse 9. "... to know that I have loved thee..." One day everyone will know just how much the Lord has loved His churches.
3. A Commitment To 'Vanishment' — verse 10. This is one of the most certain statements of a Pretribulation Rapture. The return of the Lord for His saints is, and always has been, imminent. Should the Lord have returned during the existence of the church in Philadelphia, He assures them they will be raptured and will not pass through the events of Daniel's 70TH Week on earth. The word "from" is the Greek 'ek,' meaning "out of." The Lord promised to keep us "out of" this coming hour of temptation (testing) not to keep us "through" it.

COUNSEL (verse 11). Here the Lord reminds this favored church of the possibility of:

1. Falling. "Hold fast to that which thou hast. "
2. Failing. "That no man take thy crown... "

CHASTISEMENT (v. 11): The Lord gives no promise of chastisement to this church. Instead, He gives a word of CAUTION.

## CHALLENGE (verse 13)

The church at Smyrna was the "poor-rich" church. The church at Philadelphia was the "weak-strong" church. In contrast with the five other churches, we may be challenged to see the real strength and wealth of any church.

- Are we a church seeking opportunities to serve?
- Are we holy and true in all we seek to do?
- Do we plan to "work till Jesus comes?"

COVENANT (verse 12). The blessings of salvation through Jesus Christ include:

1. A Permanent Position In Heaven. The "pillar in the temple" suggests permanence. "He shall not more go out" further confirms this point. On earth, each true New Testament church is the "pillar and ground of the truth". It seems in glory these pillars will make up the great temple of God.
2. A Personal Passport To Heaven. This passport, like any worldly kind, contains three important pieces of information:
  - Our Sovereign — the Name of our God
  - Our City — the New Jerusalem
  - Our Signature — my new Name. See: Revelation 2:17

## III. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA — READ vv. 14-22

CHRIST (verse 14). The Lord Jesus portrays Himself to this church in three ways:

1. As The "Amen". The word 'Amen' is Hebrew for 'truth,' and literally means "let it so be." It is sometimes translated in the New Testament as "verily" (e.g. John 3:3). Christ is the "Amen" — the verification of divine revelation. What He says is so! Perhaps this title of Christ has its greatest significance with a 'wishy-washy' church like that at Laodicea. "Thus saith the Lord," should ring out from our pulpits; "Amen" should resound back from the pews!
2. As The Author. HE is the "faithful and true witness, " thus the words our Lord speaks are truth. These letters are not the words of men — but of God the Son.
3. As The Architect. The phrase "the beginning of the creation of God" does not mean Jesus was a created being, but rather that He initiated the creative act with the Godhead. This church boasted of its wealth — the Lord here reminds them that all things are from Himself.

COMMENDATION: This is the only church out of the seven which is not commended by the Lord. Even in the dead church at Sardis the Lord could find a few faithful members — but here, nothing good is said.

CENSURE (verses 15,16,17). The Lord brings a three-fold complaint against this church.

1. Complacency — verses 15,16. The church at Laodicea is described as being lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. It is this kind of church most of all that makes the Lord sick. No enthusiasm, no compassion, no urgency, no vision — just a tepid brand (perversion) of Christianity.
2. Conceit — Revelation 3:17a. "Because thou sayest..." This church was trusting in its own possessions and position as a mark of spirituality. Notice the deceit follows conceit:
  - a. "Thou sayest" — conceit
  - b. "Thou art" — deceit
3. Comfort — verse 17. As noted previously, Laodicea was a wealthy city, and it seems the church there had 'enjoyed' a similar condition. Here we learn the value of living by faith — looking to the Lord to supply our needs. It is not a sin to be rich — but it can be a snare. There are some notable differences between this church and the previous six:
  - a. In Its Title. This church is addressed as "the church of the Laodiceans," whereas the others are referred to as "the church in," or "the church at." This title suggests the Lord didn't really own this church — the people did! The word "Laodicea" means the "voice of the people" — indicating that the members had ceased listening to the voice of God and submitting to the Headship of Christ.
  - b. In Its Relationship to Christ — Revelation 3:20. This church seemed to have everything --- except Christ. HE was on the outside seeking entrance. This verse gave rise to the classic painting by Holeman Hunt entitled, "Christ at the Door."
  - c. In Its Total Corruption. There was no faithful remnant within this church — it seems the entire membership was affected with spiritual malaise.

COUNSEL (verse 18)

In giving His admonition to this church, the Lord evidently drew from the conditions and surroundings of Laodicea.

1. Get Spiritual Riches. We need to have the riches of Christ! Note that this kind of wealth comes:
  - a. From the Lord — "... buy of Me..."
  - b. From testing — "tried in the fire"

How paradoxical! This church was "at ease", no hassles, no battles, no hardships — nothing! Therein we observe the real value of trials for a church and for individuals.

2. Get Spiritual Raiment. Laodicea was noted for its manufacture of black wool. To these merchants, the Lord points them to their need of righteousness.
3. Get Spiritual Reality. Laodicea was also noted for the manufacture of two kinds of medicine — an ointment for sore ears and an eye powder for sore eyes. The Lord turns this into an illustration to the church of its need for spiritual perception. The Lord Jesus opened the eyes of many men during His earthly ministry — He still opens the spiritual eyes of men today.

CHASTISEMENT (verse 19): The Lord is sick over this church, He is literally left outside the assembly. The Lord still loves this church but finds it necessary to reprove. Correction and chastening of the Lord is not to punish, but to lead the church to repentance.

CHALLENGE (verses 20,22): The only hope for a lukewarm church is to invite (and allow) Christ to take up His rightful place. An artist friend of Holman Hunt looked at his painting and said, "Haven't you made a mistake by painting the door without a latch?" To which Hunt replied, "There is no mistake. The latch is on the inside. You and I control the latch."

Note: Should Revelation 3:20 be used when dealing with the lost about salvation? In its immediate context (and proper interpretation) the verse applies to a church which has basically ceased to be a real New Testament Baptist church. A secondary application for soul winning would be illustrative — much like the parable of the prodigal (Luke 15).

COVENANT (verse 21): In response to our receiving Jesus Christ into our lives, and the joyful feasting and fellowship which follows, the Lord promises all His children:

1. Everlasting Fellowship — sit with Me..
2. Everlasting Future - " .. in my throne"

This throne suggests the kind of service we will be involved. While we cannot at this point even begin to comprehend the glory to come (I Corinthians 2:9), we know we shall not simply exist sitting around doing nothing during the Millennium or throughout the eternal ages.

#### IV. A SUMMARY OF THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

- EPHESUS                      Cooling
- SMYRNA                      Comforted
- PERGAMOS                  Compromising
- THYATIRA                  Contaminated
- SARDIS                      Cadaverous
- PHILADELPHIA              Challenged
- LAODICEA                  Corrupt



## V. AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

It is evident the Lord did not choose to write letters to these seven churches because they were the only ones existing, or because they were the largest and most influential. Some, evidently, were small in membership (Revelation 3:8e), others were materially poor (Revelation 2:9c).

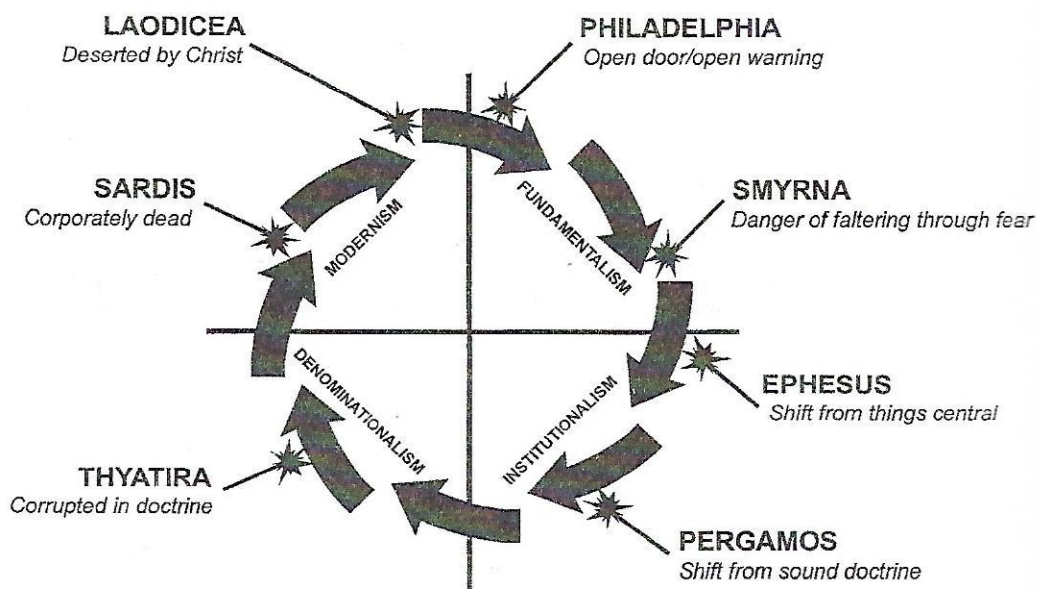
The Lord chose these seven churches because they are representative of the whole spectrum of New Testament church life — at any time and in any age. We know from history that none of these seven churches survived as New Testament churches. Historically, there were three basic phases each one passed through:

- A time when the church conformed to the Word of God.
- A time when the church ceased to be a New Testament church.
- A time when the 'church' ceased to exist physically.

When considering these things, we observe an apparent "cycle" through which many churches ultimately go through — a metamorphosis, where a true New Testament church turns into to a human organization.

The first wholesale recognition of this fact occurred in the year 251 A.D., when our Baptist forbears (at that time called "Novatians") actually withdrew their fellowship from many other churches who were changing rapidly into what would later become the Roman Catholic system.

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This cycle has since repeated itself many times over the past centuries of church history. A diagrammatic form is shown here — perhaps a little simplistically, since these changes are actually very subtle and gradual. The location of the seven churches around this diagram is a suggestion only.

Since every Baptist church is different, elements from all of the churches may be found in any particular church.

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**BIBLE-BELIEVING BAPTIST CHURCHES:** Characterized by fervent dedication, sacrificial service, growth, dynamic life, pioneering spirit, separated stand, strong convictions, concerned about obedience to the Word of God and reaching others for Christ around the world.

**INSTITUTIONAL BAPTIST CHURCHES:** Characterized by a desire for sophistication, recognition, and respectability, weaker convictions, broader fellowship, concerned more about interpersonal relationships and meeting needs within the membership. Often a second or third generation phenomenon.

**DENOMINATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCHES:** Characterized by groups of churches bound by formal rules, structured Christianity, centralized decision making, Theological seminaries, mission boards, ecumenical ties, liberal and conservative 'camps,' rejection of the King James Bible, concerned about self-perpetuation.

**LIBERAL "BAPTIST" CHURCHES:** Characterized by deadness, hypocrisy, negative growth, formalism, wholesale departure from Biblical truth, ecumenism, etc.

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## I. THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE THIRD DIVISION OF THE BOOK

### Slide 15 - Outline

- Things which thou hast seen — PAST (1:10-20)
- Things which are —PRESENT
- Things which shall be hereafter — FUTURE (4:1—22:21)

READ v. 1 – Introduces the third division. There can be no doubt, the v. 1h - "...things which must be hereafter..." section commences here. The main body of the Book is future. It is a certain future — "MUST BE!". Chapters four and five introduce the future section — the actual unveiling of coming events begins with chapter 6.

### Slide 16

## II. A PREVIEW OF THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS — vv. 1, 2a

READ vv. 1, 2a. The aged apostle is given a foretaste of the glorious 'rapture' as he is transported in his spirit to Heaven. The words "after this" is significant, for they have reference to the previous messages to the seven churches.

### 1. The Rapture Will End The Present Church Age.

- a. There is no mention of any church between Revelation 3:22 and Revelation 22:16.
- b. The familiar phrase in Revelation 13:9 does not mention a church.
- c. From the days of Christ and the apostles there have always been New Testament churches in existence, illustrated by the seven in Revelation 2 & 3. The coming of Christ FOR His saints has always been imminent (could happen at any time).

2. Another Proof for A Pre-tribulation Rapture. In Revelation 4:1,2 the believer (represented in John) is translated to heaven. The events which begin unfolding in Revelation 6 relate to the earth. Christians will not pass through Daniel's 70TH Week (which includes the Great Tribulation)! However, believers on earth now are always subject to tribulation John 16:33 which is the result of man's wrath, but they will not go through God's wrath – the Tribulation period.

V. 1 – there is a door opened in heaven. Three doors are mentioned in the Revelation:

1. The Open Door — Revelation 3:8 — Christ seeking
2. The Closed Door — Revelation 3:20 — Christ Pleading
3. The Heavenly Door — Revelation 4:1 — Christ Receiving

V. 1 – The voice. This is the voice of the archangel (I Thessalonians 4:16), presumably Michael, since he is the only archangel mentioned in the Bible — Jude 9.

V. 1 – The trumpet - the 'trump of God' (I Th 4:16), the 'last trump' as far as believers are concerned.

V. 1 – The call from heaven. "...come up hither... ". The rapture is distinguished from the Second Coming. At the Rapture, the Lord Jesus does not return to the earth -- the saints are "caught up" to meet Him in the air. At the Second Coming, the Lord Jesus Christ will actually set foot on the earth.

V. 2a. It is an instantaneous rapture. "...immediately...". When the Rapture takes place, believers will immediately be ushered into the presence of God.

V. 2. The throne in heaven. This throne is probably the 'Judgment Seat of Christ.' After the Rapture, every Christian must appear before this judgment throne to give an account of his life.

1. This Judgment Is For Christians Only.

2. It Is A Judgment Of Works (Service), Not Salvation. According to I Corinthians 3:9-15, the Lord looks at how we serve Him in His building, His Temple — our church.

3. Rewards Will Be Given For Faithful Service In The Church. These undoubtedly will be the five crowns. The mention of crowns in connection with the 24 Elders seems to confirm this scene as contemplating the Judgment Seat.

### III. THE THRONE IN HEAVEN — vv. 2b, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11

READ v. 2b. The location of the throne is in Heaven, the abode of God, i.e. the third heaven.

Description of the throne.

1. Surrounded By An Emerald Rainbow — READ v. 3. The rainbow is a pledge of God's mercy and faithfulness. In heaven it is a full circle, indicating God's eternal faithfulness.

2. Set Over A Sea Of Crystal Glass – READ v. 6. This relates to the sea (laver) of the Jewish Temple. There, the laver (sea of water) was for personal cleansing and is a type of the Word of God. Perhaps the significance of the rainbow and the crystal sea relate to the Judgment of Christians.

READ vv. 3, 9, 11. The Occupant of the Throne.

1. His Identity. Without doubt, the eternal Godhead is pictured here.

a. God the Father. Because the One on the throne is differentiated from the Son in ch. 5.

b. God the Son. Because He sits with His Father on the throne.

c. God the Spirit. Because the seven-fold plenitude of the Holy Spirit is again represented (v. 5b).

2. His Description. John sees the symbolic colors.

a. Brilliant Stones — verse 3. The jasper is like a diamond. The sardine is a ruby. Both these stones are mentioned in the Bible in connection with things "glorious" — Revelation 21; Ezekiel 28. Both these stones are found in the Aaronic breastplate — Exodus 28.

- Jasper — Reuben — 'behold a son' firstborn.
- Sardius — Benjamin — 'son of my right hand' last born.

It seems then that this representation of God depicts His glory (Psalms 104:2) and His covenant relationship with His people.

b. Lightnings, Thunderings. Voices — READ v. 5. Representative of God's righteous judgments.

#### IV. THE FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS — vv. 4, 10, 11

There is a degree of speculation concerning the identity of these persons. Some believe them to be a class of angels. Some hold them to be representatives of the 12 tribes of Israel plus the 12 apostles. Others believe them to be representatives of the redeemed. Consider the following:

READ v. 4. The elders were sitting — it is a promise to the overcomer (i.e. believer) — READ Rev. 3:21. The elders were clothed in white raiment. This again indicates a redeemed company and the elders had 4 crowns. The Greek word for crown here is "stephanos" rather than "diadema," indicating these crowns were rewards. The five crowns are for believers during this present age.

READ vv. 10, 11. We see the occupation of the 24 elders. What is interesting is that the Aaronic priests were divided into 24 companies. We learn this from I Chronicles 24. There were literally thousands of priests in David's day, but they were organized and represented by 24 groups.

1. Believers Are Called Priests Unto God — 1 Peter 2:9.
2. The Promise Of Priestly Duty Is Given — Revelation 1:6; 5:10.

Thus, we conclude that the 24 Elders represent the company of the redeemed in heaven. Notice the ultimate purpose for these reward crowns— verse 10c. Not only should our works glorify Him, but our rewards as well.

#### V. THE FOUR BEASTS — READ vv. 6-9

READ vv. 6-9. In contrast to the 24 Elders, these 4 beasts are not human. They are spirit beings — six winged as the Seraphim of Isaiah 6, and four-faced similar to the cherubim of Ezekiel 1. They are in the midst and round about the throne of God giving continual praises to God.

## I. THE SEVEN SEALED SCROLL — v. 1

READ v. 1. It is in the right hand of the Father on the throne. This book is shown to be important due to: (1) Its Comprehensiveness— written on both sides and (2) Its Seven Seals. It seems this book was like a scroll, sealed in such a way that the seals must be successively broken as the scroll is read.

Do we know what this book is or where it came from ? Yes! This is the book of the prophecy that Daniel was commanded to seal up.

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READ Daniel 12:4. Daniel 10, 11, & 12 comprise one vision, which is primarily concerned with world events as they relate to Daniel's people (the Jews) in the last days. Daniel 11 speaks of the coming Antichrist. Daniel 12 speaks of the coming Great Tribulation, part of the 70TH week (of seven years) of Daniel 9:27.

Revelation chapters 6 and on unfold in detail those things which Daniel saw but was not permitted to reveal. Over 600 years transpired between the sealing and the unsealing of this prophecy.

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## II. THE SEARCH AND THE SOBBING SEER— READ vv. 2-4

READ v. 2. Who is the strong angel? This may have been Gabriel, the angel who gave Daniel the visions (and probably ordered the sealing of the book). Question - Who was worthy to open it?

READ v. 3. No one was worthy to open and read this Book. Neither in (1) Heaven - the dwelling place of God. Neither man nor angel was found NOR in (2) Earth — the dwelling place of man. No man was found NOR (3) Under The Earth — the underworld. No man was found.

READ v. 4. We see John's broken heart. This scene sets before us the sinfulness of man. No man is worthy. John no doubt wept over this fact, and out of real concern for a Christ-less world.

## III. THE SLAIN SAVIOUR — vv. 5-7

READ v. 5. The Lion of Judah and Root of David - two titles declaring His Sovereignty.

READ v. 6. We see the appearance of the Savior - slain. In Christ's post-resurrection appearances the marks of the cross were still in evidence. Throughout eternity we shall be reminded of Calvary. Horns, in the prophetic scriptures, speak of rule or power. The Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit in all His (seven-fold) perfections to this earth. He is in the midst of the throne of the Father.

READ v. 7. The Lord does not meekly take the book from the hand of the Father — the verb 'took' in the Greek suggests promptness and resolute finality. The destiny of mankind is in the nail-pierced hands of the Lamb that was slain.

#### IV. THE SAVED SINGERS — READ vv. 8-10

READ v. 8. We see the worship of Jesus Christ. There are the (1) Four beasts and (2) the 24 elders representative of the redeemed in Heaven. The harp is a musical instrument associated with worship. Only the harp and the trumpet are mentioned in connection with heavenly worship. We also see vials of incense – prayers of the saints. This verse teaches us much about prayer from heaven's perspective.

1. Prayer Reaches Heaven.
2. Prayer Pleases God. It is a sweet-smelling incense to Him.
3. Prayers Are "Stored" In Heaven. The symbolism suggests this fact.
4. Prayer Worships God. This is because prayer is an expression of our total dependence upon the Lord. The prayers of the saints are used in worshipping God.

READ vv. 9, 10. The Gospel in song.

1. The Explanation of The Gospel. "...thou wast slain.. " (not "are!" ) The Gospel is the good news of Christ's death and resurrection.
2. The Application of The Gospel. "... and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood..." When the blood of Jesus Christ is applied, we are saved and redeemed.
3. The Contemplation of The Gospel. "...Out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation..." The world (every creature) is included in the scope of redemption.
4. The Elevation of The Gospel. In Christ we are made something special. Now, we are priests unto God (1 Peter 2). Later, we shall be kings and rule with Christ during His millennial kingdom.

#### V. THE SONG OF THE SAVED AND THE SERVANTS — vv. 11-13

READ v. 11 - 13. This heavenly choir was made up of the myriad of angels, the redeemed, the four beasts, and the whole creation. The title of the song is "Worthy is the Lamb". To the Lord Jesus Christ is ascribed a seven-fold praise: power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing.

READ v. 14. We see the response to the song. All Christian music should provoke a response like that in Heaven: (1) Amen meaning agreement: Songs and scripture should agree. A number of well-known hymns are patently unscriptural in their statements or sentiment. (2) Adoration. Music ought to turn our heart to the Lord — Ephesians 5:19, 20.

## I. DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK

Revelation chapters 6 through 19 unfold and detail coming events encapsulated in the 70TH week of Daniel's great prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, recorded in Daniel 9:24-27. This key prophetic passage provides a framework upon which other Bible prophecies can be set.

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READ Daniel 9:24-27. There are FIVE IMPORTANT THINGS to note concerning this prophecy:

1. Part Is General And Part Is Detailed. Verse 24 gives a general overview and informs us that the length of God's dealing with the Jews would be 70 weeks.
2. The Seventy Weeks Are "70-Sevens Of Years". This was covered extensively when we studied Daniel in Major Prophets 2. By way of review: The Hebrew word rendered "weeks" in this passage is "shabua," which literally means 'sevens' or HEPTADS. It means a group of seven of anything, similar to our word 'dozen.' Daniel would have understood this expression to mean 70 sevens of years because he had been contemplating years at the time verse 2.
3. There Are FOUR Personages Of Note.
  - Thy People - verse 24. This refers to Daniel's people, the Jews. The reference to "thy holy city" further confirms this fact. There is nothing Gentile or Christian about this prophecy.
  - Messiah The Prince — verse 25. There can be no doubt this refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - The People Of The Coming Prince — verse 26. Daniel chapter 7 reveals that the Antichrist will rise out of the latter stages of the fourth world empire (Rome), these 'people' must belong to the Roman empire at some stage of its existence.
  - The Prince That Shall Come ----- verse 27. Antichrist.
4. There Are EIGHT Separate Events.
  - (1) The Going Forth Of The Commandment — verse 25. This was the decree of Artaxerxes given in 445 B.C. and recorded in Nehemiah 2:5-8, when Nehemiah was permitted to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. This commandment signaled the beginning of the 70 Weeks.
  - (2) The Street And The Wall Built In Troublous Times — verse 25. This portion of the prophecy has now been fulfilled and is recorded in detail for us in Nehemiah chapters 4 through 6.
  - (3) Messiah Cut Off — verse 26. An obvious reference to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was 'cut off' — indicating a sudden death. But not for Himself — His was substitutionary.



- (4). The City And The Sanctuary Destroyed -- verse 26. This part of the prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. with the complete destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions under Titus.
  - (5) Desolations Determined Unto The End -- verse 26. This part of the prophecy speaks of the continuing trouble in Israel right up to the second coming of Jesus Christ.
  - (6) The Covenant Confirmed -- verse 27. The Antichrist. He will confirm the Covenant with the Jews. What covenant? As a counterfeit Messiah (Revelation 6:2) the Antichrist will bring an apparent peace to Israel and establish an agreement with that nation. It appears that land is involved. It is the Abrahamic Covenant that promises the land to Israel. The Jewish expectation is to acquire the full promise of the land when their Messiah comes!
  - (7) The Overspreading Of Abominations -- verse 27. In the midst of this 70TH Week, the Antichrist will break the covenant, cause the restored animal sacrifices to cease, and install himself as God in the temple.
  - (8) The Consummation -- verse 27. This is the final event in the history of the world as we know it. It corresponds to the second coming of Jesus Christ (Daniel 2:45; 7:22), and involves the judgment of the Desolater, everlasting righteousness is established, and the most Holy anointed -- coronation of King Jesus.
5. There is a time gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week. The 70TH Week of Daniel's vision is yet to be fulfilled, and the gap between the 69TH and 70TH Week has extended now for almost 2,000 years. GOD'S PROPHETIC CLOCK STOPPED WHEN THE MESSIAH WAS CUT OFF!

If the 70 Weeks were continuous (as many suppose), they would have ended around 37 A.D. ---- somewhere in the Book of Acts. But everlasting righteousness was not brought in, and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.!! which is when the sacrifices ceased. Furthermore, the "consummation" (the second coming of Christ) has certainly not occurred.

\*\*\* From Daniel's prophecy, all that remains to be fulfilled is Daniel's 70TH Week (last 7 year period)

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## II. DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK AND THE TRIBULATION

Most prophetic literature refers to the seven-year span of Daniel's 70TH Week as "The Tribulation,". The second half of the week (3.5 years) is known as the Great Tribulation. What will this time be like?

1. A Time Of Unprecedented Trouble. This is staggering, especially considering the devastation of the wars of the 20TH and early 21ST centuries alone!
2. A Time Of Persecution Of The Saints. The "elect" here refers specifically to the Jews.
3. A Time Of World-scale Conflicts.
4. A Time Of Frightening Darkness.

5. A Time Of Terrestrial & Celestial Disturbance.
6. A Time Of Satanic Delusion & Deception.
7. A Time Of Mass Death.
8. A Time Of Divine Judgment.
9. A Time Of Demonic Chaos.

Surely human words cannot adequately describe the horror of this final period of the present age. Thank the Lord for salvation that keeps us from that hour!! Some may ask, "Why would God bring such a time upon the earth?" Scripture gives several reasons:

1. To Save Israel. The nation of Israel is presently in a state of unbelief and Christ rejection. The Lord will use this time to purge, refine, and eventually save His people. God will prepare His people to receive their Messiah through severe persecution from the Antichrist, divine protection in the wilderness, inescapable military siege, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.
2. To Vanquish Satan. Daniel's 70TH Week will bring to a head the great conflict of the ages which began before the earth was formed (Isaiah 14). The sentence of death was passed upon Satan through our Lord's victory at the cross — at this future time the sentence will be executed.
3. To Reveal Man's True Nature. The Rapture will be a time of separation, when the children of the kingdom will be gathered into the Lord's house — leaving the children of the wicked one reserved for judgment. In the lawless 'atmosphere' of Daniel's 70TH Week, the true character of man will be seen. Revelation 9:20,21 speaks of rampant idolatry, murder, sorcery, fornication, and theft.
4. To Punish Sin. The holiness of God demands that man's lawlessness be punished. Sin must be dealt with. With the onset of Daniel's 70TH Week, the "dam of God's longsuffering" will finally burst! Lawlessness will overtake the earth and God's wrath will be poured out upon an unregenerate, unrepentant earth.
5. To Recompense Those Who Have Persecuted The Churches. The church of the Thessalonians was undergoing severe tribulation, which the Lord said was but a "token" (small sample) of what awaited those who were persecuting them. The "Great Whore" will receive her just recompense.

The Book of The Revelation, which unseals that which Daniel sealed, gives the greatest detail about this 7-year period. Chapters 6 through 19 are structured around three sets of "judgments" — the seals, the trumpets, and the vials. The 7<sup>th</sup> seal brings the 7 trumpets. The 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet brings the 7 vials.

These "judgments" are sequential, covering the entire seven years of Daniel's 70TH Week and increasing in their intensity. The seventh trumpet judgment marks the mid-point of the period.

Before we dive into chapter 6, note that 7, 10, 11, 17, and 18 are parenthetical — i.e. they do not advance the narrative, but explain some of the details.

### III. THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE — verses 1-8

READ v. 1. The opening of the sealed book. John is in glory. The events of Revelation 4 and 5 show John caught up into the presence of God. He pictures present-day believers raptured out of the world just prior to the Tribulation breaking forth. The Lamb – Jesus Christ opened the first seal. The noise of thunder symbolized impending judgment.

READ v. 2. SEAL #1 — THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE. – THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST – The Antichrist is the false "messiah" who will confirm the covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27) and seemingly bring the promise of a utopian age. From this description, he is:

1. A Counterfeit Messiah. Some commentators believe this rider is Jesus Christ, but this cannot be. The rider is followed by war, famine, pestilence, and death. The Bible teaches Christ will come to establish real world peace.
2. A Diplomatic Messiah. The rider has a bow, but no arrows. This suggests a 'bloodless' conquest. "By peace shall [he] destroy many" — Daniel 8:25.
3. A Conquering Messiah. The Antichrist will also conquer by deception.

READ vv. 3, 4. SEAL #2 — THE RIDER ON THE RED HORSE. – WAR –

This may be referring to Ezekiel's War - a great Middle East conflict between a northern Islamic confederacy (along with Russia possibly) and Israel that was prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39. In this battle, five-sixths of the Northern army will be destroyed. It appears this great battle may occur at the beginning of Daniel's 70TH Week and may lead to the Antichrist rise to world-wide power.

READ vv. 5, 6. SEAL #3 – THE RIDER ON THE BLACK HORSE. - FAMINE -

It is not unusual for a famine to follow the devastation of war.

1. A Measure Of Wheat. This was considered to be what a man would eat in a day.
2. A Penny. The Roman denarius. This was considered to be a man's wages for a day's work. Thus we see the severity of this famine — it would take all a man could do just get enough to eat.
3. Three Measures Of Barley. A cheaper grain, for those who had to keep families.
4. Hurt Not The Oil And The Vine. Oil and wine were the fare of the rich. (Grain is the fare of the poor!) As is often the case in times of war, the wealthy manage to survive, and the poor suffer.

READ vv. 7, 8. SEAL #4 — THE RIDER ON THE PALE HORSE. - DEATH -

1. Pale In Color. In reality, "corpse-like."
2. Followed By Hell. Those in Hell will be brought up to stand before the Great White Throne judgment — only to be found guilty then cast into the lake of fire.

3. 25% of the population will die. Already the population of this earth exceeds seven billion souls. That means over 1.5 billion people will die as a result of the great war, the subsequent famine, pestilence, and the ravages of an animal kingdom turned mad. What a horrific picture!

#### IV. THE FIFTH SEAL — TRIBULATION MARTYRS — verses 9-11

READ vv. 9-11. SEAL #5 — TRIBULATION MARTYRS

In three other places, the Book of The Revelation indicates many multitudes will be saved during this awful Tribulation — Revelation 7; 13; 20. Faith in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation will mean death to multitudes.

Regarding their prayer, it is not a prayer belonging to the present age of grace, but certainly in keeping with a time of divine judgment.

#### V. THE SIXTH SEAL — DIVINE WRATH — verses 12-17

Hitherto, the troubles that have befallen the earth have resulted from the actions of man. Now we see the beginning of God's anger.

READ vv. 12-14. Catastrophic terrestrial and celestial judgments.

1. A World-shaking Earthquake. According to Revelation 6:14b, every section of the earth will be jolted and moved by this killer-quake.
2. The Sun Darkened. Could this be dust and debris from a large volcano?
3. The Moon Turned Blood Red. This is a result of what will happen to the sun.
4. Stellar Showers --- verse 13. Other Scriptures predict such occurrences in nature.

READ vv. 15, 16. The general reaction of earth dwellers.

There will be great panic and fear. All class distinction is bridged by the terror of what takes place. There will be no repentance and no turning to God. This is a phenomenon seen in the Book of Revelation. In times of unspeakable horror, men will still not turn to Christ.

READ v. 17. There will be a recognition of divine wrath. Who shall be able to stand?? Chapter 7 somewhat answers this question.

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## I. THE PARENTHESIS OF MERCY

This chapter is a "parenthetical" chapter -- i.e. it does not advance the narrative, but is a "by the way" (explanatory) insertion. There are three parenthetical sections of the book: (1) Between the 6TH and 7TH seal — chapter 7; (2) Between the 6TH and 7TH trumpet — chapters 10, 11; (3) Between the 6TH and 7TH vial — chapters 17, 18.

## II. THE SUSPENSION OF JUDGMENT — verses 1-3

Angels figure prominently throughout the book of The Revelation as instruments of God's dealings. Angels are 'ministering spirits'. They are God's ministers or servants. We see them active in the affairs of nations.

READ v. 1. The four angels. They are standing on the four corners of the earth. This is an expression referring to the four points on the compass, i.e. the whole earth. They are holding the four winds defined here as the judgments of God.

READ v. 2. This angel is charged with the protection of God's people.

READ v. 3. The seal of separation. When God destroyed the world with a flood, He first separated Noah and his family from that "hurt." When God destroyed Jericho, He protected Rahab and her house. Here, divine protection is given to Israelites so that they may pass unscathed through the period of Judgment.

## III. THE 144,000 ISRAELITES — verses 4-8

READ vv. 4-8. This passage, together with Revelation 14: 1, has been the subject of much misappropriation, especially over the last century and a half.

THE FALSE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE 144,000:

1. By The Jehovah's Witnesses Cult. Under the teaching of Judge Rutherford, the successor to the founder of the cult, Charles Taze Russell, the 144,000 were said to be Jehovah's Witnesses. However, in 1931, when it was clear the number of the faithful was exceeding 144,000, Judge Rutherford moved the 144,000 into heaven, calling it the "Heavenly Class" — the only ones who will live in heaven and rule with Christ in the heavenly sphere, and then devised an earthly class, which comprised the "great multitude" of Revelation 7:9c. Today, no Jehovah's Witness member expects (or desires) to go to Heaven. Instead, they labor and hope to inherit the earth.

2. By The Seventh Day Adventist Cult. This group believes the 144,000 are representative of the Sabbath-keepers in the last days (them!).

#### THE BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE 144,000:

1. Twelve Thousand From Each Tribe. The Bible is very specific here: they are Jews! The events during Daniel's 70TH Week are primarily directed toward the Jews.

A common objection here concerns the supposed "Lost Tribes of Israel" — a belief that the individual identities of the 12 tribes of Israel were "lost" in the captivity and beyond. According to James 1:1; Philippians 3:5, this was not the case at least before 70 A.D. While an Israeli today may not know his genealogy (from 70 A.D.) — it is certain God knows.

FYI Note: The heresy of British-Israelism, popularized during the height of the British Empire, attempts to equate the so-called "lost tribes" with Britain (and, more recently, the USA).

2. The Tribe Of Dan Is Omitted. It is thought the reason for this is that Dan was often connected with idolatry. Others think that the Antichrist may come from the tribe of Dan, based upon Genesis 49:17 and Jeremiah 8:15, 16.
3. The Tribe Of Ephraim Replaced By Joseph. In the Old Testament reckonings, the descendents of Joseph were listed under his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

THE SEALING OF THE 144,000: In scripture, a seal was a mark of protection, possession, and/or preservation. God will protect these 144,000 Jews from the ravages of tribulation.

THE PURPOSE OF THE 144 000: In every age, God has had His remnant of Jews. The Word of God does not actually say what the 144,000 will do. It is only assumed they will be "witnesses."

#### IV. THE MULTITUDE SAVED OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION verses 9,14-17

READ vv. 9, 14-17. People will be saved during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.

Some have speculated that there will be a different "plan of salvation" in effect during Daniel's 70TH Week. However, God's one commandment that must be obeyed by all sinners everywhere if they are to be saved is given in Acts 17:30 – repent! Gentiles and Jews will be saved in exactly the same way as present-day saints. People are saved in every age BY grace THROUGH faith IN Christ.

Others have wondered if salvation could even be possible during this time because of the removal of the "Restrainer," the Holy Spirit (2 Th. 2: 7b). This passage does not say the Spirit of God would be removed from the earth, just that He would be "taken out of the way." The Spirit of God will no doubt operate as he did during the Old Testament days.

Here are some interesting facts about these saints:

1. Their Population. All nations will be represented. A great multitude.
2. Their Position. Before the throne in Heaven. This means they are no longer on the earth. Why?
3. Their Purity. Washed in the blood of the Lamb — the only means by which a sinner can be cleansed!
4. Their Triumph. The palms in their hands symbolize victory. The Feast of Tabernacles (celebrating Israel's march toward the promised land) was celebrated with palm branches.
5. Their Privilege. Serving the Lord is a privilege we have now, despite any tribulations we experience. What a joy to be able to continue this throughout eternity.
6. Their Provision. This is in direct contrast to their lot on earth during Daniel's 70TH Week. Even the WORST OF SORROWS EVER TO BE EXPERIENCED ON EARTH will be nothing compared to the bliss of Heaven.

#### V. THE PRAISES OF THE REDEEMED IN HEAVEN — verses 10-12

READ vv. 10-12. Here is a passage similar to Revelation 5:8-14. We read the cry of the redeemed. This is recognition of the Source of salvation. And then the seven-fold doxology of the angels.

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## I. THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL — verses 1-6

READ v. 1. Silence in Heaven. It is the calm before the storm. As noted previously, the first five seals unfolded events relating to the actions of man. Now the "great day of divine wrath" is to really break upon the earth. It is a suspenseful 30 minutes of silence. All creation will no doubt hold its breath awaiting the next stage in God's judgment.

READ v. 2. We see more of the activity of angels in the Divine purpose. In this case, they are instruments of God's judgment. In scripture, the trumpet was used to announce something important like a summons to worship, an alarm signaling danger, and anointing a king.

READ v. 3. This angel is associated with the worship of God by the people of God.

1. The Altar In Heaven. This altar is mentioned seven times in the Book. It appears to be associated with the prayers of God's people, thus corresponding to the altar of incense in the tabernacle.
2. The Golden Censer. In the earthly tabernacle, the golden censer was used to carry fire from the altar into the Holy of Holies, where incense was added.
3. The Incense. In the tabernacle, the incense spoke of the perfections of Christ.
4. The Mingling Of Incense And The Prayers Of The Saints. Here is a wonderful understanding of our prayers from Heaven's point of view. Our stammering prayers are made beautiful and worshipful as they are mixed with the perfections of Christ.

READ v. 4. The prayers in question here would be of those saved during Daniel's 70TH Week. It is as these prayers ascend to the throne of God that the answer descends.

READ vv. 5-6. The angel casts the censer to the earth. The fire speaks of God's terrible vengeance. The silence is now broken as voices, thunderings, lightnings, and another earthquake herald the trumpet judgments.

## II. THE SOUNDING OF THE FIRST TRUMPET — verse 7

READ v. 7. This was literal hail, fire, and blood. There is no reason to look for symbolism here. God has already done such things --- literally (Moses - Exodus 9:23-26) It devastated the earth's vegetation.



### III. THE SOUNDING OF THE SECOND TRUMPET — verses 8,9

READ v. 8. This is NOT a literal mountain because the Bible uses the words, "...as it were.." There are two possible explanations of just what this "mountain" means:

1. The Great Mountain Symbolizes An Earthly Kingdom. This is not an unreasonable interpretation, because in scripture (particularly prophecy) a mountain does symbolize a kingdom.
2. The Great Mountain Is In Fact A Large Celestial Body – a giant meteor. This is the most probable explanation, for all the trumpet judgments in Revelation 8 see objects falling from heaven to earth, or celestial activity of some kind.

The sea usually refers to the Mediterranean Sea — the center of world activity during the events of Daniel's 70TH Week. The "ships of Tarshish" (Isaiah 2:16) refers to the trading and commercial fleets on the Mediterranean.

READ v. 9. We see the devastation of this judgment. The sea is turned to blood. God did this in Egypt. Sea life is decimated. And maritime and commercial services are disrupted.

### IV. THE SOUNDING OF THE THIRD TRUMPET — verses 10,11

READ vv. 10, 11. This is another celestial body which will fall to the earth. This star is called "Wormwood" — meaning 'bitterness.' It made 1/3 of the waters bitter.

### V. THE SOUNDING OF THE FOURTH TRUMPET — verses 12,13

READ v.12. The dimming of heavenly lights.

READ v. 13. The announcement of the three woes. As with the seven seals, there seems to be an apparent grouping of four trumpets and three trumpets (Woe #1 is trumpet 5, Woe #2 is trumpet 6, and Woe #3 is trumpet 7).

1. First Four Seals — judgments through human agency.
2. Last Three Seals – judgments through divine agency.
3. First Four Trumpets — judgments upon the earth. These judgments are upon those things on which mankind depends and so often takes for granted.
  - a. Food supply cut short — Revelation 8:7,9.
  - b. Means of distribution crippled — Revelation 8:9.
  - c. Water supply poisoned — Revelation 8:11.
  - d. Means of production dimmed — Revelation 8:12.
4. Last Three Trumpets — judgments upon human beings.

## I. INTERPRETING CHAPTER NINE

It is essential to determine whether the language in this chapter is to be taken literally or as symbolic. The two areas of concern here are the description of the locusts and of the horsemen. As with all of the Word of God, the Book of The Revelation is to be interpreted literally and grammatically.

As noted in the introduction, this method of interpretation recognizes the use of symbolic and figurative language. It is very evident that the descriptions of this chapter are symbolic by use of the words "as", "like unto", and "as it were". These are the identifiers of similes.

The Apostle John is giving a literal description in symbolic terms of exactly what he saw. The use of symbols does not give license for any allegorizing or spiritualizing interpretations. When such a method of interpretation is imposed the results are subject to the whim of the interpreter. Thus, in Amillennial literature, the plague of locusts has been seen variously as Baptist "heretics," the Goths, Islam, Jesuits, Protestants, Turks, etc. depending on one's personal prejudices and fancies.

## II. THE SOUNDING OF THE FIFTH TRUMPET (Woe #1 – v. 12) — verses 1-6

READ vv. 1-6.

The fallen star from heaven is not a literal star. This is seen from the fact that a personal pronoun is used of the star, and that personal acts are ascribed to him. In prophetic symbolism, a star refers to an angel. In this case, the star is Satan. The "bottomless pit" is the place of imprisoned devils:

1. The devils begged Jesus not to consign them to this place.
2. Some fallen angels are reserved in chains in a place of darkness — Jude 6; II Peter 2:4.
3. Satan will be kept in this place during the Millennial reign of Christ — Revelation 20:1-3.

The place of this pit is deep within the heart of the earth. Until the resurrection of Christ, the region of the dead consisted of two sections, the place of torment (Hell) and Abraham's Bosom (Paradise) — Luke 16:22-26. It is likely that the "great gulf fixed" here is in fact the bottomless pit.

At Christ's resurrection the Paradise section was vacated. Now, all believers who "fall asleep" are immediately with Christ in glory. At the second resurrection, the Hell section will be vacated, the occupants judged and cast into the everlasting lake of fire.

The key to the bottomless pit was given, by Divine permission, to Satan, but by Rev. 20:1, it is again in the possession of an angel. Satan uses this key to open the pit and release the 'prisoners' of this abyss. John sees the prisoners, devils, as "locusts." What John sees here is clearly a demonic invasion. That these are not natural locusts is seen by the fact that:

1. Their Behaviour Is Opposite To Natural Locusts — verse 4a – not hurt the grass?
2. They Have A Strange Description – vv. 7-10
3. They Have A King – v. 11

This demonic invasion could not hurt the vegetation of the earth nor those Jews who were sealed (v. 4) but they could torment, not kill, everyone else. It is likened to the sting of a scorpion — one of the most painful stings of any member of the animal kingdom. They had this power for five months. The effects of this demonic activity was that people wanted to die, but could not.

### III. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DEMONIC LOCUSTS — verses 7-12

As previously noted, the description given by John is symbolic. We have in scripture some descriptions of angelic beings — descriptions that are beyond the grasp of the human mind as to their beauty. Here we have a description of fallen angels, devils — descriptions that are also beyond the grasp of the human mind as to their hideousness.

READ vv. 7-10. They had horse-like shape, crowns of gold, human-like faces, woman-like hair, lion-like teeth; breast plates of iron; noisy wings; and scorpion-like tails.

READ v. 11. The king of the demons is the angel of the pit – Satan. The name Abaddon (Hebrew) or Apollyon (Greek) means destroyer. These are some of the many names and titles given to Satan.

READ v. 12. The fifth trumpet is the first woe.

### IV. THE SOUNDING OF THE SIXTH TRUMPET (Woe #2) — verses 13-19

READ vv. 13-15. Since these angels are bound, it would seem they also belong to the group of fallen angels. There are a number of suggestions as to why these angels were set loose in Euphrates River.

- a. It was in this area that Satan's work on earth began — Genesis 2:10-14; 3:1.
- b. It was in this area that the first organized satanic revolt took place — Genesis 11:1-9.
- c. The Euphrates is one of the borders of the Promised Land – Genesis 15:18.
- d. The Book of Revelation predicts an invasion from the East. It may well be the events here are part of what will happen.

V. 13 says these angels were prepared. An interesting thought about fallen angels in Jude 6, "... they are reserved in chains... unto the judgment of the great day..."

It is commonly thought that these angels were so bad that they will go directly to the Lake of Fire someday, but is the "judgment of the great day", not their judgment, but God's judgment on earth, and therefore an actual reference to this release from their "prison" or an hour, a day, a month, and a year (391 days) to slay 1/3 of all people on earth? Hmm

READ v. 16. There are two interpretations as to who or what this vast army of 200,000,000 is:

1. It Is A Supernatural Army Of Hellish Devils. Much like the demonic locust-like creatures from the bottomless pit, some see this mighty army as purely demonic, an interpretation which would not necessarily violate scripture.
2. It Is A Satan-inspired Invasion Of Earthly Armies. Others see this army as human, and the descriptions of the horses perhaps as a graphic picture of modern tank warfare. They see this army is linked to the army of the kings of the east (Revelation 16:12) and maybe why on the Euphrates.

READ vv. 17-19. The description of the horsemen. They have breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone. This is unusual attire for riders. The horses had lion-like heads serpent-like tails, both of which were deadly.

One-third of the world's population will perish in this plague – the second woe.

#### V. THE REACTION OF MANKIND – vv. 20,21

One would think that multitudes will turn to God in desperation because of the horrible judgments rolling in successive waves across the earth. Instead we read:

READ v. 20. There was a hardening of Christ-rejecting hearts. There will be a continuation of demonic worship. The Bible teaches idolatry is fellowship with devils I Corinthians 10:20. This practice is a feature of the last days, including Daniel's 70TH Week – I Timothy 4:1.

READ v. 21. As a direct result of Christ-rejection and giving over to the worship of demons (through idolatry), mankind will also experience a total:

1. Disregard For The Life Of Man. The first sinful act after the fall was murder.
2. Disregard For The Bodies Of Men. The Greek word translated "sorcery" is 'pharmakeion,' – drugs.
3. Disregard For The Marriages Of Men. The term 'fornication' refers to a "free sex" syndrome, wherein the sacred institution of marriage is done away with.
4. Disregard For The Rights Of Others. Theft – the disregard for personal property – will be rampant during this time.

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Chapter 10 and 11 is the second "parenthetical passage" of the Book. As with the previous interlude (Revelation 7) between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> seal, this occurs between the sixth and the seventh trumpets (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Woe).

#### I. THE NOTABLE PERSONAGE — verse 1

READ v. 1. The angel is clothed with a cloud, a rainbow upon his head, a sun-like face, and feet like pillars of fire. There is some diversity of opinion as to the identity of this mighty angel. He is thought to be either:

1. Jesus Christ. This assertion is based upon a comparison of His description with other verses.
2. A Created Spirit Being. Such an opinion is based upon three reasons:
  - a. The use of the word "another" — v. 1. Suggesting another of the same kind as in chapter 9, i.e. created spirit beings.
  - b. This angel swears by the Living God — Revelation 10:6.
  - c. Angelic beings can have glorious appearances.

#### II. THE NOTABLE ACT OF THE MIGHTY ANGEL — verses 2,3a

READ vv. 2,3a. This mighty angel holds a "little book" — the object of much interest later. The placing of his feet on the land and the sea suggests the taking possession of the earth. If this mighty angel is in fact the Lord Jesus Christ, this act is significant. His voice is like the roar of a lion - symbolic of imminent, assured victory.

#### III. THE NOTABLE RESPONSE FROM HEAVEN — vv. 3b, 4

READ vv. 3b, 4. As noted previously, thunder symbolizes impending judgment. John was about to record what he heard but was commanded to seal it up. What was said was for John's ears only. Everything God wants us to know is revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

#### IV. THE NOTABLE DECLARATION — verses 5-7

READ vv. 5-7. While believers ought not to swear by an oath, God has sworn by as an affirmation to what He has said is so.

The phrase "Time no longer" does not mean, as some have supposed, that time ends and eternity begins at this point, but it means that time has run out for man. There will be no more delay.

The Lord reveals that, with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the events of the consummation begin. Thus we can conclude that the seven Seals and the first six Trumpets have taken us through the first half of Daniel's 70TH Week.

V. 7 – The mystery of God. In the Bible, a mystery is a truth that was previously hidden in the Old Testament but is now revealed through the New Testament. The Rapture of the saints is one such mystery. The Old Testament prophets foresaw the return of Christ in glory to the earth, but say nothing of His coming to the air.

No other scripture passage speaks of the "mystery of God." (v. 7). Tying it in with the sounding of the trumpet by the seventh angel (Revelation 11:15), it would appear this mystery is the long delay of Almighty God in finally taking the kingdoms of the world and establishing His glorious kingdom.

#### V. THE NOTABLE DOCUMENT – vv. 8-11

READ v. 8. This little Book is open in the hand of the mighty angel. It is possible it is the now opened seven-sealed book of Revelation 5 — or representative of the Word of God as a whole.

READ vv. 9-10. Command to eat the book. Similar to Ezekiel and Jeremiah. It was sweet in his mouth but bitter to the belly. The Bible is a two-edged sword. It contains the sweet message of salvation and the bitter message of damnation.

READ v. 11. The command to prophecy. Having digested the Word of God, John is told he must prophesy to many. In like manner, Christians are to digest the Word of God and then disseminate it, that is to share it with others.

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## I. THE MEASURING ROD OF THE LORD — vv. 1, 2

Chapter 11 continues the second parenthetical ("by-the-way") section of the Book which was started in chapter 10

READ v. 1. The measuring reed was most likely from a plant grown by the Jordan and used as an instrument of measurement. A "reed" as a measure was 10' (3.08m) long — Ezekiel 40:5. John is instructed to measure. He becomes the actor in, as well as the observer of, the vision.

Although the Jewish Temple built by Herod the Great was destroyed by Roman General Titus in 70 AD, there are three Biblical references indicating that a Jewish temple will be in existence during the Tribulation period:

1. Jesus Christ Said So in Matthew 24:15. He is referring to Daniel 9:27. The Antichrist will sit in the Holy place — i.e. the inner parts of the Temple.
2. The Apostle Paul Said So — 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4. This is referring to Daniel 11:36.
3. The Apostle John Saw It And Measured It — verses 1,2 .

v. 1 states that there are worshippers in this Temple. The Temple Is Located In The "Holy City." — Jerusalem and is the place where the Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel. This is prophesied in Daniel 9:27, and the clear inference is that sacrifices and oblations are involved.

Thus we conclude these worshippers are Jews. Such a scene requires Jews to be in Israel and in control of Jerusalem, which after nearly 1,900, they are.

READ v. 2. Jerusalem is to be trodden down. This period began with the Babylonian invasions and captivity (Nebuchadnezzar) 606-586 B.C. The "Times of the Gentiles" refers to the period of time when no son of David sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

The Great Tribulation is the climax of this period. 42 months equals 3 ½ years and refers to the first half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. Verse 2 indicates the ending of this prophetic period and places John's measuring of the Temple at the mid-point of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week.

## II. THE TWO WITNESSES OF THE LORD — verses 3-6

READ vv. 3-6. Much surmising has taken place on the identity of these two witnesses. What we do know is that they are "my two witnesses." Of this we can be certain, they will be two literal men. Who are they? Some suggest:

1. Moses and Elijah. Both men present at the Transfiguration of Christ. Together they represent the "Law and the Prophets".

Moses was given power to turn waters to blood and to smite the earth with plagues. Elijah was given power to prevent rain from falling. Elijah is prophesied as returning to earth before the Day of Judgment, Malachi 4:5,6. Although some point out that this prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptist, Luke 1:17 indicates John the Baptist ministered in the "spirit and power" of Elijah.

2. Enoch and Elijah. Elijah for the reasons above. Furthermore, both Enoch and Elijah did not die. Hebrews 9:27 states it is appointed unto man ONCE to die. Since both these witnesses are killed (Revelation 11: 7), only these two Old Testament characters fit the bill.
3. John and Elijah. The aged apostle was told he would still yet witness to many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings in v. 11.

We see their description in vv. 3, 5. They were clothed in sackcloth. Sackcloth is an outward symbol of mourning, sorrow, and repentance. The two olive trees and two candlesticks has reference to Zechariah 4:1-4, 11-14. The immediate fulfillment of this prophecy in Zechariah's day was seen in Zerubbabel (the re-builder) and Joshua (the high priest). These were two men who stood out for God in their day, and prophetic forerunners of the two witnesses of the Book of the Revelation.

Their active ministry will be for 3-1/2 years and will probably be the latter half of the Tribulation. Their ministry will be two-fold. First, to prophecy. They will proclaim judgment against men and the Man of Sin. Second, to torment. This is a period of judgment, not grace. These two men are given judgmental powers.

### III. THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE TWO WITNESSES — verses 7-12

READ v. 7. These two men are protected until their ministry is finished. This is a source of comfort to all who serve the Lord — God only takes us home when we have finished our designated task. This is the same beast of Revelation 13: 7, the Antichrist, kills them.

READ vv. 8, 9. The two dead bodies are left to lie in the streets. No burial for these two. They are killed in Jerusalem, because that is the city where the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified.

READ v. 10. All people on the earth shall see these two dead bodies. This is certainly possible today through the agency of satellite television. And they shall rejoice and send x-mas gifts to each other.

READ v. 11. They will be dead for 3-1/2 days and then supernaturally raised. In this, their last act upon earth, a testimony of the power of God to raise the dead will be given.

READ v. 12. Then we read of the ascension of these two witnesses. The voice from heaven is the same John hears in Revelation 4:1. They will be raptured, but evidently in 'slow-motion' because the people could watch them go up.



#### IV. THE SECOND WOE BEFALLS THE EARTH— verses 13,14

READ v. 13. Within the hour of the two witnesses going to heaven, the second woe occurs, a great earthquake. One-tenth Of Jerusalem Destroyed and 7,000 Men Killed. The Remaining Dwellers In Jerusalem Give God The Glory. They were literally "frightened to death!!" The fact that they gave God the glory does not mean they were saved.

READ v. 14. The declaration of the second woe. As a reminder, the first woe was the sounding of the fifth trumpet, this second woe was the sounding of the sixth trumpet. The third woe, the sounding of the seventh trumpet is announced.

#### V. THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET — verses 15-19

The parenthetical passage is ended and the description of the last trumpet is given.

READ v. 15. This trumpet brings no plagues upon the earth — except that with it the temple in Heaven is opened (verse 19), initiating the seven “vial judgments” upon the earth. The 7<sup>th</sup> seal initiated the 7 trumpets and now the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet will initiate the 7 “vial judgments”.

The sounding of the trumpet also announces of the impending end to the rule of Satan and man and the establishment of the reign of Jesus Christ. This is in fulfillment of much prophecy. The actual fulfillment of this announcement comes in Revelation 19:11-21, but the events are set in motion and the Great Tribulation hastens to its climax.

READ vv. 16-18. The heavenly reaction to the sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is that the saved in heaven worship and praise God. The earthly reaction was to fly into a rage. V. 18 seems to be part of the praise of the 24 elders. Notice it is a time when accounts will be settled. The world will have wrath, death, and destruction. The saved will have rewards.

READ v. 19. The temple of God in heaven was opened and the ark was seen. This temple is the one the tabernacle in the wilderness was patterned after. All earthly worship was to be patterned after the heavenly, but sin desecrated that which was holy. On earth, the Antichrist sits in the temple. In Heaven, the contrast is made.

The comparison between earthly and heavenly things brings a manifestation of God's displeasure — lightnings, voices, thunderings, another earthquake, and hail.

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Chapters 12 through 14 of the Book of The Revelation give us details of the chief "actors" in the coming events unfolded by the prophecy. There are seven mentioned in these three chapters: The Woman, The Dragon, The Man-Child, Michael, The Beast out of the sea, The Beast out of the earth, and the 144,000 Jews.

## I. THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN — vv. 1, 2

READ vv. 1, 2. Various attempts have been made to identify the woman.

1. Roman Catholic Interpretation. The woman is the Virgin Mary. It is true that Mary brought forth the Man-child, Jesus Christ, but the events relating to the Woman in Revelation 12 do not hold true of Mary — or even of the Roman Catholic teaching of the 'Assumption of Mary.'
2. The Protestant Amillennial Interpretation. The woman is 'The Church.' However, such a view would have the 'Church' giving birth to Christ, when in reality, Christ gave birth to the church as an institution Matthew 16:18.
3. The Mid-tribulational Rapture Interpretation. This view sees the woman as representative of both national Israel and spiritual Israel, i.e. 'The Church.' This interpretation also sees the rapture occurring at Revelation 12:14.
4. The Christian Science Interpretation. Mary Eddy, the foundress of the Christian Science cult claimed she was the Woman, Christian Science the Man-child, and that the Dragon was 'mortal mind' trying to destroy her and her religion.
5. Other Interpretations say that the woman is Jesus Christ — the Man-Child is 'The Church' and others identify the woman as Jerusalem.

Who is the woman? The correct method of interpretation is to let Scripture interpret Scripture. When we do this, we shall come to one conclusion the Woman is a symbol of the Nation of Israel. Here are the reasons why the Woman is Israel:

1. Because of Her Description — v. 1. The "sun," "moon," and "stars" are significant when compared with Joseph's dream in Genesis 37.

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This dream was fulfilled in Genesis 42—45, when Joseph's entire family (the future nation of Israel) bowed down to him. In his dream, the sun, moon, and stars symbolized the family of Jacob.

2. Because of Her Offspring — Rev. 12:2,5. The Lord Jesus Christ came forth from Israel.

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3. Because of Old Testament Prophecy – Isaiah 66:5-8 – bearing a man-child.
4. Because Israel Is Called The "Wife of The Lord." Several Old Testament prophecies picture Israel as the unfaithful wife of Jehovah – especially the Book of Hosea, where the Lord instructs the prophet to wed a harlot (Hosea 1:2) in order to illustrate the broken relationship.
5. Because Of The Stated Nature of Daniel's 70TH Week. The Great Tribulation period is a time of 'Jacob's trouble.' (Jews). In Revelation 12:13-17 we note the Woman is severely persecuted.

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## II. THE GREAT RED DRAGON – vv. 3, 4

READ v. 3. There is no difficulty here identifying who the dragon is. Verse 9 clearly identifies him as Satan and describes him as: fearsome, red – the color of blood, seven heads (speaking of a very wise deceiver), ten horns (representing the governmental base of the Antichrist), and seven crowns that speak of Satan's ruler-ship over the kingdom of this world.

READ v. 4. His tail drew 1/3 part of the stars of heaven. The "stars of heaven" refer to the host of spirit beings associated with the initial rebellion of Lucifer. Here Satan is pictured as seeking the destruction of the Man-child, Jesus Christ.

This great conflict began with Genesis 3:15 the "seed of the woman" (Jesus) and the "seed of the serpent" - Satan and his human agents. Throughout the Bible we read of Satan's efforts to destroy the seed of the woman, thus his ultimate conqueror, Jesus Christ. Consider:

1. Cain Killed Abel. Satan's first attempt to destroy the promised seed of faith.
2. Unholy Inter-marriage - Genesis 6:1-4. Satan tried to corrupt the seed of faith.
3. The Murder of Boys In Egypt – Exodus 1:16-22.
4. Extermination Of the Royal Seed. –2 Kings 11:18 – Athaliah. Only one member survived – Jesus would come from his line.
5. Murder of the boys in Bethlehem. – Matthew 2:16-18.
6. The Temptation Of The Lord – cast himself down.
7. During The Ministry Of The Lord – stone Jesus

Skip vv. 5-8 and come back. READ vv. 9, 10. Scripture has a number of names and titles for Satan.

1. The Devil – Greek: 'diabolos, ' "slanderer."
2. Satan – Greek: 'Satanas, ' "adversary."
3. That Old Serpent - Subtle, sharp, poisonous, and treacherous.
4. The Deceiver

5. The Accuser — He is the "accuser of our brethren," which means he is accusing Christians when they sin.
5. Dragon. They were possibly crocodile-like creatures, and as such were fearsome and with cunning power — yet often quite innocent-looking.

READ v. 11. From this chapter alone we learn that Satan is a being of great power and influence. But praise the Lord, according to verse 11, we can overcome him through: the power of the blood and the power of the Word of God.

### III. THE MAN-CHILD — v. 5.

READ v. 5. The identity of the Man-Child is the Lord Jesus Christ.

### IV. WAR IN HEAVEN — verses 7-11

READ v. 7. We see the combatants of this war.

- Michael. He is the only angel called an "archangel" (Jude 9), although Jewish tradition and the fact that he is called "ONE of the chief princes" (Daniel 10:13) suggests there may be others.
- Michael's Angels. The armies of heaven consist of hosts of angels.
- The Dragon — Satan.
- The Dragon's angels. These are the fallen angels that followed Satan in the rebellion in heaven.

This great battle will be staged in heaven — probably the 'second heaven,' the "air," i.e. outer space. This battle occurs in the middle of Daniel's 70TH Week.

READ vv. 8, 9. Satan and his host are defeated and deprived of access to Heaven. Satan is cast down into the earth — thereby fulfilling Isaiah 14:12 and Luke 10:18.

READ vv. 10, 11. It seems the redeemed of all ages will witness this heavenly defeat Of Satan. It will be an occasion for great rejoicing in v. 12a. The loud voice is the voice of the saved. The prayer of Revelation 6:10 has now been answered. It is a cry of victory. "Now is come salvation... " refers to deliverance — not salvation from our sins — but a recognition that the end has finally come, the day of victory is in sight.

As already noted, there are three keys to overcoming Satan (v. 11):

- Through Salvation — by the blood of the Lamb...
- Through Scripture — by the word of their testimony...
- Through Surrender — loved not their lives...

## V. WOE ON EARTH — verses 12-17

In Revelation 8:13 an angel pronounces three "woes" upon the inhabitants of the earth. These were the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet sounding. The first woe (5<sup>th</sup> trumpet) was the plague of demonic locusts. The second woe (6<sup>th</sup> trumpet) was the vast army (demonic or human - possibly the eastern kings). A part of the third woe (7<sup>th</sup> trumpet) is the casting down of Satan to the earth. What is the significance of Satan being cast down to earth?

READ v. 12. There is a period of great wrath. A snake with its back broken is defeated, but still very, very dangerous. Satan is near his end, yet is set upon wreaking havoc and the start of the Great Tribulation. We have previously noted that Revelation 4-19 accounts for the events of Daniel's 70<sup>TH</sup> week (Daniel 9:27) — a seven-year period usually called the "Tribulation." According to Daniel 12:1, after Michael defeats Satan in Heaven (the mid-point), the GREAT Tribulation begins.

According to Daniel 9:27 and Revelation 6:2; the 'coming prince' will appear as the Messiah of Israel, will allow the temple to be rebuilt, the ancient sacrifices to resume, and will confirm the [Abrahamic land] covenant with Israel. In the middle of this seven-year period (week) he shall turn against Israel.

This coincides with the casting down of Satan to the earth. Satan will enter the Antichrist, the dictator he has hitherto controlled, and as Revelation 13:2 indicates, will give him his power, his seat, and his great authority. This may be likened to the Devil entering Judas Iscariot.

READ vv. 13, 15, 17. Here we see the Satanic persecution of Israel. The covenant broken, the Abomination of Desolation occupying the Holy place demanding worship as God, a fearful time of anti-Semitism will break out. Jews will become the prime target of Satan. Zechariah 13:8 indicates two-thirds of Israel will perish after all is said and done. Verse 17 probably refers to the 144,000 sealed Jews — Revelation 14:1.

But in this chapter, we also see the Divine protection of Israel, a remnant of Israel will be miraculously delivered from the beast.

READ v. 6. A Wilderness Haven. Many believe this may be the ancient city of Petra, the capital of Edom (Nabatea) — carved into the wilderness rock faces.

READ v. 14. A Winged Help. This is referring to divine help — Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11,12.

READ v. 16. A Wide Hell. Isaiah 11:16 speaks of the Lord doing for Israel during this time things similar to the days of the Exodus. In Numbers 16:31-33 we read of the earth opening up and swallowing the enemies of Moses.

How long will Israel's woe last? Verses 6 and 14, together with Revelation 13:5 show very clearly that this time will last for three and one-half years.

## I. THE UNHOLY TRIAD (Trinity)

This chapter reveals considerable detail about the workings of Satan in Daniel's 70TH Week. Satan is a created spirit being who works effectually through human agency. In Isaiah 14:14, which relates to us the initial rebellion of the mighty angel Lucifer, we have a statement of desire from this being which has NEVER changed: "...I will be like the Most High."

From the beginning to the very end, Satan seeks the worship and allegiance of God's creation. In Matthew 4:9, he even sought the worship of God the Son. The Bible teaches us that the ONE true and living God (Deuteronomy 6:4) exists as THREE distinct, separate, harmonious persons — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost — Matthew 28:19; I John 5:7.

This chapter in the Book of the Revelation shows that Satan will present himself as a "triad of evil," a pseudo-trinity. This Satanic triad may be presented as such:

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Satan is the great counterfeiter. Everything God does Satan imitates. Consider the following satanic substitutes for the real thing:

1. A COUNTERFEIT GOD: Satan himself, the "god of this world"
2. A COUNTERFEIT CHRIST: There are many would-be Messiahs in history, such as, Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Napoleon, Hitler, etc. have all sought to usher in a kind of millennium.
3. A COUNTERFEIT SPIRIT: There have been false spirits in history. During Daniel's 70TH Week, the great counterfeit will be the False Prophet. Just as the Holy Spirit points men to Christ, so this False Prophet will point men to the Antichrist.
4. A COUNTERFEIT GOSPEL: Paul wrote in Galatians about "another gospel". Whatever its form, it is invariably a 'gospel' of works salvation.

5. A COUNTERFEIT BAPTISM: This was a baptism without salvation — which is exactly what the infant-sprinkling is today.
6. COUNTERFEIT PREACHERS: Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Peter Jude 4; Revelation 2:2
7. COUNTERFEIT BIBLES: From the very beginning, Satan has sought to cause man to doubt the Word of God, dilute the Word of God, add to the Word of God, or outright deny the Word of God. Today, many perversions of the Word of God are readily available and being used by gullible Christians (and look-alike Christians).
8. A COUNTERFEIT PEOPLE: Jesus' parable about the wheat-tares. Tares are a 'look-a-like' wheat.
9. A COUNTERFEIT CHURCH: Revelation 17 gives details of the "church of the Antichrist." This religious system is likened to a "harlot" — the Lord's churches are called "pure, chaste virgins,"

As we study the Antichrist in this chapter, we shall learn how he will counterfeit Jesus Christ to pose as Israel's long-awaited Messiah.

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## II. THE BEAST RISING UP OUT OF THE SEA— verses 1-8

READ v. 1. This Beast is said to come up out of the sea. The sea represents the 'mass of humanity,' described as restless and troubled. This beast will come as the answer to a troubled world.

The Beast is described as having seven heads. With the information in Revelation 17, these heads represent seven mountains — a clear reference to Rome the city built upon seven hills. The 10 horns represent ten kings. It has the name of blasphemy - speaks of the opposition and self-deification of the beast.

The description of this beast lines up exactly with the prophecies in the Book of Daniel. The last of the four 'metallic empires' in Daniel 2 represents ROME. Just prior to the second coming of Christ this empire will exist in the form of TEN KINGS or kingdoms. Likewise, the last of the four 'beast empires' in Daniel 7 also represents ROME. Just prior to the second coming of Christ this empire will exist in the form of TEN KINGS. The blasphemy is seen in Daniel 7:25.

According to Daniel 9:26, the of the 'prince that shall come' (i.e. the Antichrist) would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary. This occurred in 70 A.D., and the people were ROME. Putting it all together, we see that this beast comes out of the sea as part of a "revived Roman Empire."

The question is: "DOES THE ROMAN EMPIRE STILL EXIST?" Yes, but not in the form it once did. Consider today, countries that once constituted the old Roman Empire are joined in military alliance — NATO, an economic alliance — the EU, and political alliances such as the European Parliament.

READ v. 2. This beast looks like a mixture of wild animals, but this is significant. In Daniel 7, the Babylonian empire was likened to a lion (verse 4), the Mede-Persian empire to a bear (verse 5), and the Græcian empire to a leopard (verse 6). The fourth beast (representing Rome) was without description, but we now see it as a mixture of the preceding Gentile powers. The Beast is the Antichrist that rises up from within the revived Roman Empire.

READ v. 3. The deadly wound healed. The Antichrist will undergo some form of a 'death and resurrection'. It will be a deception, of course through the power of the false prophet — vv. 13-15.

READ v. 4. This is surely Satan's finest hour — to receive the worship of the world.

READ vv. 5, 6. The blasphemous statements issued forth from the mouth of the Antichrist are directed against the name of God – Jesus, the tabernacle of God – the way to God through the blood, and the power of God.

READ v. 7. Satan will carry out his warfare through the Antichrist. In these horrific times, the multitudes who turn to God will pay with their lives

READ v. 8. Antichrist will be a world ruler in the total sense of the word. There have been numerous attempts to identify the Antichrist including the Pope and Judas Isacariot. Suffice it to say the Bible DOES NOT identify this man, and in fact tells us he will be revealed after the Rapture.

### III. THE EXHORTATION TO HEAR — verses 9,10

READ v. 9. This shows the seriousness of this prophecy.

READ v. 10. The battle lines are drawn. There is no more respite. The actors are committed to their course and ultimate end.

### IV. THE BEAST COMING UP OUT OF THE EARTH – verses 11-15

READ vv. 11-12. The first beast (Antichrist) comes out of the sea. This second beast comes from out of the earth. He has 2 horns like a lamb and speaks like a dragon. This is a religious figure. The second beast's power comes from the first beast, the Antichrist.

Revelation 19:20 clearly identifies this beast as the "False Prophet" who is associated with the rise of the Antichrist. This chapter give six things the False Prophet will do:

1. READ v. 12. He causes the whole earth to worship the Antichrist. He is the religious character, whereas the Antichrist is the political character.



2. READ v. 13. He performs amazing miracles. Let this be a lesson for us in these last days. SATAN CAN DO MIRACLES!!!! These last days are characterized by satanic activity within the bounds of Christendom.

3. READ v. 14. He deceives the world. An unsaved world will believe his lie.

4. READ v. 15. He gives apparent life to the image of the Beast. This reminds us of the great image erected by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:1-7. The giving of 'life' to this image is explained by saying that the image would speak. This is a simple task for demons!

5. READ v. 15. He initiates the slaughter of those who refuse to worship the image.

6. READ vv. 16-17. He causes all men to receive a mark. Satan will exercise economic warfare.

#### V. THE MARK OF THE BEAST — verses 16-18

One of the greatest areas of speculation in the Bible prophecy has been over the significance of these verses, particularly verse 18. All kinds of explanations and theories have been advanced. The fact is, the Word of God does not tell us the meaning of the number 666.

A careful reading of v. 17 shows that no man might buy or sell, except he that had one of three things: a mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name. So, 666, the number of his name, is not the mark of the Beast. The mark and the number of his name are two different things.

V. 18 states the significance of 666. The number 6 IS the number of man. The number 6 in scripture is the number of man, one short of God's perfect number 7.

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This chapter gives a preview of what is yet to come. Whereas chapters 12 and 13 highlight the characters of Daniel's 70TH Week, chapter 14 elaborates on its contents. We see the ultimate triumph of Jesus Christ, the fall of Babylon, and the last great battle — all of which are then detailed in subsequent chapters.

## I. THE VISION OF ASSURANCE — verses 1-5

In the darkest days of human history, the Lord reminds His people that victory will be His.

READ v. 1. John is given a preview of Christ reigning in Millennial splendor. This scene takes place on earth because in Rev. 7:3 the Lord seals the 144,000 Israelites to protect them from the "hurt" that is coming upon creation.

These are the same 144,000 who were sealed at the beginning of Daniel's 70TH Week (Revelation 7). Now at the beginning of the Millennium they are still there! God takes care of His own! What a blessed assurance!

READ vv. 2, 3a. In praise of this promised victory and triumph, a heavenly choir breaks forth into song. We are told this Heavenly song can only be learned by the 144,000 on the earth.

READ vv. 3b-5. Here's a description of them. They are redeemed (meaning saved) Israelites. They are referred to as "virgins," which speaks of their purity. They are the "followers of the Lamb" during this period of history as present-day believers will have been raptured already.

They are called "first fruits," which implies more to come. At the second coming of Jesus Christ, Jews who have survived the Great Tribulation will turn to Christ and join this remnant. We see their piety in v. 5.

## II. THE VISION OF THE ANGEL WITH THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL — verses 6, 7

READ vv. 6, 7. Here we read about the first of the six angels mentioned in this chapter. In Revelation 13:14, the False Prophet uses deceptive miracles to persuade men to turn to Satan. Here, God uses a supernatural method of persuading men to turn to Him.

In this age of Grace, the Lord uses His churches to preach the Gospel, but during the Tribulation, there are three ways the Gospel may be proclaimed during this dark period:

1. By the 144,000 Israelites — divinely protected. This fact is assumed. Nowhere does the Bible say they will be witnesses. They are called "servants" in Revelation 7:3 and "followers" in verse 4.
2. By the two witnesses — divinely returned. This pair will prophesy (preach) for 3 1/2 years.
3. By the Angel — divinely sent.

The everlasting Gospel is the same Gospel found throughout the Bible — salvation BY grace, THROUGH faith, IN Christ. Salvation through the shedding of the blood.

It was first preached demonstrably when the Lord covered Adam and Eve with the skins of innocent animals (Genesis 3:21). It was preached through the types in the Book of Leviticus with the sacrifices of innocent, unblemished animals. It is the message we preach today. It is the way of salvation during Daniel's 70TH Week.

This Gospel will be proclaimed worldwide. Even in a time of rebellion, the gracious Lord gives man an opportunity to be saved. Turn from your sins, turn to God, receive Christ.

### III. THE VISION OF DOOM — verses 8-11

READ v. 8. This is a prophetic preview of the destruction of the religious Babylon in Rev. 17 and the city of Babylon in Rev. 18. We'll study that more when we come to it.

READ vv. 9-11. Here we see the doom of those who worship the Beast. It only concerns those who cast their lot in with the Antichrist. Receiving the mark = rejecting Christ. Their doom is severe, an eternal suffering.

### IV. THE VISION OF VICTORY FOR THE SAINTS — verses 12,13

Again the Lord brings a word of comfort in the midst of horrific scenes. Those who turn to Christ are contrasted with those who follow Antichrist.

READ vv. 12, 13. This is a promise given to those who will be saved during Daniel's 70TH Week. The word "patience" here signifies enduring or waiting for the blessed reward of faith. There is a special relief in martyrdom during the terrible days when Antichrist shall reign in terror. The blessing comes in the form of REST. Their works do follow them. That is, these dear believers will be rewarded for their faithful service to Christ.

### V. THE VISION OF THE FINAL BATTLE – verses 14-20

1. The Ripeness of the Harvest. READ vv. 14-16. The Lord Jesus seated upon a cloud indicates this event is close to the point of Christ's return to earth. The sickle is an instrument of the harvest. The angel from the heavenly Temple implores Christ to exercise judgment. Then what a solemn statement!! "...the earth was reaped..." Yet this is a law of God Galatians 6:7 – sow/reap.

2. The Reaping of the Harvest. READ v. 17. Another angel with a sickle. There are two possible scenarios here:

- a. The sickle judgment of Christ is a general judgment of sin in the earth, and the sickle judgment of the angel has to do particularly with gathering of the nations at Armageddon.
- b. There is but one sickle judgment – by Jesus Christ using His holy angels as instruments – Mt. 13:30, 41.

READ vv. 18, 19. And another angel from the altar. As part of the harvest of judgment, the angels will bring the nations (their armies) to one place:

- a. Armageddon – previewed here but actually takes place in Rev. 16:16. Armageddon means the "hill of Megiddo," a location in Northern Israel overlooking the Valley of Jezreel.
  - b. The Valley of Jehoshaphat – This is a location just outside of Jerusalem. These gathered armies shall cover the land of Palestine, but particularly direct their attention to besieging Jerusalem.
3. The Results of the Harvest. READ v. 20. The winepress of God's wrath will occur at the second coming of Christ. The Bible indicates millions of soldiers will be involved in this final battle with their volume of blood running up to five feet (two meters) deep for a length of 200 miles or, 320 km. (1,600 furlongs).

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### I. THE END OF GOD'S LONGSUFFERING — verse 1

READ v. 1. Chapter 15 is an introductory vision to the seven last judgments of God and goes together with chapter 16. As a review of the general course of events, there were 7 seals. The 7<sup>th</sup> seal introduced the 7 trumpets. The 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet then leads into the 7 vials (plagues).

This shows the finality of events. These judgments bring humanity to the last moments of their rebellion against God. We are living in an age of grace where we experience the longsuffering of God but His wrath and judgment have been brewing. This is truly the end of the longsuffering of God.

### II. THE ANTICIPATION OF GOD'S VICTORY — verse 2-4

READ vv. 2-4. Revelation 4:6 locates the scene of John's vision to be in the very throne-room of God. The victorious saints here are the ones who have gotten the victory over the Beast through martyrdom. They stand upon the sea of glass with harps singing two songs, (1) The song of Moses. This is recorded in Exodus 15 and was composed and sung after the plagues in Egypt and God's deliverance of Israel. (2) The Song of the Lamb which would be about redemption through the blood.

### III. THE OPENING OF GOD'S TABERNACLE – verse 5

READ v. 5. This vision corresponds to Rev. 11:19. Remember that chapters 12-14 were parenthetical meaning it did not advance the narrative in time. Chapters 13 and 14 specifically were a preview of what is to come. The Tabernacle Moses set up was patterned after this Tabernacle in Heaven. The "Tabernacle of the Testimony" refers to the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant is kept.

### IV. THE MINISTERS OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS – verses 6, 7

READ vv. 6, 7. There are 7 angels in pure white linen, a symbol of righteousness and girded with gold, a symbol of deity. These angels have a priestly role. These 'angel-priests' are about to offer a great sacrifice of judgment. A vial is a bowl-like container. These were golden vials and were filled with the wrath of God.

### V. THE CLOSING OF GOD'S TEMPLE — verse 8

READ v. 8. The presence of God is signified by a cloud. No one was able to enter into the Temple until the 7 plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

I. THE SEVEN VIAL JUDGMENTS — verses 1-4, 8-10, 12, 17-21

These are the last judgments that comprise the 7<sup>th</sup> and final trumpet judgment. These seven judgments come in rapid fire succession. The vials are said to be full of the wrath of God.

READ v. 1. This is the voice of God. All seven angels are dispatched at once to pour out the vials.

READ v. 2. Vial #1. This was poured out over the whole of the earth. In contrast, the first Trumpet judgment was directed upon one-third of the earth. This was a judgment upon the worshippers of Antichrist.

A noisome plague means it will be so painful as to cause men to groan audibly. A grievous sore means some kind of boil or open ulcer. Perhaps it was something God had already done this on a smaller scale in Egypt.

READ v. 3. Vial #2. It may be that the "sea" here refers only to the Mediterranean (as opposed to 'seas' — globally). The oceans are vital to man as a source of food and transportation. The waters AS the blood of a dead man and every living soul died in the sea. This plague was also one of the ten poured out on Egypt.

READ vv. 4. Vial #3. A plague upon all freshwaters. (skip vv. 5-7 and come back)

READ vv. 8, 9. Vial #4. A plague of the sun. The sun will scorch unsaved men.

READ vv. 10, 11. Vial #5. A plague of darkness. This plague will be a literal, physical darkness, which shall serve to heighten the effects of the preceding plagues. Perhaps it was similar to the Egyptian Darkness (Exodus 10)

READ v. 12. Vial #6. A plague upon the river Euphrates. The great river is dried up, permitting this eastern army to continue its advance into the Holy Land. This plague from God is preparing for the final battle at the Second Coming of Christ.

We are going to temporarily skip over vv. 13-16 and come back to it.

READ vv. 17-21. Vial #7. The second coming of Jesus Christ. There is a great voice out of the temple in heaven, "It is done"! There was a great earthquake. This is the earthquake spoken of in Zechariah 14:4 which splits the Mount of Olives. Jerusalem was divided.

The fall of Babylon, previewed in Revelation 14:8, is covered in detail in the parenthetical chapters 17 and 18. Giant hailstones, each weighing about 130 pounds (60 kg) will crash down upon the earth.

## II. ANGELIC RESPONSE TO THE VIAL JUDGMENTS — verses 5-7

READ v. 5. This verse gives the lie to the belief that God is a God of love and would never send anyone to hell, etc. The Bible teaches God to be HOLY, and this demands judgment upon sin. If God overlooked sin -- He could not be Holy!

READ v. 6. God takes as much offense at the mistreatment of His own as He does with sin in general.

READ v. 7. Even though these judgments seem extremely harsh and cruel, all of God's judgments are true and just. Nothing will be unfair or unwarranted.

## III. HUMAN RESPONSE TO THE VIAL JUDGMENTS — verses 9,11 ,21

READ v. 9, 11, 21. Man will still blaspheme God. Instead of crying out to God for mercy and salvation, they will curse Him the more. It is hard to believe that man will still not repent.

## IV. SATANIC RESPONSE TO THE VIAL JUDGMENTS — verses 13,14

READ vv. 13, 14. Three frog-like devils that come from the mouths of the Satanic triad. We have already learned that Satan can duplicate the miracles God does — now we see how he actually does this. Satan uses them to prepare for his "show-down" with Almighty God.

## V. DIVINE RESPONSE IN THE VIAL JUDGMENTS — verses 15,16

READ v. 15. This is a final word of encouragement to the faithful remnant. "Behold, I come as a thief". For those who follow the Beast, Christ's coming to earth is unexpected. A blessing is given for those who watch and remain spiritually and morally pure even in the last dark hours of tribulation.

READ v. 16. The gathering of the nations to Armageddon. This is an area in the north of Israel in the Jezreel Valley overlooked by Mt. Megiddo.

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The valley of Jezreel is of immense strategic importance because it forms a natural highway from the Mediterranean coast to the Jordan valley.

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The Valley of Megiddo (Jezreel) is about 20 miles long X 14 miles wide (32 km X 22 km) -- not enough to accommodate all the armies of the world. However, the Scriptures give two other locations where the final conflict will take place:

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- a. The Valley of Jehoshaphat (Kidron Valley) --- Joel 3:2,12. This is the valley at Jerusalem between the city and the Mt. of Olives. The brook Kidron flows in this valley. Zechariah 14:2 indicates the city of Jerusalem will be surrounded by God's enemies just prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

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- b. Edom Isaiah 34:6. Edom is South-East from Jerusalem.

The conclusion we draw is that in this final conflict, all of Palestine will be a battlefield. Armageddon is a part of this, and a logical point to begin an invasion.

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## I. THE VISION OF THE DOOM OF BABYLON — verse 1

READ v. 1. John is summoned by an angel to come hither. He is permitted to see in detail the collapse of Babylon. In Rev. 14, the fall of Babylon was previewed. It occurred with the pouring out of the 7<sup>th</sup> vial judgment in 16:17-21. Chapters 17 and 18 it form a parenthetical passage giving the reader more details about the fall of Babylon.

It is evident from a study of the Book of The Revelation that reference to Babylon goes beyond that of a single, isolated city — although such a city will be a reality. Babylon is a SYSTEM. It is a religious system (vv. 1-7), a political system (vv. 10-14; 18:1-10), and an economic system (18:11-19).

In a general sense, Revelation chapter 17 deals with RELIGIOUS Babylon, while chapter 18 deals with POLITICAL and ECONOMIC Babylon. This observation is based upon some differences seen in comparing both chapters.

### BABYLON — chapter 17

"MYSTERY Babylon" — verse 5  
Herself rich — verse 4  
Destroyed by man — verse 16  
Turned on by kings — verse 16

### BABYLON — chapter 18

"Babylon the GREAT" — verse 2  
Makes others rich — verse 3  
Destroyed by God — verses 5-21  
Lamented by kings — verse 9

The system of Babylon had a definite beginning in a definite location, and this is all recorded for us in Genesis 10:8-10. It was a system of rebellion by man against God. God commanded the sons of Noah to spread out and re-populate the entire earth. Instead, man congregated in the plain of Shinar — Genesis 11:2. The rebellion was apparently led by one of the grandsons of Shem named Nimrod.

Second, it was a system of unity. In Genesis 11 we find the whole world speaking ONE language, with ONE speech — one common idea, UNITY!!! It was man's first attempt at GLOBALISM! This shows that man resisted the God-ordained division of the human race into 70 families, as outlined in Genesis 10.

Pagan records relate that the wife of Nimrod (Semiramis) was responsible for the development of the Babylonian religious system. In summary form, the events are said to have occurred as follows:

Semiramis outlived her husband Nimrod by some 42 years, during which time she gave birth to a child Tammuz (Baal). It was then that Semiramis began to formulate certain religious claims: namely that her conception was miraculous, that her son was Nimrod reincarnated as the long-promised "savior". From these claims developed a religious system with the following features:

1. Mother-child Worship. Semiramis called herself the "Queen of Heaven," and the worship of herself and her son spread into all parts of the world under different names.

2. Virgin Birth, Death, & Resurrection. The birth of Tammuz actually came a result of licentious living — but a miracle birth was claimed. He was later killed while hunting wild boar. His mother claimed to have brought him back to life again by her power.
3. Pagan Rites And Immoral Practices. A system of feasts, symbols, rituals, etc. eventually developed. Religious prostitution was practiced with the temple virgins. It is a 'mystery (secret)'.

The system of Babylon has long been a part of Christendom. From the days of the Roman emperor Constantine the Great (288-337 A.D.), the pagan system has become well entrenched in the Catholic traditions. Constantine's 'conversion' to Christianity and his subsequent patronizing of Christianity as the official State religion of Rome brought about a wedding of Christianity and paganism.

To accommodate the influx of unregenerate pagans into the church, pagan deities were merely Christianized i.e., Christian names (Mary—Jesus) were given to pagan gods and goddesses.

## II. THE DESCRIPTION OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON – verses 1b-6

READ v. 1 again. This religious system is referred to as the "Great Whore" (harlot). Its description is in direct contrast to that given of real New Testament churches — "chaste virgins", the "bride of Christ".

This religious system is a universal "church". It sits upon "many waters" which, according to verse 15, symbolizes the nations of the world. Another word for universal is "catholic." By contrast, the Lord's churches are (by definition) local assemblies! There is no such thing as a "universal Church" — - visible or invisible!

READ v. 2. The religious Babylon is a "state church". The New Testament teaches there is to be a complete separation of sovereign powers, between Church and State. This religious system is one which has intertwined (committed fornication with) government and religion.

This was very much the situation between the years 500 A.D. and 1500 A.D. when the Roman Catholic 'Church' and, later, many subsequent Protestant denominations, literally controlled and worked through civil governments to achieve their totalitarian ends. Even today, the Vatican is accorded political status, and the "kings of the earth" seem to be falling over themselves courting her favor.

It is a "seducing church". The influence of this religious system will be to seduce mankind into accepting the Beast as God. The Roman Catholic system exercises a seducing influence over people, governments, theologians, the media, etc.

READ v. 3. It is a "blasphemous church". Blasphemy is ascribing the things of God to others. The blasphemy of the Antichrist will be to declare himself to be God. Consider also the present-day blasphemous claims made by the Church of Rome. For example:

- The Pope is the "Vicar [substitute] of Christ." The Pope speaks infallibly for God.
- The Mass re-sacrificing Christ again and again.
- Prayer made to God through intermediaries — Mary, the saints, etc.
- Mary is the Mother of God — sinless. etc., etc.

READ v. 4. It is a "pompous church". Purple and scarlet are significant colors. Purple is a color of majesty (John 19:2,5), scarlet the color of sacrifice. These are also the colors in the vestments of the cardinals and archbishops of the Church of Rome.

It is a "wealthy church". The treasure and wealth of the Roman Catholic system is obscenely fantastic — derived via massive amounts of real estate throughout the world, priceless treasures in the Vatican vaults, and through money it has scammed for centuries with its blasphemous doctrine of Purgatory.

It is an "immoral church". The reference to the golden cup has to do primarily with spiritual adultery which thing God hates! History relates a shocking tale of immoral popes and priests. Even today, pedophilia runs rampant in Catholic churches.

READ v. 5. It is a "pagan church". The term, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT" gives the true nature of this religious system. No doubt it will pose as the pure form of Christianity (as does Rome today), but an examination will reveal nothing Christian about it at all.

The term "mystery" refers to the secretive nature of the system, where the secrets are only fully known to the priest-craft. Rituals, relics, regalia, altars, and oaths are the characteristics of the Babylonian religion.

This system is called a "Mother of Harlots." To be a mother there must be children. Once again, the Church of Rome fits this description for she has mothered many children (Protestant denominations) — all of whom bear some 'family resemblance' to her. (e.g. infant sprinkling, hierarchical government, formalism, state churches, sacramentalism, etc.)

READ v. 6. It is a "persecuting church". A feature of Daniel's 70TH Week will be its many martyrs — those who refuse to worship the Beast, etc. In the last 1,700 years, the Roman Catholic Church has butchered over 50 million Christians — mostly Baptists — through its inquisitions and crusades. This does not take into account the wholesale slaughter of Jews and Moslems through other crusades.

It was the Roman Catholic Church, which invented the rack and the thumbscrews as instruments of torture, which burnt so many at the stake, which devised cruel and inhuman means of slaughter. Already, this system is "drunk with blood" — but more is to come!!

Today, there is an great desire to re-unite all religions into one world "church" — known as the ecumenical movement. It is the children of Rome who are desiring to return home to mother. Whether this is completely accomplished before the Rapture is not possible to tell — but in the first half of Daniel's 70TH Week, the Church of Rome will be like a deep sewer into which all apostate Christendom and heathendom will drain.

### III. THE IDENTITY OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON — verses 7, 9, 15, 18

There is some difference of opinion as to the identity of this "woman," and in particular to the location of the center of her activity.

READ v. 7. Her identity is to be known. It is not God's intention to keep it a secret.

READ v. 9. It is generally accepted that this verse is a reference to the city of Rome, which was built on seven hills.

READ vv. 15, 18. Rome is the center of apostate religion today. The Vatican wields worldwide influence (v. 15) over almost 25% of the world's population today. It is the greatest center of religion in the world — and a power behind kings, verse 18.

### IV. THE POWER OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON — verses 8, 10-14

vv. 3, 7, 9 shows the woman sitting on the beast. This indicates two things. First, the woman's power comes from the Beast. She is supported by Antichrist and Satan. Second, she exercises control over the Beast. Just as any rider controls the horse, so this woman plays an influencing role in the shaping of the rise of the Antichrist. This can be seen today in the attempts of Christendom (especially the popes) to mediate in world affairs.

READ v. 8. The Beast is the Antichrist — the counterfeit Messiah who will in some way imitate death and resurrection.

READ v. 10. The seven kings do not correspond with the seven heads of verse 9 because of the conjunction "and." The interpretation is that these "kings" are in fact world kingdoms or empires.

"five are fallen": Egypt → Assyria → Babylon → Medo-Persia → Greece

"and one is": Rome

"and the other is not yet come": 10 Nation confederation (revived Roman Empire)

v. 10 - The coming ten-nation confederation is referred to as the 10 horns. It is the 10 toes of Nebuchadnezzar's metallic image (Daniel 2). It is the 10 horns of Daniel 7.

READ v. 11. The 8<sup>th</sup> king is identified as the Antichrist. "He is of the seven" meaning that the Antichrist shall rise up out of the revived Roman Empire.

READ v. 13. The 10 kings shall be instruments in the hands of Satan. They will do all they can to enthrone the Antichrist.

READ v. 14. They will oppose and go to war against Christ.

#### V. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RELIGIOUS BABYLON – vv. 16, 17

READ vv. 16, 17. The destruction of religious Babylon. It appears the following scenario will occur:

1. The apostate religious system will assist the rise of the one world government and the Antichrist.
2. Perhaps religious Babylon will attempt to gain total control.
3. The governmental system will destroy all religion.

It is man that does God's work. The Lord often works in this way.

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## I. THE COLLAPSE OF THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD

This chapter gives further details of the end of the rule of man in opposition to God. This event has already been previewed (Revelation 14:8) and took place with the seventh Vial (Revelation 16:19). The details given here correspond to the smiting of the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's great image by the uncut Stone in Daniel 2.

In Revelation 18 we see Babylon in its final form — the kingdom of the Antichrist which arose out of a 'revived' Roman Empire with the aid of a worldwide religious system. It appears from this chapter that a literal city (as well as a system) is meant. There is much speculation among commentators as to the identity of this city. For example, it is thought to be:

1. Rome. Since the seat of religious unity and power is at Rome, why not the seat of world government as well?
2. Jerusalem. Antichrist is going to sit in the temple at Jerusalem.
3. An un-named City. Based upon the fact that 'Babylon' is more a system than a place, and that the seat of Babylonianism has changed through the course of history.
4. Literal Babylon. This view holds that the ancient city of Babylon will in fact become the center of world government under the Antichrist. The main objection to this is that Babylon was destroyed. However, careful consideration of the facts of history and Scripture reveal the real possibility of the ancient city of Babylon being rebuilt.

The prophecies relating to her destruction are found in Isaiah and Jeremiah. These prophecies have not been literally fulfilled. Therefore, for these prophecies to be fulfilled Babylon must once again rise to her former glory. The conclusion is that the Babylon of Revelation 18 is the yet-to-be restored metropolis of ancient Babylon.

## II. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FALL OF BABYLON — verses 1,2

READ v. 1. Although still part of a parenthetical explanation of the doom of man's system, the words, "After these things.." indicates a separate vision from that of chapter 17. Some believe this glorious and powerful angel is Jesus Christ Himself, a Christophany; but the phrase "another angel" shows him to be a celestial spirit-being.

READ v. 2. The angels gives the announcement that Babylon is fallen. It was previewed in chapter 14, but actually took place with the 7<sup>th</sup> vial (chapter 16) and now have the details of the seventh vial. This great city, destined to become the showpiece of godless totalitarianism, will be turned into a habitation for fallen angels, evil spirits, demons, etc.

### III. THE HEAVENLY INDICTMENT OF BABYLON — verses 3-5, 23, 24

READ v. 3. Notice the influence of this city system. ALL nations have been intoxicated with her wine of fornication (rebellion) — evil political relationships. Wealth is generated through the abundance of her delicacies evil commercial relationships.

READ v. 4. We see the command for separation. From its immediate context, this verse is addressed to the Jews living through Daniel's 70TH Week. Just as Lot was removed from Sodom before its destruction, so God's people are warned to leave Babylon.

READ v. 5. In this latter-day Babylon, the sins of the past 6,000 years will have been heaped up to heaven.

READ v. 23d. The word translated "sorceries" is 'pharmakeia' in the Greek — a word related to drugs and evil potions. Even now we can see how the economies of nations (not to mention the lives of people) are dominated by the illicit drug trade.

READ v. 24. Whether in its religious, political, or economic form — whether in the past, the present, or the future — the system of Babylon has been an enemy of God and His people.

### IV. THE HUMAN ASSESSMENT OF BABYLON verses 7, 12-16, 22, 23

READ v. 7. It was a center of splendor — self-glorified, self-sufficient, and self-assured.

READ vv. 12-16. It was an economic power. These verses give us a glimpse of the vast wealth and economy of this city: precious metals, clothing industry, timber industry, base metals, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, livestock, transportation, labor, and trade.

At the beginning of Daniel's 70TH Week, with the rise of the Antichrist as a false messiah, we read of terrible famine conditions throughout the world (Revelation 6). Now, less than seven years later, control of the means of production and the produce is firmly in the hands of the Antichrist.

READ v. 22a. It was the center of entertainment. In ancient Babylon, music was used to sway and manipulate the masses. This coming Babylon will use music to control and influence men.

READ v. 22b. It was the center of industry.

READ v. 23. It was the center of activity — no voice, sound, light.

### V. THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON — verses 6, 8-11, 17-21

READ v. 6. She is to be dealt a double dose of judgment.

READ vv. 8, 10, 17, 19. It is a speedy destruction. Literally one hour is all it will take to reduce this glorious city to complete ruin.

READ v. 8. It will be a complete destruction. Babylon will be "utterly" destroyed. There are eight "no more's."

READ v. 9. It will be a visible destruction.

READ vv. 10, 11, 115, 16, 18, 19. It will be a lamented destruction. Three times we read the cry, "Alas! Alas!"

READ v. 21. It will be a violent destruction.

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## I. THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS — verses 1-6

READ vv. 1-6. "After these things..." — that is, after the total collapse of man's system of world government, world economy, and world religion, all heaven erupts in joyous praise.

The word "alleluia" is transliterated from the Greek form of the Hebrew "Hallelujah" which means "PRAISE YE THE LORD."

1. Hallelujah For Redemption — v. 1. Christ's work of redemption (which goes beyond the salvation of man) is about to be completed. This "Praise the Lord" is for His great work of salvation.
2. Hallelujah For Retribution — vv. 2,3. The saints praise the Lord because He has dealt with Babylon.
3. Hallelujah For Righteousness — v. 4. The 24 elders and four beasts recognize God for Who He is.
4. Hallelujah For Reigning — verse 6. Finally, the answer to the great petition of the Model Prayer, "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10) arrives.

Note: We can readily see that praise is going to be a major feature of life in Heaven. Sadly, praise is so often missing in the life and service of the average believer and Baptist church often replaced with grumbling, complaining, pessimism, ungratefulness, etc. What a difference would be seen if God's people lived and served their God with continual rejoicing and praise.

There are five groups participating in this chorus of praise:

1. The Much People In Heaven. This specifically refers to the saints coming out of Great Tribulation, who looked to the Lord for judgment upon their persecutors.
2. The 24 Elders. As noted in this study before, the 24 Elders represent the redeemed of the Lord prior to Daniel's 70TH Week — the 12 apostles and the 12 tribes.
3. The Four Beasts. As noted before, these are spirit beings.
4. The Voice From The Throne. This is an angelic being — one of those mentioned in Rev. 4.
5. The Great Multitude. These are the angelic hosts. Indeed, the entire Heaven's company.

## II. THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB — verses 7-10

READ vv. 7a – The marriage of the Lamb to His bride is an occasion of joy and gladness. In earthly weddings, it is usually the bride who is the center of attraction. But in this wedding, it is the bridegroom — the Lord Jesus Christ who receives all the honor.

At this point, it is most helpful to gain an understanding of the customs of oriental marriage. Unlike weddings in the Western world, the oriental wedding was a long, more complex process involving three separate stages:

1. Stage 1 — Betrothal. This is the arranging of the marriage, usually by the fathers of the bride and groom, and often when the bride and groom were quite young. At this stage, a dowry is often paid. In a sense the bride is purchased. This espousal, or betrothal, is somewhat similar to an "engagement" in western custom, except that it was legally binding. During the time of espousal, the bride began preparing herself for the wedding day.
2. Stage 2 — Presentation. This took place when the couple became old enough to come together in the sacred relationship of marriage. At this time, the man would take unto himself his wife and the two would become one flesh.

A wedding procession preceded the wedding. This usually took place in the evening. The wedding party would meet at the bride's house, then the bridegroom would come and escort his bride to his house. She was accompanied by virgins, and such a procession was accompanied with great joy and merriment.

3. Stage 3 — Wedding Feast. This was the period of celebration and festivity. Unlike many western weddings, it was a religious occasion lasting over several days, rather than a time of revelry and drunkenness. John 2:1-10 gives us a glimpse of what occurs at a marriage feast.

Three participants are mentioned in Revelation 19. The groom, the bride, and the guests (v. 9). Unquestionably the Lord Jesus Christ is the Groom. There is much difference of opinion as to exactly who or what is the "Bride of Christ:"

1. Some say it is Israel — reunited with their Messiah. The Old Testament does picture Israel as the wife of the LORD — unfaithful, divorced, widowed. It is true that Israel will be re-united with her estranged husband at the second coming of Christ, but:
  - a. This reunion will occur on earth, whereas the scene in Revelation 19: 7 is heavenly.
  - b. This reunion will occur at the Second Coming, an event still to occur at the point of the prophetic narrative in verse 8.
2. Some say it is made up of all the redeemed. However, not all people will have been saved at this point of the prophetic narrative. Jews will be saved at the second coming, and people will also be born again during the Millennial kingdom.
3. Some say it is an unspecified select group. The bride of Christ is a group of people within a people — just as the 144,000 Jews are a select group within the whole nation.
4. Some say it is "The Church". This is by far the most usual interpretation. But this view still leads to three possibilities.

- a. Those who believe in the "invisible, universal, mystical, body of Christ, Church" believe the Bride of Christ consists of all the saved between Pentecost and the Rapture. This is the prevailing view among conservative premillennial scholars. The problem is, the "invisible, universal, mystical, body of Christ, Church" is a myth!!
- b. Some (who believe that a New Testament Church is an organized assembly of Baptized believers) see the Bride of Christ only as a future entity -- a single church (assembly) composed of all believers assembled in heaven, Hebrews 12:23a.

This view speaks of the "church in prospect" as distinct from any church on earth. Such an interpretation begs the question, "Why does the Bible refer to real New Testament churches on earth (e.g. at Ephesus or at Corinth) as being espoused, to be presented, etc., if the future reality is to include all the saved?"

- c. Some (who also believe that a New Testament Church is an organized assembly of baptized believers) see the Bride of Christ as composed of such churches presently on earth. This is the most controversial view. It is often [erroneously] referred to as the "Baptist Bride" position.

### 3. The Invited Guests — verse 9.

At any wedding, although only two are joined in wedlock, many are involved. The guests are invited to attend and share in the joy and honor of the occasion verse 7. Those who hold that the Bride of Christ is "The Church" (either the "Universal Church" or the "Church in Prospect") usually identify these guests to be the Old Testament saints and/or those coming out of Great Tribulation.

#### The New Testament Church Bride.

At this point we want to closely examine the doctrine that only true (New Testament) churches make up the Bride of Christ. The label "Baptist Bride" is not altogether accurate, because many so-called Baptist churches do not hold to Biblical faith and order. It takes more than a sign to make a church a Baptist church! Why does the Bible teach a "faithful Church bride?"

1. The "Bride" is the Church. 2 Corinthians 11:2 was addressed (initially) to the church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:1). The only kind of church taught in the New Testament is a local, visible, organized assembly of baptized believers.
2. The NT does not sanction today's religious scene. It knows nothing of the man-made "churches," denominations, and religious organizations comprising Christendom today. The apostles and their converts knew of only one kind of church, one kind of baptism, one kind of faith, etc., Eph.4:4-6.

In its original intent the New Testament was primarily addressed to New Testament Christians in New Testament churches. Thus, for all practical purposes, the (1<sup>st</sup> century) Bride DID consist of all the saved. The idea of someone getting saved and NOT becoming part Of a New Testament church is foreign to the Word of God.

3. The NT, however, did envision Baptist apostasy. The Bible warned of the departure of some of the Lord's churches from a position of purity and has been proven by history. Thus a distinction may be drawn between those belonging to real churches and those belonging to the false 'church.'
4. The Heavenly catalog distinguishes the Lord's churches. Hebrews 12:22-24 lists things we will see in glory. In v. 23 – "To the general assembly AND church of the firstborn...". They are both redeemed people yet two distinct groups.
5. There is a difference between a church and the family of God (Eph. 3:14, 15, 21). The "family of God" consists of all the saved in heaven and on earth. A New Testament church is made up of "family members" who are baptized and assemble with a particular assembly in a particular place.
6. The marriage of Rebekah to Isaac gives an interesting picture. Abraham chose a bride for his son FROM his family, but Isaac didn't marry the whole family. For the Lord to marry the church is consistent. He doesn't marry the whole family!
7. The New Testament describes the Lord's churches using three main metaphors: (1) a BODY of which Christ is the HEAD; (2) a BUILDING of which Christ is the CHIEF CORNERSTONE; and (3) a BRIDE to which Christ is the BRIDEGROOM.

The most common misconception of the "pure-Church Bride" doctrine is that those who hold to it believe only Baptists will be raptured! Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is, the Bible NEVER speaks about the "Rapture of THE CHURCH" (an "invisible-universal-mystical-body of Christ church concept" term), but only of the Rapture of saints.

READ vv. 7b, 8. Here is the preparation of the wife. This is the fulfillment of Ephesians 5:27. It is at the Judgment Seat of Christ where all the dross is removed. What a beautiful sight it will be when the bride appears in the presence of her Lord!!

READ v. 9. Evidently not everybody will make up the bride, but ALL will participate (who are saved). Old Testament Saints, those saved during Daniel's 70TH Week, un-churched saints (the "general assembly") will attend as honored guests; and John the Baptist will be the "best man!"

READ v. 10. This verse is a great proof of the deity of Christ. Here, John is soundly rebuked for attempting to worship an angel and told to worship God. In the Gospels there are a number of instances where men worshipped the Lord Jesus Christ and NOT ONCE were they rebuked or corrected. Why?? Because the Lord Jesus Christ IS God, and He accepts our worship.

### III. THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST – verses 11-16

READ vv. 11-16. Revelation 4 covered the Rapture where all believers are caught up to meet Christ in the air. This passage covers the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Here's His description:

1. He rides upon a white horse – v. 11. The horse is a symbol of warfare.
2. His eyes are as a flame of fire – v. 12. As noted in Revelation 1, this description of Christ speaks of His omniscience, His perception, His searching out the hearts of men. Nothing escapes Him.
3. His head is crowned with many crowns – v. 12. These are the sovereign's crowns — Greek "diadema." The "many crowns" suggests one for each of the kingdoms of this world. Rev. 11:15.
4. He wears a vesture dipped in blood – v. 13. Unlike the slain Lamb of God, this is the blood of conquest and judgment.
5. Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword – v. 15. This sword is His Word.

Four Names are ascribed to our Lord at this great event.

1. Faithful and True – v. 11. It is a title, which suggests that what Christ said so He would do.
2. A secret name – v. 12. Possibly this is a Name which has been shared only with the Father in their essential relationship.
3. The Word of God.
4. King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

READ v. 14. A great army will accompany Christ at His return. This army will comprise believers (Jude 14, 15) and angels (Matt. 25:31). In this event the armies will be more spectators — the Lord shall do the fighting.

There are several activities Christ will do at His second coming:

1. He shall judge – v. 11. Specifically, this will involve the judgment of the Gentile nations (Matt. 25)
2. He shall make war – v. 11. The second coming of Christ involves a great battle.
3. He shall smite the nations – v. 15. This will be by the Word of His mouth.
4. He shall rule – v. 15. This refers to the establishment of His millennial kingdom.
5. He shall tread the winepress – v. 15. This is a descriptive term referring to the vengeance of God.

#### IV. THE FINAL BATTLE OF DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK — verses 17-19

READ vv. 17, 18. This is called the "Supper of the Great God," and the birds are called to it. An idea of the death and destruction in this battle described in v. 18.

READ v. 19. The scene for the final battle. The Antichrist and his armies will be arrayed against the Lord and His armies.

1. The focal point will be Jerusalem. This city will be under siege.
2. The battleground will be all of Palestine.
3. The nations will be in their final rebellion. This shows how far sin affects man — to think he could actually fight against the Lord Jesus Christ!
4. God has brought the nations to this point. Although the Antichrist has seemingly all the power on earth, God is still on the throne, and we see His workings bringing about this climax in world affairs.
5. Not all nations will fight against the Lord. This is evident from other scriptures.

The return of Jesus Christ will be a visible return, a personal return, a post-tribulational return, a powerful return, and earthly return, and a delivering return.

#### V. THE OUTCOME OF THE FINAL BATTLE OF DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK — verses 20, 21

READ v. 20. The Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet are captured, along with Satan. The Antichrist and false prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire whereas Satan was cast into the Bottomless Pit.

READ v. 21. We see the destruction of the armies of the Antichrist.

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With the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the events of Daniel's 70TH Week (which constitute the major portion of the Book --- chapters 6 through 19) are now concluded. God has taken 14 chapters to explain in detail a period lasting approximately seven years, but in this one-chapter God gives information on events spanning over 1,000 years! Five separate events are recorded.

### I. THE BINDING OF SATAN — verses 1-3

READ vv. 1-3. In Revelation 9:1 we observed Satan being given, with divine permission, the key to the abyss. Now the key is in the hand of a mighty angel. This abyss is a hellish place in the heart of the earth, the abode of locust-like demons from Revelation 9:3 along with certain angels which sinned. The angel binds Satan for 1,000 years at which time he will be loosed for a brief time.

### II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REIGN OF CHRIST — verses 4-6

READ vv. 4-6. A number of important facts are gained from these verses:

1. Believers shall sit as judges during the Kingdom Age. This privilege granted to faithful Christians is another reward for the saved — in addition to the crowns received at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
2. Tribulation saints shall reign with Christ.
3. The length of Christ's reign shall be 1,000 years, hence the term, "Millennium" meaning 1,000.
4. A pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ. The order of events clearly demonstrates a pre-millennial order: Rev. 19 – the second coming of Christ followed by Rev. 20 – The Millennial reign of Christ.

### III. THE FINAL REVOLT OF SATAN — verses 7-10

Before considering these verses, it is important to establish just who will be involved in the millennial order. There are two classes of people. First, you have the glorified saints comprising of OT saints, present-day saints, and tribulation saints.

Second, you have the mortal saints comprising saved Israelites and Gentiles that entered the Kingdom at the return of Christ. **\* Important\*** You also have their children that will be born to them during the Millennium. Those born in the millennium will still have Adam's nature. We know that Christ will rule with a rod of iron meaning that it is probable that many who grow up in this age will not be born again, but will simply maintain a form of godliness under dire threat.

READ v. 7. He will be released from the Abyss.

READ v. 8. Satan will "test the hearts" of the inhabitants of the millennial earth (who have lived in most favorable circumstances) to bring out their true spiritual condition. "Gog and Magog" is not the same as that found in Ezekiel 38:2.

Ezekiel 38 and 39 refer to an invasion of Israel by a Northern confederacy of nations and event which will most likely occur at the beginning of the Daniel's 70TH Week. The reference to Gog & Magog in verse 8 relates to the character of the rebellion — nations arrayed against Jerusalem.

READ v. 9. The final rebellion led by Satan. He will amass a vast rebellion. " . . .the number of whom is as the sand of the sea... " This is indeed a sad commentary on human nature. Even under the most utopian, spiritual conditions, man is still a wicked sinner! He will center his rebellion against Jerusalem — where Jesus Christ reigns and he seeks to rule. But his army was quickly dispatched.

READ v. 10. Satan is cast into the lake of fire. Here we note that the doctrine of annihilation is refuted. Many cults (Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, etc.) deny the existence of a literal Hell and teach that all who die lost (anyone but them) will eventually be annihilated. Notice in this verse, that 1,000+ years on, the beast and the false prophet are still consciously suffering in the lake of fire.

#### IV. THE END OF THE PRESENT EARTH AND HEAVEN — verse 11

READ v. 11. We see the end of time and the beginning of eternity. Time is relative to earth. When earth passes away, so does time. The destruction of the present earth and heaven is detailed further in 2 Peter 3. He will make His creation anew.

#### V. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT— verses 11-15

There are three future judgments to distinguish.

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ. This involves the judgment of believers for their works, and takes place in Heaven after the Rapture.
2. The Throne of Glory Judgment (Matt. 25). This involves the judgment of the nations based on their treatment of Israel, and takes place on earth immediately after the second coming of Christ.
3. The Great White Throne Judgment. This involves the judgment of the unsaved for their rejection of Christ, and takes place after the Millennium and it is this judgment in our passage.

READ v. 11. It is called "Great White Throne." The Judge is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ.



READ v. 12. The dead, meaning unsaved, are judged. By this time the righteous have already been resurrected, judged, and with Christ. Contrary to popular belief this is NOT A GENERAL JUDGMENT where all will appear to determine their eternal destiny. That question was settled before death. Notice that one of the books that will be there on that day is the "Book of Life".

READ v. 13. The first resurrection was where the saved received their glorified bodies. This is the second resurrection where it seems the lost shall receive their corrupt bodies once again.

The Lord will give everyone a "fair trial." It seems many will plead their works for a defense (Matthew 7:22), therefore all will be given an opportunity to speak. No soul who will be consigned to the Lake of Fire for eternity will ever be able to say, "I was cast here unfairly".

READ v. 14. The final Hell is the "Lake of Fire." It was originally made for Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41). God never intended the place for His crowning creation, and in fact NEVER DOES SEND ANYONE TO THE PLACE. A man sends himself to the Lake of Fire by rejecting Christ. The Lake of Fire is an eternal place of everlasting fire, torment, punishment, and pain.

READ v. 15. The absence of one's name in the Lamb's Book of Life means eternity separated from God in the Lake of Fire.

1. Whosoever. The word of choice. Every man has been given a choice either to accept or to reject Christ
2. The Book Of Life. The name of every person ever conceived is recorded in this book but may be blotted out
3. The Second Death – an eternal separation from God

If you are born once, you'll die twice.  
If you are born twice, you'll die but once.

Slide 48

### I. THE ETERNAL ORDER INTRODUCED — verse 1

READ v. 1. It is at this point that "eternity" begins and time shall be no more. Time is relative only to this creation, this present earth. The present heavens and the present earth will pass away. There will be no more sea. The oceans have served to form racial and national barriers — perhaps this statement indicates no more ethnic or national divisions among men.

### II. THE ETERNAL CITY PRESENTED — verse 2

READ v. 2. The name of the city is New Jerusalem. The name "Jerusalem" means "city of peace." Unlike the millennial Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem is a distinct creation of God. The key word in verse 2 is "prepared." From John 14:2,3, we understand that the Lord Jesus is preparing this heavenly home at this present time.

### III. THE ETERNAL STATE DESCRIBED verses 3-8

READ v. 3. This will be the full, abiding presence of the triune God.

READ v. 4. Citizens of the eternal heavenly state will have glorified bodies not subject to death, sorrow, pain, hunger, and thirst.

READ v. 5. New environment - "All things new!!" This is the summary of what the eternal heavenly state will be like. We cannot hope to understand much about this wonderful place right now. In response to his vision of the things God has prepared for them that love Him, it seems John is so amazed that he is reminded to write!

READ v. 6. Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, is the One Who is central to the eternal state. We saw this title of Christ at the beginning of this Book and now again at the end of the Book. The "water of life" (salvation) is freely available to all who thirst.

READ v. 7. Heaven is for the overcomer — not the one who would strive to overcome by himself, but he that is a blood-washed child of God.

READ v. 8. God gives a brief catalogue of the sins which will keep a man from Heaven and send him to the eternal Lake of Fire. It will be quite the crowd there in the Lake of Fire!!

1. Fearful — those afraid to trust Christ whether afraid of what others might say or what it will cost.
2. Unbelieving — failure to trust Christ.
3. Abominable --- this refers to the pollution of sin.

4. Murderers — the very first sinful act.
5. Whoremongers – including those involved in pornography
6. Sorcerers - has to do with the occult and drugs.
7. Idolaters - This is anything, any place, or anyone that takes first place before God.
8. Liars

#### IV. THE ETERNAL CITY DETAILED — verses 9-23

READ v. 9. An invitation from the angel to see the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

READ v. 10. So he takes John to the see the city instead. This has perplexed some people. However, it is not unreasonable to be shown the dwelling place of the Bride if one expects to see the Bride. If I were to introduce you to my wife, I would take you to our home.

Being that John was taken to a 'great and high' mountain indicates the size of the city as given in v. 16. The builder of this is God – the city is 'from God' (John 14:2).

READ v. 11. God is the glory of this unspeakable structure. Notice the word "like" in this verse — John is unable to find any other words to adequately describe it. The transparent, crystal-like nature of the city serves to reflect the Glow of its Maker.

READ vv. 12, 17, 18. The angel used a human measure to give the height. 144 cubits is 216 feet or 67 meters. The wall is transparent, like a diamond.

READ vv. 12, 13, 21. A lot of 12's. There are 12 gates. Twelve angels will form an "honor guard" at each gate. The gates will be named after each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Each one a giant, perfect, pearl.

READ vv. 14, 19, 20. The city will have a 12-layered foundation, each one bearing the name of one of the apostles. Each foundation will be garnished with a precious, transparent gem.

Jasper – clear diamond

Sapphire – blue

Chalcedony – blue with colored stripes

Emerald – bright green

Sardonyx – red and white stone

Sardius – fiery red stone

Chrysolite – golden yellow stone

Beryl – a green stone

Topaz – yellow-green stone

Chrysoprasus – blue-green stone

Jacinth – a violet stone

Amethyst - purple stone

READ vv. 15, 16. The city was measured with a reed approximately 10 feet (3 m.) long. The city was measured to be 1,500 miles X 1,500 miles X 1,500 miles (cube or pyramid) — or 2,400 km in three directions. Of one thing we can be certain -- there's room enough in Heaven's city for everyone ever born — God's grace extends His salvation to everyone ever born and for everyone who believes.

READ v. 18. The city was made of pure gold, so pure it is transparent like glass!!

READ v. 21b. Even the streets were made with pure gold, so pure it is transparent like glass!!

READ v. 22. There is no Temple as the entire city is the dwelling place of God. Some commentators see it as a cube, others as a pyramid — either one fits the given description. In the first earthly tabernacle (temple) the "Holy Of Holies," where God dwelt, was a cube— 10 X 10 X 10 cubits.

READ v. 23. No need of the sun for Jesus is the light.

#### V. THE ETERNAL ORDER INHABITED — verses 24-27

READ v. 24. Three groups of saved people will inhabit the city.

1. First And Foremost, The Bride Of Christ. The Bride consists of those who comprised the Lord's churches from the days of the apostles. The city is the eternal home of the Lamb and His wife.
2. Saved Israel Will Be There. The names of the 12 gates confirm this. While there is no doubt that those of Israel will inhabit the Holy City, a reading of Isaiah 60 may indicate the saved Jews will populate the New Earth.
3. Saved Gentiles (Nations) Will Be There. This group will include those saved in all ages, but especially those nations, which were truly born again in the Millennium.

READ v. 25, 26. The New Jerusalem will be an open city.

READ v. 27. No sin in Heaven – AMEN!!

Slide 49

## I. THE NEW PARADISE — verses 1-5

READ v. 1. The river of the new paradise. This water is pure. There are no contaminants — it is as pure as Heaven itself because God is the Source. Note: This is not to be confused with the river that will issue forth from the Great Altar in the millennium.

READ v. 2. The tree of life. This description does not specify exactly how the tree of life will be situated. Some commentators see it as a grove of trees on either side of the river; others see it as a tree growing in the midst of the river whose branches extend to over the sides of the river. And no, this is not the same “tree of life” mentioned in the book of Genesis. That tree sustained physical life. Obviously, there is no need to sustain physical life in Heaven since we will be in our glorified bodies.

12 fruits X 12 months. This certainly is a supernatural tree! The leaves were for the healing of the nations. Why would there be a need for healing?" The word translated "healing" is the Greek word meaning "therapeutic." It may be that the leaves are not to heal any actual sin, sickness, and sorrow but that they are health promoting. i.e., they are beneficial to Heaven's inhabitants.

READ v. 3. There is no curse. The curse is caused by sin, and there is no sin in Heaven. Christ reigns with the Father throughout eternity.

READ v. 4. We shall see Him "face to face." This privilege alone would be Heaven enough. Jesus Christ is the center of Heaven. The Name written upon the forehead signifies "belonging to Christ".

READ v. 5. Eternal light and eternal life. This verse completes the Revelation given to the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos. Verses 6-21 form an epilog, concluding the Book.

## II. SEVEN CLOSING PROMISES — verses 6-16

READ v. 6. These promises come from Jesus Christ. The Lord promises:

1. That this book is the Word of God. READ verse 6a. "These sayings ARE faithful and true..."  
As fantastic as many these prophecies may seem, they will happen because God said they would.
2. That these prophecies are next thing to happen in God's prophetic timetable. READ vv. 6c, 10.  
"... the things, which must shortly be done..."; "...the time is at hand.." It means that these things are next in God's plan.
3. The promise of Christ's sure return. READ v. 7a, 12a. "... behold, I come quickly..." This promise refers to the Rapture, not the second coming because we are now in the Epilog of the Book. John's vision of the future is done. He addressed this book to churches in particular — verse 16.
4. The promise of blessing. READ v. 7b.

5. The promise of eternal security. READ v. 11. "...he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.." This verse clearly teaches that our eternal destiny is settled in this life. The condition in which we pass into eternity (saved or lost) is the condition we will remain in throughout eternity.

For the saved, it is a wonderful statement of eternal security. Nothing can change our justified position of being righteous before God in Christ. Nothing!

6. The promise of eternal rewards. READ v. 12. We are reminded of three things concerning the Judgment Seat of Christ:

a. "MY reward." In this judgment, the searching eyes of the Lord will examine us. Man heaps his own accolades and awards upon himself, but man is not the judge on this occasion. How will CHRIST see me?

b. "EVERY man." NO one will be excused or exempted — 2 Corinthians 5:10.

c. "As his WORK." Not a judgment of salvation, but of works and service for the Lord. It is a judgment to see how we build upon the foundation of our church — 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

7. The promise of eternal life. READ vv. 14, 15.

### III. GOD'S LAST GREAT INVITATION — verse 17

It is indicative of the love of God that here in the closing words of the Bible, a last, great invitation is extended to man.

READ v. 17. "Come!" God loves the sinner. God seeks the sinner. Christ died for the sinner. God invites the sinner. All the sinner needs to do is come. God does not say, "work!" He does not say, "give!" Just come! — Matthew 11:28.

1. The Spirit — says 'come!' It is the particular ministry of God the Holy Spirit to invite sinners to Christ. He does this by working in the heart to produce conviction (John 16:8) through the Word, pointing the convicted sinner to Christ.

2. The Bride — says 'come!' It is the task of the Lord's churches to invite sinners to Christ. The business of every New Testament church is the proclamation of the Good News of Christ. Churches have been given the "keys of the kingdom" (Matthew 16:19). The key that unlocks the door of salvation is the Gospel.

3. The Hearer says 'come!' Everyone who has heard (Romans 10:17) and experienced the salvation of the Lord ought to be involved in inviting the lost to receive Christ through personal witnessing and soul winning.

Who is invited? Everyone. "whosoever will". Salvation is freely offered to all. In reference to the teachings of Calvinism, there is no such thing as a "limited" atonement that Christ died only for the elect or the wicked notion that God has predestined only some to be saved, others to be lost.

Salvation involves an act of the will. The Bible teaches man is a "free moral agent." This does not negate the "absolute sovereignty of God," which the heresy of Calvinism asserts, because our absolutely Sovereign God 'decreed' first to create man with a free will, and second to save all those who, by an act of that will, will come in repentance and faith to Christ.

#### IV. THE LAST WARNING OF THE BIBLE — verses 18, 19

READ vv. 18, 19. The book of the Revelation end the Biblical canon of Scripture. In other words, the Book of The Revelation was God's final chapter in His Bible — to add extra revelations is to violate this warning. Yet men today are continually adding to the Word of God.

1. The Church of Rome added the apocrypha -- 1546 A.D.
2. The Mormons added the book of Mormon and other writings.
3. The Jehovah's Witnesses have added the writings of their leaders and have mutilated the text to serve their own evil ends.
4. The Christian Scientists have added "Science & Health" as the "Key" to the Scriptures.
5. The Seventh Day Adventists have added the writings of their foundress, Ellen G. White.
6. Charismatics add their visions and voices.
7. Many add their own philosophies and experiences.

These two verses issue a solemn warning.

1. For those who add to Scripture — the addition of plagues — v. 18. Only unbelievers would deliberately add to the Bible. They'll be numbered with those in everlasting fire. Rev. 21:8 — "all liars".
2. For those who subtract from Scripture — no part in heaven — verse 19. Only unbelievers would deliberately subtract from the Bible Rev. 21:8 — "the unbelieving".

#### V. THE LAST WORDS OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION — verses 20, 21

READ v. 20. The final promise — "Surely I come quickly" and the final prayer — "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." This is the prayer of a home-sick saint.

READ v. 21. The final benediction of grace. What a thing to wish upon our brothers and sisters in Christ!! The Old Testament ends with the words "with a curse" (Malachi 4:6); the New Testament concludes with grace.

Slide 50 — And so ends the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ...

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