

The Book of Revelation

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Chapter 1 – The Judge

The first verse tells us what Revelation this is - it is not a revelation of John, but of Jesus Christ. In the Greek text the definite article "*the*" is not expressed. It reads, "A Revelation of Jesus Anointed." It is not correct to call this book Revelations, but Revelation. The word Revelation means an 'unveiling, a manifestation, or appearance.' This is an actual revelation of Christ's person, an *outward appearance*. Christ will be visibly manifested in His power and glory. Actually the whole Bible is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul had a revelation of Christ and he gave that revelation to us, it is of the *inward work* God is doing. We have the life of Christ in us; Paul said in Galatians 1:15-17, God had chosen him to reveal His Son in him. That is why God gave the message to Paul, to reveal Christ in us, the hope of glory - Col. 1:27. We need the inward revelation to fully understand this outward revelation. It is very important to study Paul's epistles.

Who gave this revelation? "*Which God gave unto Him,*" that is unto Christ. God gave all these details to Christ and He in turn was "to show (them) unto His servants" - v. 1. John was the mediator, he has passed it on to us and we in turn pass it on to the others, "*things which must shortly come to pass.*" The R. V. and Greek text reads - must come to pass speedily. This revelation was so real to John that he felt that Christ was coming then, he had that hope. It is the gospel that has given people *hope* all down through the ages.

As we search the Scriptures we find what must precede His coming. Scoffers say, 'those people were looking for Jesus to come 2,000 years ago (John wrote this book about 96 A.D.) and He did not come. So how do you know He is coming now?' Well, we are privileged to have all the signs of His coming that they did not have in their day. They had the forerunners, but not all that we have. Did you know that some were falling away from the truth way back then, but they did not have the apostasy we have today. We see the signs of His appearing in every aspect of life (nationally, in nature, religious apostasy, the world economy, etc.). They are happening fast, His appearing is right at the door.

V. 2 -. John not only heard these things, but God revealed them to him by visions. He actually *saw* these things like a moving picture before him. Just think, John saw these things happen with his own eyes. WOW! Now, which John of the New Testament wrote this book? It is not John the Baptist, the cousin to Jesus. It is not John Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark. It is the apostle John, one of the twelve disciples who leaned on Jesus breast and called himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. He also wrote the gospel of John and the three epistles of John and this book of Revelation.

V. 3 - What a wonderful promise! Blessing is promised to those who *read* and *hear* the words of this prophecy and who *keep* them. Why would we be blessed? "*For the time is at hand.*" Do you believe it? Let us make this blessing ours by searching out the understanding of the matter for God's glory. Revelation is not a closed book. Some say that it is and that you can't understand it so you

shouldn't try. Satan would like to hinder anyone from studying this book. But it is a Revelation, an uncovering, not a closing. It is Christ's last message to His people on earth. A special message from the resurrected Saviour to His church, let us profit by it. This book is Daniel 9:27 in detail and takes in the whole seven years of tribulation. Most of the book swells on that, but not all the book. The first three chapters tell us of this present Church Age (a vision of it). But Chapter 4 - on, concerns the fulfilment of Daniel 9:27 and what happens after that.

Vs. 4-5 - The Apostle Paul planted these seven churches in Asia, which are named in Verse 11. Finding them on a map, they form a circle pattern. In Bible numerology the number seven speaks of that which is complete; so we see they represent the whole church or the whole Church Age. From the time the Church began to the very day we are living in and until Jesus takes His throne to rule. The salutation to us in the church is *grace and peace* from the triune God. "*From Him which is and which was and which is to come*" - God the Father; "*and from the seven Spirits* (or 7-fold Spirit of God)" - the Holy Spirit. "*And from Jesus Christ*" the Son, as seen in His three offices:

- (1) "*The faithful witness*" (while on earth) - Prophet.
- (2) "*The first begotten of the dead*" (the source and head of the new creation) - Priest.
- (3) "*The Prince of the kings of the earth*" (what He will prove to be) - King. Rev. 17:14.

"*Unto him that loved us,*" He loved us as Jehovah, our CREATOR. "*And washed us from our sins in his own blood*" as REDEEMER.

V. 6 - "*Hath made us kings and priest unto God and His Father*" - as our Lord. See what God has done for us. "*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*" John shouts it and so do we. Some people are just hoping to get to heaven and maybe good enough to be an angel. But let us believe (agree with God), we are developing as kings and priests now. Let us believe it and enter into this; let us learn to be kings and priests.

Kings: We are learning now to *reign* over the world, the flesh and the devil. We are in the world, but not part of it; we are just passing through on our way to glory. Friendship with the world is to be an enemy of God - James 4:4. The world must not reign over us, but to be in subjection to the life of Christ in us. We also are enabled to reign over our fleshly nature - Rom. 8:12-13 & 5:17. We meet the devil's onslaughts with the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) - Eph. 6:16-17. We learn to rule now by Christ's strength. "*Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ*" - II Cor. 2:14. Let us lean on Him, yield to Him and He will work this in us.

Priests: A priest is someone who has communion with God and goes to God on behalf of others in prayer and intercession. A priest also brings the Word of God to men. We must know the Word of God to be able to give it out to others. We are not all preachers or teachers, but we can give out the Word to others. II Tim. 2:15, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" Read also II Tim. 3:16-17.

V. 7 - This is the key verse to this book. "*Behold he* (Christ) *cometh with clouds,*" or we could read 'with crowds.' For those clouds represent 'people.' As we read in Hebrews 12:1 of "*a cloud of witnesses*" referring to the Old Testament overcomers of chapter eleven. Also in Acts 1:9,11 which tells of Christ's ascension, "*while they* (the disciples) *beheld, He* (Christ) *was taken up; and a cloud*

(or crowd) *received Him out of their sight.*" The angels said, *"this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."* So it shall be, and I Thess. 4:17 – *"we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the resurrected saints) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."* We will make the clouds that much bigger.

When Christ comes back to earth to judge the ungodly, we will be a part of the clouds or crowds that come with Him. Mt. 24:30, *"then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."* Compare Rev. 19:11- 16.

Three groups are mentioned in verse 7: (1) *"every eye shall see him,"* this doesn't mean every individual in the world, but those who are looking for Him. As see read in Heb. 9:28, *"unto them that look for him shall he appear."* This principle is true whether He comes for the ranks of the church or unto Israel. (2) *"they also which pierced him,"* is the nation of Israel who rejected Him. (3) *"and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."* notice, it does not say that they shall see Him, but they wail because of Him. Why? Because the result of His coming will bring judgment. John agrees and says, *"even so, Amen."* We read often in this book of the saints agreeing with God in judging the world. Now, we might be a little reluctant when some people are being judged by God. But we must agree with Him, for He has a purpose and we do not want to hinder His purpose.

V. 8 - Jesus words (red letter), *"I am Alpha and omega."* These are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet. He is saying, He is the beginning and the ending, nothing before Him or after Him. He encompasses everything. All things would go to pieces if not for Him. Col. 1:15-19 - *"by Him all things consist."*

"Saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" - showing His eternal being. He didn't have a beginning and He won't have an end. Our natural mind cannot grasp that God always was, but God reveals these things to us by His Spirit - I Cor. 2:10.

V. 9 - John was not beheaded like Paul nor crucified like Peter, he was banished to the isle of Patmos where they dumped criminals. There was no institution or even a house with guards. It was a barren island and they had to get along the best way they could. They had to get their own food, etc. They were really exiled. Why was John put there? *"for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."*

John was called the disciple Jesus loved. He leaned on Jesus breast - Jn. 21:20. Jesus spoke to him from the cross to take care of His mother - Jn. 19:26-27. Years later in John's life, the Lord allowed him to be put on this awful island. But John was rewarded with this wonderful revelation. Remember Peter pointing to John and saying, what is this man going to do? *"Jesus said, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"* - Jn. 21:22. Well, John did tarry until Jesus came again. He was privileged to see the second coming of Jesus in vision, in all His glory. In fact this is the second time John saw Jesus in all His glory. John, Peter and James saw Jesus glorified on the mount of transfiguration - Mt. 17. Here John saw in vision Christ glorified again and also many other wonderful things that no one else has had the privilege to see.

The saints in the early church really had to suffer for the gospel and for their testimony. It made them very bold and strong Christians. We have not had to suffer much outward persecution. If we were forbidden to speak out for Christ or pray or read the Bible, do you know what effect it would have on us? It would cause us to be more bold. It seems that today we have to overcome indifference, sluggishness and Satan's taunts to disbelieve the Scriptures and the stirring up of the flesh and getting our attention on other things beside the Lord. We have a more subtle temptation than they had in that day. When they had a temptation face them, they knew what it was. Sometimes we don't even realize we have a temptation. We need to be on guard against Satan's subtle temptations.

V. 10 - John in giving his testimony of what he saw, telling us that he was actually taken to the day of the Lord in Spirit. That little word "*the*" is not in the original text. It reads, "*I was in Spirit on the Lord's day.*" John was caught away in Spirit and saw this vision. In body he was still on the isle of Patmos.

The Lord's day is not Sunday or the Sabbath day, but the day Christ is seated on His throne and begins His reign. John is viewing this scene, when he heard a great voice behind him like a trumpet and *he turned* to see the voice (v. 12). The last part of verse 20 tells us that the seven golden candlesticks he viewed are the seven churches. Remember John addressed the seven churches (v. 4) and they represent the Church Age. Much of this book of Revelation is symbolic. John was looking back at the whole Church Age from the view point of the Lord's day. Knowing the *view point* is key to understanding this book.

V. 11 - Christ words: He is not only the first in time, but the Preeminent One, and Chief One and the culmination. Eph. 1:10 - He will bring everything into completion. "*What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches.*" These churches actually existed and they are called by the name of the city in which they were located. In chapter 2 and 3 we will study them in the order in which they are mentioned here. There is a very good reason why they are in this order. For they also show a dispensational aspect of the Church Age which we will see later. John is to record this vision and send the book to the churches. It is for all believers in this Church Age to understand and heed (v. 3).

Vs. 12-13 - John saw this whole church Age and Jesus Christ in the midst of the churches. John is viewing the whole Church Age from the view point of the Lord's day. There are 5 vision view points in Revelation which helps us to understand the book. I will mention them as we come to them.

John sees Jesus in the midst of the churches. We know by His description what He is doing. He is judging believers and He will give His verdict at the judgment seat of Christ - II Cor. 5:10. He is not in every church building as we will read later concerning the church of Laodicea - where He is on the outside knocking at the door. Does that not figure many organized churches today? The only place Jesus Christ is judging the saints is where the Word of God is going forth. He judges us by His Word. If the Word of God does not go forth, the saints are not going to be judged by that Word. They will go on just like they always were, unless they read the Word privately.

Nine-fold Description of Christ as Judge: Vs. 13-16.

(1) He is *"clothed with a garment down to the foot."* The word *"clothed"* means endued. He has been endued with power and has the authority to judge - Jn. 5:22. When Christ was raised from the dead, the Father gave Him to be the head (the authority) over the church, which is His body. Christ has the right to judge the church, for He gave His life for the church - Eph. 1:20-23; 5:23,25. This judicial garment speaks of His authority as High Priest and Judge. He is the righteous Judge.

(2) He is *"girt about the paps (or breasts) with a golden girdle."* The breasts are for nourishment, love and mercy. Babies need milk to grow, but all babies need to be weaned. Paul said in I Thess. 2:7, *"We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."* But as judge, Christ cannot show mercy, the breasts are girded up with a golden girdle (gold speaks of deity). When God judges the flesh by the Word, He does not show mercy. We will read later on in this book of the saints being girt about the same way. They agree with God when He comes to judge the world.

(3) *"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow."* White speaks of His purity, His holiness and also His eternal being (ageless). Dan. 7:9 records the same things of *"the Ancient of days."* Here in Revelation He is seen as God manifested in the flesh, in the capacity of His majesty, the Judge.

(4) *"His eyes were as a flame of fire."* He sees through the hypocrisy of men, His eyes scrutinize. Remember He said of the Pharisees and scribes, that they were like whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outwardly, but are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. He also gives us a spirit of discernment to see through falsity - Heb. 4:13.

(5) *"His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."* In scripture, brass speaks of judgment. In the tabernacle and in the temple there was a brazen altar made of brass. The sacrificial animals were slain and burned on it, speaking of the judgment of God on the sacrifice, instead of on the people. Remember Moses was told to put a brazen serpent on a pole. When the people who were snake bit, looked on the brazen serpent, they were healed. Christ likens Himself to that brazen serpent on that pole in Jn. 3:14-15. Fine brass speaks of intricate judgment. Christ judges thoroughly as He walks among the churches.

(6) *"His voice as the sound of many waters."* Daniel also described the voice of the Judge, as sounding like many waters in Dan. 10:6. We also will read later in this book of the praise of the saints in heaven sounding like many waters - Rev. 19:6. Have you ever been near a great water fall and heard the roar the waters make? Believers in full sympathy with Jesus Christ are presently judging by the Word - I Cor. 6:2-3.

(7) *"He had in His right hand seven stars."* V. 20 informs us that these stars are the angels or messengers (pastors) of the churches. Christ, the Judge holds them in His right hand, meaning they are responsible to Him. That is certainly more serious than the responsibility to the people. Heb. 13:17 tell us they must give account. Acts 20:28 says they are responsible to feed the saints which Christ has purchased with His own blood. One of the wrongs in the churches today is the boards rule the pastors and the churches, instead of Christ who is the head of the church. He is able to correct and even remove pastors if necessary.

(8) *"Out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword."* The sword is the Word of God - Heb. 4:12. The sword going out of His mouth speaks of the Word by which He judges. He is the Word of God, the Word made flesh - Jn. 1:14. He speaks the Word or causes others to speak it. We are responsible for the Word we hear, no matter who the vessel is that gives it forth. That makes us responsible to heed the Word and let it judge us. It will cut the flesh and it will hurt, but the Holy Spirit heals where the Word of God cuts.

(9) *"His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."* Oh, how bright His countenance is, The True Light. The apostle Paul saw Him at midday and His countenance was brighter than the noon-day sun - Acts 26:13.

V. 17-18 - No wonder John fell at His feet as dead upon seeing His awesome Personage. Christ touched John and encouraged him - *"fear not,"* I am the Eternal One. *"I am he that liveth,"* Christ is *"the resurrection and the life"* as we read in John 11:25. He is the conqueror of death - Romans 1:4. He has the keys of hell and of death. Keys speak of authority, which He has because of His death and resurrection. He opens, and closes the door of hell and of death. Just think, Christ took Satan's weapon (death) and defeated him who had the power of death with his own weapon - Heb. 2:14-15. Praise God for ever!

V. 19 - This verse gives us the inspired outline of this book. It has three parts:

1 - *"Write the things which thou hast seen"* - Ch. 1 - the Judge (*past*).

2 - *"And the things which are"* - Ch. 2-3, the Church Age (*present*).

3 - *"And the things which shall be hereafter"* - Ch. 4-22 the day of the Lord (*future*).

V. 20 - The mystery of the stars and candlesticks are made known in this verse.

Chapters 2 & 3 – Christ's Letters To The Churches

Local View

Chapters 2 and 3 contain the letters from our Lord to the seven churches. They are very important and teach us many personal lessons and we learn that there will be different rewards. Also the seven churches give us a view of the dispensation of the Church Age, from its beginning to the end. Of course when John wrote this book on the isle of Patmos this was prophecy of the future, but the vision view point is from the Lord's day, as though they were already past. We believe we are almost to the end of the Church Age. We are at least living in the last phase of it.

Ephesus – Active But Lacking

V. 1: *"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write;"* Each letter is addressed to the angel of that church. This word *"angel"* is 'messenger' in the original Greek text and refers to the pastor or ruling elder. The word pastor means 'shepherd.' The pastor is not only the ruling elder, but cares for and

feeds the flock by giving forth God's Word. He is the responsible head of the local assembly under Christ.

These churches actually existed and are named for the city in which they were located. Most of these cities began in the time of the Medo-Persia empire or in the Grecian Empire and finally came under the control of the Roman government. Some of these cities are only ruins today, but Philadelphia, Smyrna and Pergamos still exist though their names have been changed.

Ephesus the first church addressed has a double meaning, 'full purpose' and 'city of the moon' which tells us something of its character. The Apostle Paul had a Bible school in Ephesus for over two years (Acts 19:10). The saints in that church were well founded in the truth. They had purposed in their hearts to take their place in the heavenlies where the church is provisionally seated - Eph. 2:4-7.

To each church, Christ as Judge appears in one of His official guises that we read of in Chapter 1:13-16. To Ephesus He comes as *"He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."* Christ walks as Judge among His people and He has authority over the ministers.

In Acts 20:29 the Apostle Paul called the elders of Ephesus unto him. He warned them saying, after my departing grievous wolves shall come in not sparing the flock. If they had heeded these warnings, they never would have failed. Some did heed Paul's words and held fast to the truth. For we read in each of these churches there were overcomers (they were not all defeated).

Vs. 2-3: Each letter also starts with the Lord saying, *"I know thy works."* As Judge He sees and knows the works of everyone and whether they are standing for the truth. The Lord gives nine things in which the church at Ephesus is commended, but one thing is said against them.

V. 4: They had abandoned their first or pre-eminent love for Christ. The word "first" is the same word Jesus used when He said, *"I am the first and the last"* - Ch. 1:11 (the chief One or Pre-eminent One). How do we nurture that love? By studying His Word and yielding to Him. That love grows and deepens, we come to love Him as our Bridegroom. Ephesus had left that first love. This is the first step to failing the Lord, not giving Him the first place in our lives. May we love Him above all.

V. 5: Three words stand out to me in this verse, *"remember," "repent" and "do."* *"Remember"* (be mindful) that you have fallen from your place in the heavenlies. This is not speaking of our standing in Christ for that is fixed by God and never changes. But our state can change. Their state had deteriorated, they began to mind earthly things. The result of *"remembering"* should be to *"repent"* and *"do"* the first works (the chief works out of love for Him). If they do not repent, He would remove their candlestick out of his place. A candlestick speaks of light. He would remove the overcomers (those who did love Jesus pre-eminent) from that place. There is *separation* as a result of judgment.

V. 6: He commends them again, *"thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes."* Nicolaitanes means 'prevail over people.' It is clergy over laity, lording it over the people (not ruling in love). This is

how the church began to go. The Lord says of the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, "*Which I also hate.*"

V. 7: Every letter ends with, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*" We have a responsibility to listen to what He has to say. Let us hear with the ear of our heart.

A reward is promised to the overcomers of each church or the condition described there. The promised reward to the overcomer of Ephesus - "*I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*" Satan destroyed the first paradise that man had in the beginning. But Christ has triumphed over that and by His death and resurrection has brought man into a relationship where man will be in God's paradise and feed on Christ for ever (He is the tree of life).

We will consider the dispensational view of the Church Age and the difference in rewards later.

Smyrna – The Poor but Rich Church

V. 8: Smyrna means 'myrrh' which is a perfume. It was an ingredient of the holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:23). It also was one of the valuable gifts brought by the wise men to baby Jesus (Mt. 2:11). Although it has an agreeable smell, it has a bitter taste. They offered vinegar mixed with gall to Jesus as He hung on the cross (Mt. 27:34). In the gospel of Mark it was called wine mingled with myrrh (Mk. 15:23). Myrrh signifies suffering and this is very significant of the people in the Smyrna church, for they suffered much. Just as the poured out obedient life of Christ was a sweet smell to the Father (Eph. 5:2), so are the lives of these saints a sweet fragrance to the Lord, for they suffered for Christ's sake.

Also the way the Lord addressed Himself to this assembly is so fitting - "the first and the last, which was dead and is alive." Because of their suffering He would appear this way to them. We will read how they were persecuted unto death, but He comes to them as the resurrection and the life.

V. 9: The Lord knows their works, their tribulation, and their poverty. They not only suffered physically but they were poor as to this world's riches. Christ calls them "rich." True riches really consist of what we possess spiritually. That is the only kind of wealth you can count on. For the wealth of this world can vanish away so quickly.

Smyrna's persecutors were professors of the Jewish religion of works. Many today profess to be Christians, that are not. If they don't believe in the shed blood of Jesus for their sins, but trust in their own works, Jesus says they are the synagogue of Satan.

V. 10: How could the Lord say, "fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer" and adds "the devil shall cast some of you into prison?" Because it only worked good for them. They were tried and came forth as gold.

The ten days of tribulation, is a representative number, because it was actually a period of ten years that this assembly went through persecution and suffered unto death. In Scripture the number ten speaks of 'Responsibility according to ability.' They were tested and proved by the full measure of

suffering. The Lord uses anything to work His purposes in us. Sometimes He can work faster in suffering than some other way.

V. 11: The Lord has nothing against this church at all. In fact He encourages them all through this letter. You might suffer death through persecution, but it will not be the second death (eternal punishment of Rev. 20:14). "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The next assembly is quite a contrast to Smyrna, for it is worldly.

Pergamos – The Worldly Church

V. 12: Pergamos means 'much married.' They certainly needed the sharp sword with two edges. Why? -

V. 13: They dwell where Satan's seat is. Where is that? II Cor. 4:4 tells us Satan is the god of this world. This assembly was dwelling in the world. They still held fast Christ's name. They said they were Christians, but they were much married to the world. Lot is an Old Testament example of this condition. II Pet. 2:6-8 calls Lot righteous, but he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with the unlawful deeds of the wicked.

Antipas mentioned here was also called Polycarp. He was martyred for Christ sake, so we have proof there were overcomers in Pergamos that overcame that worldly condition.

V. 14: To Ephesus the Lord said He had somewhat against them, but to Pergamos He says, "I have a few things against you." One was that evil "doctrine of Balaam" that was in their midst. We read about that false prophet Balaam in the book of Numbers. Balac, the king of Moab hired Balaam to curse Israel. But every time he opened his mouth to curse them, the Lord made him bless them. This made Balaam angry and Balac also. Then Balaam gave his advise as to how Balac could defeat God's people. He said make friends with them and the people will intermarry. The Moabite women would then get their Jewish husbands to worship their idols and sacrifice to them. It worked and practically defeated Israel. The devil still works in this way. You cannot fellowship the world and win them to Christ. Read II Cor. 6:14-18 and I Cor. 15:33.

V. 15: The evil doctrine of the Nicolaitanes was clergy lording it over laity (the people). The church of Ephesus was commended because they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes (V. 6). But the church of Pergamos allowed it and the Lord said, "Which thing I hate."

V. 16: The Lord calls on them to repent or else they will experience His judgment and it would come upon them suddenly.

V. 17: Those who overcome the worldly condition present in that assembly get hidden manna to eat (not the tree of life as we read to Ephesus) The Lord will also give those overcomers a white stone and a new name written in it. In other words they are saved, but that is about it. Read I Cor. 3:10-15.

Thyatira – The Church of the False Prophetess

V. 18: The name Thyatira means, "sacrifice of labor" or "odor of affliction." It is significant, for that church is full of works as we read in V. 19. But their works were more self-effort than they were of faith. Notice how the Lord appears unto them, "his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." His eyes of fire scrutinizes, He sees thoroughly. Heb. 4:13, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." His feet of fine brass speaks of judgment and His judgment is intricate (fine). He sees, He knows and He judges accordingly. The Lord says in V. 23, "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

V. 19: He does commend them for their charity, service, faith, patience and works. But He adds that their works were more than their love. Their ministry was one of legality and not out of true love.

V. 20: "Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee." They allowed that woman Jezebel to teach. She calls herself a prophetess. But she is a false prophetess and you give her place to teach. We remember the real Jezebel of the Old Testament, the wife of king Ahab. She was very wicked and had 500 prophets of her own. She caused her husband, the king to worship idols. She slew the Lord's prophets and caused Israel to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. There must have been a woman in the Thyatira church who was teaching these things. The Lord likens her to the Jezebel of old.

Vs. 21-23: Concerning unjudged sin in the church, read I Cor. 5:1-13. Error taught in the assembly is addressed in Gal. 5:9-10. A little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump. Leaven is a figure used to picture sin. Thyatira was guilty of both error taught and it led to sin being practiced. I remember Sister. Bodie saying, it was difficult to judge sin in the camp because flesh sympathies with the flesh. This woman's teaching defiled the whole assembly until it actually taught these idolatrous practices. Those who committed spiritual adultery with her were warned that they would be punished with her except they repent of their deeds.

Vs. 24-25: There were some overcomers there and the Lord admonishes them to "hold fast" to that which ye have already, till I come. They will be rewarded for their steadfastness.

V. 26: The Lord contrasts "my works" which are works of faith with their works of the flesh (V. 19). The overcomers ceased from their works and kept His works. Praise God!

Vs. 27-29: I will comment on the rewards later when we look at the dispensational and the rewards of these churches.

Sardis – The Dying Church

Ch. 3:1: Sardis means, "prince of joy" or "that which remains" or "escaping." The Sardis church was ready to die, not much life remained there. Some escaped this condition, thus their name, "prince of joy." The Lord comes to them as "He that hath the seven Spirits of God (the 7-fold Holy Spirit), and the seven stars." To Ephesus He "holdeth the seven stars" (2:1) which are the messengers or pastors of the churches. But here He "has" them. He does not have the control as He should, because they do not walk in the Spirit. "I know thy works," you have a name that you live and art dead. This

church had a name that they were Christians, that they believed in Christ. But they really didn't have much. There is a great difference between professing to be Christians and actually possessing Christ.

Vs. 2-3: "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." This assembly had left the teaching they had received (no doubt the fundamentals of the gospel). The Lord reproves them and admonishes them "to repent," for I have not found thy works perfect before God. If they don't watch, He will come on them as a thief and they won't know the hour that He will come. I Thess. 5:1-11, brethren you are not in darkness that day should overtake you as a thief. You are all children of light...so let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

Vs. 4-6: Praise the Lord for the few names that have not defiled their garments. They shall walk with me in white raiment, meaning they are saved, possessors, clothed with the righteousness of Christ. There are many who join a church and profess to be Christians and are not. But if our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, they will never be blotted out. He knoweth them that are His - II Tim. 2:19.

Philadelphia – The Faithful Church

V. 7: Philadelphia means, "brotherly love," which tells us much about the spiritual condition of this assembly, for they loved the brethren. I Jn. 4:12, "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and *his love is perfected in us.*" We know these saints walked in the Spirit, for the fruit of the Spirit is love, Gal. 5:22-23,25.

"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." There is no appearance of any great judgment here, because there is nothing said against this church. The Lord Jesus Christ has the key (which speaks of authority) and He opens the door in heaven. He has the authority to reign on *earth* as well as in *heaven* - for He has the key of David. He is the root and also the offspring of David, the kingly line of Israel, Rev. 22:16.

V. 8: He knows their works and behold He sets before them an open door. He says this to no other church. It is the door of translation for the full overcomers. We will look through this open door when we get to chapter 4. "For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Their qualifications to enter the open door is expressed here. It is not said if the other churches had any strength. This assembly learned by experience *not* to depend on their own ability. Read II Cor. 12:9-10, we have no strength in ourselves. In our weakness we rely on His Strength. Then we can say, for when I am weak, then am I strong. Neh. 8:10, the joy of the Lord is our strength.

Thou "hast kept my word" is more fully explained in V. 10 as "the word of my patience." Just as He patiently waits till the Father gives Him the signal for His return, so these saints wait steadfastly, looking for that day. Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

"Hast not denied my name," the Lord's faithfulness has been fully worked in their lives, they are faithful.

V. 9: They were troubled by those, "which say they are Jews, and are not." These professed law keepers also opposed the Smyrna assembly. "Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." They will not be worshipping these saints. The Lord only will be worshipped. But when they bow before the Lord in worship, they will also be acknowledging the full overcomer's right to reign conjointly with Christ, for they will be beside Him.

V. 10: What a precious promise to these saints who lived as though they *really believed He would return*. He promises to keep them from the hour of temptation coming upon the world. They will not go through any of the tribulation days. He will *keep them out*, because they *kept* the word of His coming.

V. 11: A crown is promised to them if they continue to run as they had run up to this point. But there was a danger they could lose their reward. "Behold, I come quickly: *hold that fast which thou hast*, that no man take thy crown." Smyrna is the only other church promised a crown. These two churches are the same company of full overcomers. Smyrna saints are faithful unto death and will be resurrected in the first rank, "the resurrection out from among the dead" - Phil. 3:11. Philadelphia saints are those full overcomers that are alive when He comes for the first rank, "spirit and soul and body...preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" - I Thess. 5:23.

V. 12: Pillars hold up and are something steadfast. They have responsibly held up the truth, so they are rewarded accordingly - made a pillar in the temple of my God. Three names are given them. "*The name of my God*," - a bride takes the grooms family name. "*The name of the city of my God*" - which is the New Jerusalem, a new address, the city where He dwells. "*My new name*," His new title. (Bridegroom).

V. 13: Listen to our teacher - the Holy Spirit.

Laodicea – The Lukewarm Church

V. 14: Laodicea means, "just people" or "rights of the people." They must be politically correct, democratic, the people rule - voting in pastors and voting them out, electing elders and setting up policy, etc. The Judge comes to them as "the Amen (the One able to carry out what He says), the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Why does He come to them in this way? Because they were not faithful to God's Word nor a true witness.

Vs. 15-16: They are indifferent, not concerned at all. This does not please the Lord at all. There are some who will smile when they hear the gospel and agree, but there is no conviction, the truth does not touch them. They do not get angry or real glad either. There is not much hope for those people. If ones get angry when they hear the gospel there is hope, they are reacting to it, they are under conviction.

V. 17: This assembly felt they were rich and had everything they needed. But the Lord says of them, they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked - they are spiritually destitute.

V. 18: What they needed was gold tried in the fire, that they may be rich in eternal riches. Gold speaks of *Deity*. Through faith in Jesus we are partakers of His divine life. No matter how much worldly riches a man may have, if he does not have this gold, he is poor. To be clothed with "white raiment," is to be covered with *Christ's righteousness*. The first man Adam sinned and was ashamed because he was naked, he had no righteousness. When we believe on Christ our nakedness is covered and we can stand before God, "Accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6. Eyes anointed with eyesalve is in essence, to have the *Holy Spirit* give us spiritual enlightenment. He has provided healing for our triune being - body, soul and spirit. Do you see the Trinity united in the saving of mankind?

V. 19: He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" - II Pet. 3:9. God is calling out a people in these last days to accept His salvation, freely offered to men. How is it bought? By believing on the Lord Jesus Christ (V. 18 - "buy of me."). See Acts 16:31.

Vs. 20-22: Jesus is on the outside of this church, even the pastor (the angel, messenger) is counselled to buy tried gold, etc. Christ has been standing, knocking a long time desiring entrance. Individuals who open their heart door to Him are saved and have fellowship with Him. The overcomers of Laodicea are believers and as members of Christ body will reign with Him in some measure.

Dispensational View Of The Church Age

A dispensation is a period of time. We are living in the dispensation of the Church Age. Let us remember the view point of these two chapters, John was looking back on the churches from the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10,12,20). He saw this Age from the beginning to the end, for these seven churches tell it's story. We will see how the church has travelled from the Day of Pentecost down to the present time and even beyond where we are now.

Ephesus represents the beginning of the Church Age (2:2-3). On the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after Christ's resurrection, all believers were baptized into one body and the church began - I Cor. 12:13. The book of Acts tells of the glorious beginning of the church. It was separated from the world. They gladly received the Word and continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship: filled with the Holy Spirit, they had all things common, rejoicing and praising God and the church grew daily (Acts 2:1,4,41-47).

God's purpose for the church is outlined in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. There we find *what* the Lord has provided for the church and *what* He wants for them. Paul said he had heard of their faith and love to all the saints. He prayed for them to have the spirit of wisdom and revelation to know the hope of their calling and that they might experience the power that raised Christ from the dead - Eph. 1:15-23. In the second chapter he tells them they had been dead in trespasses and sins, but they

have been quickened, raised with Christ and seated in the heavenlies - Vs. 1-6. That truth is for the whole church, they are a heavenly body, a heavenly people. God didn't intend for the church to be a part of this world. We are in the world, but not part of it - Jn. 17:13-17. Neither did God instruct believers to fix up the world. It will never change until Christ comes back to set up His kingdom. We are *not* to be as Lot was, for he fellowshipped with the world. We are pilgrims just passing through. Our calling is not to remain on this earth, we are going to dwell in heaven - Jn. 14:1-3.

Rev. 2:4 tells of the first failure of the church. They left their first love, their love for Christ as the head of the church, their Lord and Bridegroom. The church as a whole ceased to love Christ supremely and began to degenerate. But we will notice that in every phase down through the years of this Age, there has always been overcomers, those who held true to Christ. We read in Acts 19 of Paul going to Ephesus and God gave a great revival. The city was so stirred and many who came to Christ, burned their idolatrous books, idols and shrines. But later when Paul returned to this same church (Acts 20), he had to warn them - to examine themselves and to feed the church - for grievous wolves shall come in not sparing the flock and draw away disciples to themselves. In Paul's last imprisonment he said all Asia had forsaken him - II Tim. 1:15. They no doubt like Demos loved this present world - II Tim. 4:10. People were going away from the truth even back then. The Ephesus condition probably didn't last until the end of the first century, about 96 A. D.

Smyrna are the overcomers of this condition. No fault was found against them. They will exist clear up to the coming of Christ, for they represent the full overcomers who die before the Lord comes - 2:10. If we die before the Lord comes and are full overcomers, we will be of them.

Pergamos are the non-overcomers who dwell in the world, where Satan's throne is - 2:13. Satan is the god of this world - II Cor. 4:4. This Pergamos condition was from about 96 A. D. to 300 A. D. The decline began about the time of Paul's death. Declension takes a while whether it is the church or individuals.

The early church had terrible persecution. Believers had to hide out to worship God. Then Constantine the Emperor of Rome made friends with the church and gave them freedom to worship. The Christians thought this was the answer to all their prayers. But Constantine had a motive, he wanted to be the head of the church. Thus began the union of church and state. There were those who stood against it. One was Antipas (or Polycarp) - Rev. 2:13. He warned the church not to make friends with the Emperor of Rome and he lost his life, a faithful martyr. When any individual or church departs from the truth, they do not stay on one level. They keep going down, unless they repent. This is what happened in the church. The sect of the Nicolaitanes (clergy over laity) had tried to infiltrate Ephesus earlier (2:6), but they wouldn't have them. But during the Pergamos period, they were in the church (2:15). Not only the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, but also the doctrine of Balaam (evil associations, false doctrine, spiritual fornication) was found there (2:14). Shortly thereafter a state religion began, the Roman Catholic Church.

Thyatira tells of a further decline, with papal supremacy the climax. In this condition the prophetess Jezebel represents the *church as a teacher* - 2:20. This is actually what the Roman Catholic Church did. She put herself up as the teacher of the people (not the Bible), but the church. For years they forbade the people to read the Bible. If they wanted to know anything, they had to ask the priest.

The doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church is a mixture of the Jewish Religion (priesthood, offerings, etc.) and the Christian doctrine (virgin birth of Christ, His death and resurrection) and also paganism (idols, pagan practices and worship). This period is about 300 A. D. to 1500 A. D. It has been called the dark ages of the church. The church of Rome ruled much of the known world at that time. Still today some countries are under the state church. During this period no one was allowed to profess any other doctrine, but what the state church endorsed. The scriptures were hidden and only a few had access to them. But God preserved them through that very means. They hoarded them so perfectly that it prevented them from being lost or destroyed.

About 1500 A. D. the first man we know much about (although there were others) was Martin Luther. He found in scripture, "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). And there he was doing penitence for his sins. He was very disturbed by the hypocrisy of the priests and how evil they were. They sold indulgences for a certain amount of money. If you wanted to sin, you just paid the priest and was given permission to sin. I read the history of the popes and they were anything but good people. Many bought their way into the pope position. The Borgia's (you no doubt heard about them) had illegitimate children that they put up in the church as Cardinals, etc. They bought their way in, it was a very evil time. But out of it Martin Luther came forth. The Lord brought a revival, it was an upward trend for awhile (2:24-25). This brought in the Sardis period, the reformation.

Sardis (3:1) had a name that they lived, but many didn't continue in that way. Martin Luther came out of the Catholic Church and stood against the falsity of it. He had to hide for he was in danger of being killed by them. People formed a religious organization named after him. He was very much against that. Later Wesley came on the scene and God blessed him. After his death people made an organization after his name and there were others. Sardis represents Protestantism. They have gone on a long time. Both Catholics and Protestants profess to be God's people. The Protestants say, We are God's people, we are Christians. The Catholics say, We are God's people, we are The Church. But in these last days, the Protestants cease to protest. That is what the name means - protest-ants. They protested the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. After they ceased protesting they didn't have much and now they are buddy buddy with the Catholic Church for the most part. Sad to say, they may have big churches, big programs, but not much reality (3:2). Since the ecumenical movement they are closer to unity all the time. Soon they will be one big glob, the Laodicean condition.

Philadelphia like Smyrna, no fault is found with them. If Smyrna represents the full overcomers who go by the way of the grave during this Church Age, Philadelphia represents those full overcomers who will be alive when the Lord comes and will be translated. I Thess. 4:16-17 - "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (the resurrected Smyrna saints). Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (translated Philadelphia saints) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." "The open door" set before these saints is the open door of heaven, the door of translation (V. 8). They will not have to go through tribulation (V. 10), because they have kept the word of Christ's patience. Some true believers are not looking for the Lord to come. They are careless and indifferent and will be asleep spiritually or drunken with the things of this world. To them He will come as a thief in the night (I Thess. 5:4-11). They will wake up when they realize some saints are gone and they are left to go into some

tribulation days.

Laodicea tells us of the condition of Christendom in the last days of this Church Age. There will be one united world church. This is not the true Church, the body of Christ, but Christendom, the visible religions conglomeration. The churches have been trying to unite for years now and it is getting closer and closer for it to happen. The ecumenical movement will culminate with all the daughters going back to the mother church (Rev. 17:5). They are saying now, We are not going to let doctrine keep us apart. We can be a powerful force in the world if we are united. Let us come together and show love. Oh, it sounds good, but the truth of the gospel is what suffers, because compromise is what will bring this about. We know by God's Word, that is exactly what is going to happen. It is not God's will that His people compromise on doctrine. Love is a favorite topic in the ecumenical gatherings, but let us put the emphasis upon loving Christ supremely. The true church has already been made one (Gal. 3:26-28; Eph. 2:13-22; 4:4-6).

Apostasy is the chief characteristic of the Laodicean Church, they are "neither cold nor hot" (V. 15-17). The Lord hates this lukewarmness and indifference - "I will spue thee out of my mouth." Any true believers are called to come out, because God will judge her (Rev. 18:4,8). Yes, salvation for whosoever will (V. 18). Some individuals will be saved and come out of her before God judges her (V. 20). Oh the grace of God!

So we see how the church has gone dispensationally. It had a wonderful beginning. It was God purpose for all the church to stay up on the Ephesian plane, seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. What happen? Satan corrupted their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ (II Cor. 11:3). They left their first love for Christ. The church as a whole became worldly minded. Next, false doctrine was allowed to be taught. Many evils followed such as spiritual fornication, clergy over laity, etc. Some periods of revival occurred, but as a whole deterioration continued until the last condition is a self-satisfied *one world church*, with Christ on the outside knocking for any individual to open up to Him. As a whole the church did not heed the Apostle Paul's warning of II Cor. 11:2-3. Thank God some did and there are some today that are *holding fast* (Rev. 3:11) and keeping the Word of His patience (looking for Jesus' return).

Personal Aspect of the 7 Churches & Rewards

We learn personal lessons from these letters to the Seven churches. We learn from their failures, their victories and their rewards. We might say that the whole of what Paul's gospel teaches is brought out. Paul being the apostle to the church wrote especially to the church. In his epistles we learn of a high calling of God in Christ Jesus to which we can attain. We have to overcome, like we read in these letters to the churches. There were things they had to suffer. All the overcomers we read of in the Bible had to suffer. But for many they judged this way as too hard. The flesh does not want to suffer. II Tim. 2:12 tell us, "If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him."

When we are first saved, we begin like the church of Ephesus. We receive the Word of God and go on and are filled with the Holy Spirit - Ch. 2:2-3. As He reveals the Word to our hearts we learn what place we are called to and that we are seated in the heavenlies in Christ. That we are not of this

world and we can depend on Christ as our head. We read all these things in the Epistle to the Ephesians. We love Christ preeminently and as we take in the Word and yield to the Holy Spirit our love grows. That is the way God intended. You know, if you love someone, you want to please them. But there is a danger of failing and it begins with the waning of our devotedness to Christ. We let go of reading God's Word and cease to pray as much. We let other things intrude on the fellowship we had with our Lord. The things of the world begin to take over. Many times it may not be evil things. Simply put, it is anything we put first - material goods, pleasures or just the cares of this life, etc.

Ch. 2:4-5, Just as the saints in Ephesus had to overcome that tendency, so do we. We have pressures from within (our flesh) and from outside (the world) and from Satan. I Jn. 4:4. If we abandon our first love for Christ and do not repent, the next step is dwelling where Satan's seat is (Pergamos 2:13) which is the world. Satan is the god of this world and seeking the pleasures and fellowship of the world is dwelling where Satan's seat (or throne) is - II Cor. 4:4. We are in the world, but not of it - Jn. 17:15-17. If we live in harmony with the world, we are letting Satan gain a victory. He enjoys nothing more than defeating a Christian, especially one that had been overcoming. Satan makes everything easy for the believer who starts going into the world. Consider Gal. 6:8.

This may not be in what you think of as a worldly sense, it might be in a religious sense. Satan works on our minds so we will start to think that Paul's way is too narrow and so unbending. We are tempted to get into religious activity that doesn't have so much responsibility and is popular. This is how the Christian can go down until his spiritual life is diminished. What is the remedy? Overcoming, letting the life of Christ rule in our life. The Lord allows temptations, trials and battles for us to learn and grow. Every time we overcome, we become stronger spiritually. The Lord is very much aware of our lives. Have we not read over and over again, "I know thy works," in fact seven times. Yes, He knows our downsitting and our uprising - Ps. 139:1-4. He knows the thoughts and intents of our heart. Because God is no respecter of persons - those who overcome will receive the greatest reward. It is His purpose that everyone overcome and receive a full reward, not everyone will, so there are different rewards.

To the overcomers of Ephesus, the promised reward is "to eat of the tree of life. Some chose instead the forbidden tree and their fellowship with God was spoiled. But the overcomers eat of the Tree of life, which is Christ - 22:2. One of the ways to stay in fellowship with the Lord is to feed on Christ, reading the Word of God for He is the living Word - Jn. 1:1,14. When we feed on the Word, we are feeding on Christ. Jesus said in Jn. 6:63, "My words are spirit, and they are life." This reward to Ephesus overcomers means fellowship with Christ and with God.

The reward to Smyrna (2:10) is "a crown of life." What a great reward. In addition to the Tree of life, they have a crown of life. They speak of the full overcomers who are faithful unto death. They also "shall not be hurt of the second death (2:11). They will not be judged with the world - I Cor. 11:31-32. They would not even know any of the hurts of that judgment. So we know they judged themselves by the Word of God. Romans 8:13 tells us that if we live after the flesh we shall die prematurely. Only the Lord is judge of this. There are those who sin willfully and do not repent. They refuse to judge their own flesh by the Word, even when the Lord warns them. So they will not receive the reward they should have gained.

Pergamos' reward is "to eat of the hidden manna" - 2:17. Ephesus overcomers were to eat of the Tree of life, but here it is hidden manna. Manna was the food they ate in the wilderness and means "what is it?" They didn't know what it was. The thought here is not only what is it, but where is it? It was *hidden* manna. They didn't know where to get the manna (the Word of God). The Lord had to give it to them. He would feed them as you would feed a little child. They were also given "a white stone and in the stone a new name written." The Greek word for stone here is the stones used in judgments (in voting for commendation or for condemnation) by a judge or jury. If they voted for a person, they put a white stone in a receptacle. If they voted against them, they put in a black stone. Pergamos had a white stone, they were accepted in the Beloved, They had a new name, they were born again. That is gracious, but not like having a crown of life, so we see a difference in rewards.

The promised reward to Thyatira overcomers is power (to rule) over the nations and the morning star - 2:26-28. Dispensationally these speak of those who endure tribulation and will reign over the earth. We could say, they are the foot portion of the mystical body of Christ - Zech 14:4. All believers will reign with Christ in some measure, but some in a less measure. They come out of the darkest hour and Christ to them is as the morning star. The promise of a brighter day, the millennium, Mal. 4:1-2. The five foolish virgins of Mt. 25 correspond with these overcomers. They were not able to go into the marriage supper of the Lamb (the door of translation was shut to them).

Sardis overcomers are saved, clothed with Christ's righteousness for they held to His name in spite of where they are (3:4-5). Do you have loved ones who are saved, but not yielded to the Lord? Perhaps they don't come out of an organization (they are too comfortable to move) even though they know things are not as they should be. Be comforted, "The Lord knoweth them that are his" - II Tim. 2:19. They belong to Him, He purchased them with His own blood. They will be clothed with His righteousness. The Lord will say, these are my people. In spite of all the social preaching and error in Christendom, they accepted Christ.

We read of the reward promised to the Philadelphia overcomers in Ch. 3:10-12. They are waiting *patiently* for His coming and He promises to keep them from the hour of temptation coming upon all the world. They never enter tribulation. Like Smyrna overcomes, they have *a crown*. Also He will *make* them a *pillar* in the temple of my God. To most of the others we have read "I will give." But these overcomers become part of God's sanctuary, an established part, because they have been established by Paul's gospel. These saints are pillars, support, other people lean on them. They grew and became strong. Also "I will write upon Him the *name of my God*," *identified with God as to His nature and person, having His family name.* "And the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God." Not only citizens of new Jerusalem, but they will bear the name of the city. "And I will write upon him *my new name.*" His bride will bare His new name.

The promise reward to the Laodicean overcomers is to sit with Christ - 3:21. When Christ sat down with His Father, He did not set as an equal - Heb. 2:8 - "But now we see not yet all things put under him." Consider Acts 2:34-35. These overcomers will sit with Him, but not rule conjointly with Him. It will cost these saints something to overcome the Laodicean condition.

So we see a distinction in the different rewards to these different groups. All these are overcomers of the conditions in Christendom of their time, but some are full overcomers and receive a full reward. The Lord is righteous and He is not going to give the careless and indifferent the same reward as devoted ones. That would make Christ to be an unrighteous judge. "I know thy works," He will reward according to our works of faith out of love to Him. Saints will have different glories - I Cor. 15:41-42 - and in verse 23 of that chapter we read "every man in his own rank. Notice the Lord says, "I will" reward in 2:7,10,17,26 and 3;5,12, 21. Read Rev. 14;13 concerning those that die in the Lord and chapter 20:13 for the wicked dead.

Chapter 4 - The Throne Room

In this chapter and the next, we see the very throne room of heaven in the vision given to John. The Apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven (paradise) and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter (II Cor. 12:2-4).

V. 1: "After this," after what? After John viewed the Church Age. He is still at the Lord's day, but now his view is directed upward. He sees a door opened in heaven. He hears the same voice that he heard in chapter 1:10. It is the voice of the Lord as the sound of a trumpet (I Thess. 4:16). A trumpet has a clear, commanding sound. Yet, only the full overcomers will hear that first trumpet sound. For they will be looking for the Lord's coming, loving His appearing (II Tim. 4:7-8). Not all believers will be ready for Christ to come, they will not be listening for His voice. But they will get stirred up when they realize many believers are gone and they will be listening for His voice when He calls up the innumerable company of Rev. 7.

"I will show thee things which must be hereafter." Everything we will study from this chapter on is yet future (after the church Age). The first thing we look forward to happening at that time, is the rapture. That is exactly what is expressed by John's experience here - "Come up hither." Glory! Christ's voice will be a clear sound to the full overcomers. They will recognize the voice and Who it is. By the power of His voice, they will ascend up to be with the Lord.

V. 2: Immediately John was in spirit (the word "the" was added by the translators. "Immediately," John was taken up into heaven, he represents the full overcomers of Smyrna and Philadelphia that will be taken up at the first trumpet sound. Those in graves will be resurrected and those alive will be translated - I Thess. 4:13-15. Believers will then be "changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye" - I Cor. 15:51-53.

This chapter begins the third division of the book, the outline of Rev. 1:19. First division - "The things which thou hast seen," the Judge - Ch.1. Second division - "The things which are," the Church Age - Ch. 2 & 3. Third division - "The things which shall be hereafter," things yet future - Ch. 4-22. It also is the second vision viewpoint. The first one was John in spirit on the Lord's Day and looking back on the Church Age. This second viewpoint John is taken up and sees a heavenly scene.

"Behold a throne was set...and one sat on the throne." John beholds Christ taking His own throne. It truly is His Day to reign - I Cor. 15:25. Gentile Times are no more, the nations no longer have any

right to rule. God had given them over 2520 years, but He will say, "You have had enough time." We see today the result of man's rule. At that time the nations will refuse to relinquish their authority and Christ will have to take it from them. That is what will cause tribulation days, men's refusal to bow to Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as sovereign - Ps. 2.

V. 3: In chapter one we saw Christ as Judge, here we see Him as God Almighty. He is God, yet also a man. He is described as looking like a jasper and sardine stone. The jasper is like our diamond in appearance and means "He will be made prominent" and figures His deity. The sardine is reddish or flesh colored and means "ruddy" or "ruddiness" and represents His humanity. He will have a human body and rule over the nations and the universe. He is the GOD-MAN, glorified. He will be exalted to a greater height than a man has ever been exalted. Rev. 20:4 tells us, He will reign a thousand years, yet He will always be King. After the thousand years, He will reign in subjection to His Father - I Cor. 15:24-28. He will reign forever and ever - Rev. 11:15.

Later in Revelation we will read a description of the heavenly Jerusalem as a Jasper stone, possessing the qualities we see in Christ. "There was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." A rainbow is a token of God's promised mercy. He gave it as a sign that He would never destroy the world by a flood again - Gen. 9. We know by II Pet. 3:10-11, that it will be destroyed by fire next time. An emerald is a beautiful greenish color, which figures eternal life, growing things, life out of death. Christ will take authority and judge until He has put all enemies under His feet, but over His throne is this rainbow, this soft-beaming emerald of promise and hope. What a beautiful scene, to see Christ on His throne as universal ruler.

V. 4: The word translated "seats" is "thrones" in the original Greek. These 24 thrones circle Christ's throne and 24 elders sit on them, full grown saints reigning conjointly with Christ. It has to be a representative number, for in Chapter 5:9 we read that they are out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation. Twelve is the number of divine government and here we have 2 times 12, showing the strengthened authority these saints will have with Christ. All of Christ's body will reign with Him in some measure, but some will reign con-jointly - Rom. 8:17. We also read in II Tim. 2:12, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

Some have thought and taught that these elders were overcomers of the Old Testament because the number 12 is often associated with Israel. This cannot be for they are not all Israelites (5:9), they are out of all nations. Others teach that they are angelic beings, but angels are not redeemed, and they sing, "for thou...hast redeemed us to God by thy blood (5:8-9). They are elders (not babes in Christ), but mature saints - Eph. 4:13-15. They are seen clothed in white raiment, the righteousness of Christ - Phil. 3:9. They also have crowns of gold on their heads. They didn't let any one take their crowns, they fully overcame and have the right to reign - Rev. 3:11 & 2:10.

V. 5: This tells us what Christ will do when He sets upon His throne. He will begin to Judge the world and those nations ruling in rebellion against Him. Thunder and lightning are announcements of a storm and a storm is coming on this world. The voices coming out of the throne speaks of God's people who will lend their voices to Him in agreement. Again we read of the 7-fold Spirit of God as we did in 1:4. In Isa. 11:2-3 we are given a description of the 7-fold Spirit of God. Here He is seen as 7 torches of fire burning. For He is the spirit of judgment, the spirit of burning (Isa. 4:4), that produces that day "that shall burn as an oven - Mal. 4:1. The number 7 tells us of the fulness of that

consuming vengeance, as the Holy Spirit executes the will of the Godhead upon the enemies of God.

V. 6: The sea of glass before the throne corresponds with the laver of the tabernacle and the molten sea before Solomon's temple and speaks of the cleansing absolutely necessary to come into God's presence. The laver of regeneration in Titus 3:5. The translators made a poor choice in using the word beasts for living ones. The R.V. gives "living creatures" and the original Greek reads "living ones." Four is another symbolic number. We know this by comparing scripture with scripture. Rev. 5:9 tells us they are from the four corners of the earth, so there has to be many more. Four is the biblical number of the world. These living ones are full of eyes before and behind. They have fulness of vision, seeing in every direction, having spiritual discernment. "He that is spiritual discerneth all things - I Cor. 2:15.

V. 7: These are the characteristics of our Lord seen in this company of believers. Isn't this wonderful? Someone might ask where is Jesus Christ seen like this? The answer is the 4-fold view of Christ in the 4 gospels. In Matthew, Christ is pictured as the King, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The lion is king of beasts and speaks of Christ as the ruler, as the King. He will reign on the throne of David. This characteristic of Christ is seen in saints that have learned to reign in life by Christ Jesus - Rom. 5:17. He gives them "lion" strength and courage. We read in Prov. 28:1 - "The righteous are bold as a lion."

In the gospel of Mark, Christ is seen as the Servant, who ministers and serves like the faithful ox. The calf was an animal of sacrifice, a beast of burden, a work animal. We read in Acts 10:38 how Jesus went about doing good. This company of believers have learned Him by suffering, sacrifice and service. The ox that treadeth out the corn - I Tim. 5:18. In Luke, Christ is seen as man. Often He is mentioned there as the Son of man. The living ones having a face as a man identifies them with humanity (they are not angels), they are redeemed humans. In John's gospel, Christ is the heavenly One, like a flying eagle. He is the Son of God, the divine One. The eagle is swift and glorious. This also tells us something of these saints, Christ is their life - Gal. 2:20. They have been occupied with heavenly activities. Prov. 30:19, "The way of an eagle in the air is wonderful." As we feed on the Word (Christ), we become like Him (II Cor. 3:18) Praise the Lord! This is the work of the Holy Spirit, He does the changing.

V. 8: These saints have freedom of movement (6 wings), they are not bound, but free to do what the Lord wants them to do. They never move or act independent of Him, but in harmony and agreement with Him. Ezekiel calls these living ones, cherubims. These saints execute God's will on earth and will continue their spiritual activities in heaven. "Full of eyes within," having discernment and understanding. We should all have a discernment of truth and error by knowing the Word of God. But there is a gift of discernment given by the Holy Spirit. These saints can see (view) the things of God. What is their chief activity? Worship. We read in this book of the living ones generally leading in worship, they are the first to praise the Lord.

The 24 elders and the 4 living ones together represent the highest rank of believers, kings and priests, mentioned in Ch. 1:6 & 5:10. The elders are ruling kings on thrones and the living ones are seen in priestly activity. This company of overcoming saints are priestly kings and kingly priests. Song of Sol. 6:13, "What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company (one company) of 2

armies (kings & priests)." They shall reign with Christ con-jointly. As to their kingly nature, we are learning to overcome and rule now over different things. We are going to judge angels one of these days - I Cor. 6:3. Concerning their priestly nature, we worship Him now, pouring our love upon Him and praising Him. We fall down before Him now.

Vs. 9-10: They suffered to get those crowns and they held fast to keep them, but when they come before the Lord Jesus Christ, they don't care to keep them anymore. They have come before Him who is more worthy than they. No matter how much we attain from the Lord or how much we grow, we always realize that it is because of His worthiness that we have anything.

V. 11: They worship and Acknowledge Him as the worthy One to receive glory, honor and power for He is their Creator and the Creator of all things. Worship plays a very important part in heaven. All through this book of Revelation we read they worship the Lord and it grows greater and greater. We learn to worship the Lord now. We are going to praise Him more in heaven than we do now.

Chapter 5 - The Lamb Found Worthy

In chapter 4 we read of Christ worshiped as the Creator. In this chapter 5, He is worshiped as the Redeemer, the Lamb. John in spirit is still in heaven viewing the throne room. Of course John is not there in body, he had these experiences by vision.

V. 1: This is Christ, we read of Him taking His throne in chapter 4:3, reigning as God almighty. He is God - Jn. 1:1-3 and because of His condescension He will always be man - Phil. 2:5-8. He has in His right hand a book. The Greek text says it is a scroll written on both sides, rolled up and sealed with 7 seals.

V. 2: The word "angel" is messenger. At this point we don't know what is in the scroll. For the contents to be known, somebody had to be worthy to loose the seals and open it. Note, not just having the strength to do it, but to be worthy to open it. When it is opened in Chapter 6 we will see that it contains God's judgments that He will pour out on this world and wicked men until they bow before Him (Rom. 14:11).

V. 3,4: The search was made everywhere, not even one of the full overcomers was worthy to even look on it. John knew this was an important book, because all the attention in heaven was on it. John wept, he must have thought the contents will never be known.

V. 5: One of the fully mature saints (an elder) knew what was in the book. We are learning what is in that book as we study Revelation. When we get to heaven we will know what is in the book. John is told the Lion of the tribe of Juda "hath prevailed to open the book." The lion as the king of beasts depicts our Lord's kingly authority. "Of the tribe of Juda" speaks of Christ as Man. He became flesh, born of a woman. Jesus, the Son of man was of the tribe of Juda. Yet, He was the Root of David. The root comes before the tree, He is God. The next verse tells us how He prevailed.

V. 6: John looks to see the Lion and what does he behold? A Lamb. The Greek text says the

smallest kind of Lamb, a Lambkin. It looks like it is good for nothing. It is small, weak, bruised and slain. (Isa. 53:3-12). This is why the Jews as a whole did not receive Him when He came. They wanted and expected a mighty king, not the hanged One as they call Him.

Note, the Lamb as it had been slain, stood - Acts 2:23-24. It was by His Atoning death that He won the victory, He hath prevailed. The Lamb had 7 horns. Horns speak of power. This little Lambkin conquered Satan by His death. Satan may have bruised His heel, but Christ bruised Satan's head (Gen. 3:15). The Lamb also had 7 eyes, which speaks of discernment, being fully equipped through the power of the 7-fold Holy Spirit. (Isa. 11:1-4). It is the spirit filled Man, seen as the Lamb, the Redeemer, that shall judge the world and save Israel. Christ won the right or purchased the authority to reign as King by becoming the sacrifice for the sins of the world. First He was a Lamb, the Lamb of God, the Redeemer. Then He will become the King. Isn't it interesting that the first ones chosen to hear about the birth of Jesus, the Lamb of God, were keepers of sheep. Also in John 1:29, John the Baptist announced, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

We will not be worthy to sit on a throne, unless we suffer with Him - II Tim. 2:12. We will never know the fellowship of the resurrection of Christ, if we don't fellowship the sufferings or death with Christ - Phil. 3:10. Death comes first then resurrection.

V. 7,8: In symbolic language this simply tells us that as the victorious Lamb, He is the worthy One to loose the sealed-up judgments of God upon a Christ rejecting world. This company of saints have harps, this speaks of their worship and praise of the Lamb. They also have golden vials (the Greek says, bowls) full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. I think this is precious - the prayers of the saints are as a sweet odour to God. This is intercessions and prayers associated with Christ and His purposes. These are not pillow prayers, but where the saints fight battles against principalities and powers.

Vs. 8-10: Some people don't like noise in worship, only in other things of the world. But heaven will be noisy. For all eternity we will glorify our Lord for His great love and atoning work for us. This company of 4 living ones and 24 elders are not angels, for they sing the song of the redeemed. They are not the Old Testament overcomers either, for they sing that they have been redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation. It is also clear that the number 4 and 24 are representative numbers because they are from all the nations and languages. In Ezek. 1:24 they are said to be "an host, "holy myriads" in the original text. Rev. 21:2,9 describes the bride as a "city" and Song of Sol. 6:13 as "the company of 2 armies." It will be an immense company, but it can be numbered. We note that this company of saints arrive first in heaven and are pictured as worshipers (priests) and as rulers or kings (elders on thrones). They are around the Great Throne - 4:4,6. They have the most responsible place with Christ in judging the world and in establishing peace on earth. They must be there to witness and proclaim Christ worthy to take the government of heaven and of earth.

These saints are in training now - Rom. 5:17 and I Cor. 6:3. Their ministry in the first 7 years of the Millennium is expressed in Rev. 6:1-7; 8:2; 11:16-18; 15:7; and 17:1. The phrase "and we shall reign on the earth" is explained by Luke 1:32,33 as over the earth. The Greek "Epi" means "upon" and "over." These saints shall reign with Christ in heaven and from heaven reign with Him over the earth. They are the bride elect, the marriage will be 6 years later, after the false bride is judged -

Rev. 19.

V. 11,12: No wonder the Lord gives us an angel to protect us, there are at least 100,000,000 and then thousands of thousands. Notice, it doesn't say sing, but "saying." We never actually read in scripture that angels sing unless you have some translation that inserted it. It is not in the Greek text. What do these angelic heavenly creatures say? They say amen to what the elders and living ones have said - Christ deserves it all. Amen and Amen!

V. 13,14: The universal praise of Christ just swells to involve all creation - Phil 2:9-11. The 24 elders fall down again, they aren't too stiff to get off their thrones and fall down before Him and worship Him. It is sad that some are too stiff to clap their hands or raise their arms in praise. Some day all that starch will be removed. We have been privileged to view the throne room of heaven. We want to be there by His grace. I don't find prophecy dull at all, do you?

Chapter 6 – The Seven Seals Opened

When Christ is seated on His throne (Ch. 4:2) that begins His millennial reign. But for the first seven years, tribulation days will take place instead of millennial blessings for Israel and the earth. Christ will have to judge the Gentile nations for their opposition to His rule. He must put down all rule and authority that is opposed to Him - I Cor. 15:24-25. Also Israel as a nation must be judged for refusing His Messiahship. He must take control so it will come to pass that He rules on earth as He does in heaven. Isa. 45:20-25 shall be fulfilled.

The first eight verses of this chapter tells of the opening of the first four seals of the scroll that contains the judgments of God. It reads like an index to the remainder of the book. You know how you can turn to the index of a book and scan down through it and you have a fairly good idea what is in the book - that is what these four seals are like. The due time for judgment has come and judgments come forth as the seals of the scroll are opened.

First Seal

V. 1: John saw the Lamb (Christ) open one of the seals of the scroll, written on both sides and sealed tightly with seven seals (5:1). Seven in Scripture is the number of completeness. John heard one of the four living ones say with a voice of thunder, "Come." The words "and see" are *not* in the best manuscripts. He is not saying, come and see what is going to happen. This word "Come" is a command that is powerful, sounding like thunder. Thunder warns of the storm of judgments. This full overcomer has the voice of authority in co-operating with the Lamb in calling forth the judgments.

V. 2: At the command a rider on a white horse answers the call. When we think of a white horse, we think of Christ because Chapter 19 verse 11 describes Him coming on a white horse to make war. But this is *not* Christ. The rider had no crown when he comes and no arrows in his bow. Yet he conquers and is given a crown. This is the Antichrist. Remember this is symbolic language. There will be no white horse, a horse speaks of power in these symbolic pictures. White speaks of

righteousness, but this is not the righteousness of Christ, it is counterfeit goodness.

This bow is more of a promise bow than a bow for ammunition. The rider will conquer through diplomacy by holding out a promise bow of peace. The crown given him speaks of the authority and power he will gain. It will be the time "When they shall say, *Peace and safety* that we read of in I Thess. 5:3a. This is the first thing that is going to happen on the earth after Christ takes His throne in heaven. The world will not realize that Christ is reigning. Men will think they have achieved world peace and that there will be no more wars. This is exactly what they are striving for today by their own efforts. All the nations and churches are working for peace, all except the true church. Those efforts will succeed, but it will not last - I Thess 5:3b). Something will happen to cause them to break that treaty of peace. That will bring on the second seal.

Second Seal

Vs. 3,4: The second living one says, "Come" and a red horse comes forth and the rider is given a *great sword*. This speaks of war and blood shed, "sudden destruction" (peace is gone). Power is given to him to kill his fellows. One or more nations will rise up and break the peace league and it will lead to Armageddon. This authority comes from heaven. Man will not be able to accomplish anything until it is God's time. God says in Psalm 2:6,7 - "*I will declare the decree...I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*"

The seven kings of Ch. 17:10 will evidently be the heads of the peace league. One of them being the Antichrist (17:8). He will be one of the six that go down at the time of the Red horse period. He will come up from the pit and continue a short space, 42 months (Rev. 13:5). He will end up in the Lake of fire (19:20). We see the nations beginning to come together, so we know God's time is nigh at hand.

Third Seal

Vs. 5,6: The rider on a black horse with a pair of balances comes forth. This speaks of famine which is the result of war. Food is measured, everything is very precious. It will be a time of great scarcity. One translation reads, "a measure of wheat and barley for a whole days wages." A days' wages could keep one person alive, but one wage earner will not be able to feed his family on his income. Wheat and barley for bread speaks of the essentials of life. Wine and oil are counted as luxuries. These commodities will not be in short supply, but what good are they when the people have no food?

Fourth Seal

Vs. 7,8: The pale horse tells of death, which is a result of war and famine. Notice what follows the death of the physical body - Hell follows and takes the souls. When the body dies and is buried, the soul and spirit of the wicked goes to Hell. Spirit, soul and body will be judged and we will read of this in chapter 20. There we will find out what happens to death and hell as the result of the great white throne judgment. There will be no problem of over population of the earth then. For a fourth part will be killed by a quartet of killing (sword, hunger, death and wild beasts). The wild beasts will not have enough to eat either and they will attack men. The earth will be depopulated by millions and millions of people. We know by Matthew 24:22 that the nations would wipe one another off the map if God does not intervene, but He will.

These four horses symbolize four prevailing conditions on earth that cover the entire tribulation period like an index to the remainder of the book, at least to chapter 20.

The remaining seals, though opened one after the other, yet their contents do not actually occur in chronological order. When we tell of a happening, we give the overall picture of what took place. Then we fill in the why, where and when. A well written news story will tell the basic things in the first few sentences. Then the rest of the article is devoted to filling in the details. So it is with the remaining seals, more details are given. The fifth seal fills in some detail about conditions that begin under the second seal - war. The sixth seal tells us more about the end of the fourth seal. The seventh seal (Ch. 8) fills in more concerning the terrible happenings of the second, third and fourth seals.

Fifth Seal

V. 9: This gives us some details about the conditions that begin under the second seal - war. These are believers who will be slain during the earlier part of the Antichrist's reign. Take note: they were true to their testimony in those difficult days, faithful even unto death. The great multitude of believers from this Church Age will be in heaven before these saints are slain. We refer to these saints as the souls under the altar. They belong to Christ for they are under the protection of the blood (under the altar). They are not of the Church, because of the time they were living, the Church Age being over. We read of them again in Chapter 15:2-3 & 20:4 where they sing the song of Moses, showing they are of Israel. Being "under the altar" speaks of them as having a lesser place than the Church or Body of Christ.

V. 10: They say, "O Lord," the Greek text reads "O Despot," which means "absolute, sovereign ruler." This is found only four times in the New Testament (Lk. 2:29; Acts 4:24; II Pet. 2:1 and Jude v. 4). They cry with a loud voice for vengeance, just as we read of Able's blood crieth from the ground to be avenged. The souls under the altar know He is holy and true, that He will avenge, but they cry, how long will it be.

V. 11: They will have to wait until the end of the tribulation period, when others would be martyred as they were. At the end of that period their prayers would be answered for vengeance on those that killed them. Revelation 13:10 tells of God's justice, but in His time and will, and not before. A number of believers will be killed for the truth's sake, not everyone will escape. The Lord tells them to rest for a season, it shall be done, they will be avenged. The "white robes" given them speaks of being clothed in Christ's righteousness.

Notice, these believers are physically dead, yet their spirits are alive and they communicate with the Lord and other spirits in heaven, not with people on the earth. John saw them (V. 9) and heard them speaking with "a loud voice" (V. 10). They also heard, for "it was said to them" - (V. 11). Some teach soul-sleeping, but that is not scriptural. The body dies and goes to the grave, but the soul and spirit go to heaven (Phil. 1:23-24; II Cor. 5:6-9; Lk. 23:43). Also, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) tells of the continued life and consciousness of departed souls, both the righteous and the unrighteous.

There will be a great company of believers of Israel that will escape death, they will endure till the end of tribulation (Mt. 24:13). The Lord will protect them supernaturally (Rev. 12:14-17). We will read of them later, but some will suffer and be killed.

Sixth Seal

Vs. 12,13: Here are some details that will occur at the end of the fourth seal - death. Verses 12 through 17 agrees with Matthew 24:29. This could be both figurative and literal. We know the heavens will literally be shaken. We also read that Satan is seen as a falling star and other angels are cast out on the earth (Rev. 8:10-11 and 9:1-3). It could be that when the stars fall, the evil spirits come. Joel 2:10 and Acts 2:19-21 describes this time.

Vs. 14-17: Men will find out there is a God, a living God and of His wrath upon Christ rejectors. How terrible it will be. They rejected God's Lamb that was slain for them and they will experience His wrath. They will be forced to acknowledge Him and yet they will not repent. Mt. 18:11. How good it is that we believe in our God, He is a loving Father to us. He is forced to judge, because of men's rejection of His Salvation. Ps. 14:1-4 and 53:1. We have read a little of what tribulation will be like. The seventh seal will not be opened until chapter 8.

Chapter 7 – Two Parenthetical Events

We find two parenthesis (parenthetical events) in this chapter inserted between the sixth and seventh seals. Why? for the simple reason that two or more happenings occur at the same time. The first insert is in Verses 1-8 which tells us of the sealing of the 144,000. The second insert is in Verses 9-17 which is the innumerable company. This portion will be fulfilled sometime before the middle of the seven years of tribulation.

V. 1: "After these things" - John does not say that this follows the events of chapter six, but after seeing the events recorded in chapter 6, he was shown other things. The King James Version says "four angels," the origin Greek text has four messengers. They represent God's people who hold with Christ by faith that His perfect will be done. We read of them in II Thess. 2:6-8 as those who "withholdeth" or hindereth or restrains." The Diaglott reads, "and now you know what restrains, in order to his being revealed in his own season. For the secret of lawlessness is already working till only the one restraining for the present shall be out of the way; and then will be revealed the Lawless one; whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the breath of his mouth, and annihilate by the appearing of his presence."

Why the number four? They stand on the four corners of the earth or the four directions, holding (restraining) the four winds from blowing. The four winds are "wicked spirits in the heavenlies" - Eph. 6:12. Yes, "spiritual wickedness in high places." Is not Satan called "the prince of this world" (Jn. 12:31 & 14:30) and "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2)? We also read of Satan's wicked spirits - Dan. 10.

Daniel 7:2 & 3 says, the four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea (the nations)." The evil

spirits do the bidding of Satan in moving nations to overthrow each other. We learn in the study of Daniel that the map of the nations of this world has a corresponding map in heaven. Compare Rev. 12:3 a heavenly scene with Rev. 13:1 an earthly scene.

In Mathew 4:8-10 we read that Satan claimed to have power over the nations and Jesus did not deny it. No doubt the four winds we read of here in Revelation 7 dominated the four world Gentile powers of Daniel 7 and will dominate the revived Roman Empire. After the closing of this Church Age, "the man of sin," the Antichrist will be revealed and reign 42 months - Rev. 13:5-7. Under his reign unspeakable damage will be done to the earth (the Jews), to the sea (Gentiles) and to the trees (earth dwelling saints). Many times saints are referred to as trees - Isa. 61:3 and Jer. 17:7-8. Satan would have had this man in power long ago if God had not restrained him in answer to the cries of the saints. It is the saints today that are restraining the evil of the present time.

The 144,000

Vs. 2-3: It is clear that this happens before judgment falls on the earth. This messenger having the seal of the living God is none other than Christ Himself.

V. 4: They are sealed on the earth. We will read of them again in Chapter 12 and 14. They are sealed in Chapter 7, caught up to heaven - Ch. 12, Seen in heaven before the throne - Ch. 14. We don't have to wonder who the 144,000 are. They are of the children of Israel, 12,000 from each tribe.

Vs. 5-8: What does it mean that they were sealed? These saints out of Israel are sealed with the Holy Spirit - Eph. 1:13; 4:30. The 144,000 will need the power from on high (the Holy Spirit), for they will live in very difficult days. It is important for saints today to receive the gift of God's power. To be prepared for the coming of the Lord. Not only to be filled with His Spirit, but walk in the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16).

The first Christians were Jews, they were the connecting link between Israel and the Church. At the end time they will be the connecting link between the Church and Israel. They are the last rank of the Church. The tribe of Dan is not named here. Joseph has two portions - Joseph and Manasseh. Some Bible scholars believe the reason Dan is missing, that out of the tribe of Dan the false prophet may come. Gen. 49:16-17. It could be an indication, but we can't say for sure. But the 144,000 are not the bridal company as some teach. They correspond to the five wise virgins (born again), that had oil (the Holy Spirit), and are guests at the wedding - Mt. 25:4-10. In Psalm 45:14 we read of the bridal company and also the virgins her companions that follow her." As I said we will see them in heaven in chapter 14:1,4. In chapter 12 we read how they got there - caught up. In chapter 21:12-17 we read that they compose the wall around the holy city.

The Innumerable Company

V. 9: "after this I beheld" - this next scene John saw in vision, but did not necessarily happen after the 144,000 were sealed on the earth. But it was the next thing revealed to him. He saw a great multitude that could not be numbered out of all nations standing before the throne and the Lamb. So this is a heavenly scene. This company are the multitudes that have believed on Jesus Christ throughout this Church Age, (except for the first rank seen in chapters 4 and 5). They are not joined to the Lamb's throne as the Living ones, nor are they on thrones around the Lamb's throne as the

elders. But they are in the presence of the throne, before it, near it, even nearer than the angels. They wear the garments of saints, "clothed with white robes," (clothed in Christ's righteousness). They had "Palms in their hands." Palms speak of victory. They rejoice before the throne over their deliverance.

V. 10: They shout with a loud voice and praise God for their redemption, acknowledging who Christ is and attributing their salvation to Him, the Lamb of God with this victorious cry.

Vs. 11-12: The angels form a grand circle around them, the throne with the Living ones and the Elders being in the center. These palm-bearers stood joyous, while the angels fall down on their faces in reverent adoration. Their praise is 8-fold, beginning and ending with Amen.

Vs. 13-14: Notice, they "Came out" of great tribulation. The Greek text reads "come out." They come out of "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world" - Rev. 3:10. They come out of that time by being caught up to heaven sometime during the first half of that seven years. The great tribulation of verse 14 is not the unspeakable great tribulation of Matthew 24:21 which is the last half of that seven years. Also called "Jacob's trouble" in Jer. 30:7 and "the indignation" in Isa. 26:20. Notice, they "washed their robes...white in the blood of the Lamb," could it be that their garments had been spotted by the flesh? Lets read one of Christ's messages - Rev. 16:15. Don't you think missing being caught up in the first rank may have stirred them up to cleanse their robes? I think so.

V. 15: Praise God! they are in heaven, but they have no crowns nor thrones. They stand (V. 9) while others sit. They serve (v. 15) while others reign. But still they are blessed. They are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night. We are not told what their service consist of, but they are services befitting saints and the glory of heaven. How precious the Lord is to them, He dwells among them and they enjoy His divine presence. The Greek text reads, He that sitteth on the throne "shall spread his tent upon them" - (tabernacle over them). They abide under the shadow of the Almighty, they shall be His people, and He will be their God.

V. 16: Once they felt these things, but they are gone for ever.

V. 17: The Lamb is their Shepherd. He will nourish them, they shall hunger no more. He shall lead them to ever - flowing springs of life, they shall thirst no more. He shall wipe away their tears, sorrow banished for ever. They will only know the joys of heaven, fully satisfied in His presence. Blessed is the portion of these servants of God.

Differences Between The First Rank And This Company

1. The first rank can be numbered - the innumerable company cannot.
2. The first rank are kept out of tribulation and arrive in heaven first, before Christ takes His throne - the innumerable company come out of tribulation (after Christ is enthroned).
3. The first rank are in and around the throne - the innumerable company stand before the throne, an outer circle.
4. The first rank fell down in worship and sang a new song, having gold harps and bowls of incense

- the innumerable company stood and cried with a loud voice.

5. The first rank praised God for redemption and His work of making them kings and priests - the innumerable company cried salvation to our God.

6. The first rank wear crowns and sit on thrones - the innumerable company hold palms in their hands.

7. The first rank are kings and priests and rule and reign with Christ - the innumerable company serves Him day and night.

Do you see the difference? Do you want to be kings and priests or servants? Put Christ first in your life. He can do this work only in yielded saints.

I Cor. 9:24 - every believer has been placed on this race course. Many run uncertainly, just, beating the air. Others strive to win Christ and know it is by being in subjection to Him. Submission is the outstanding quality of the bride of Christ. She puts Him first in everything. He is the Chief One in her life. Let us run to win Him, our Beloved Lord.

The first rank lead in the worship of God and they will have specific ministries associated with Christ because they enjoy such ministries now. They will announce the opening of the seals. They sound the seven trumpets - Ch. 8. They hold the golden bowls containing the 7 last plagues - Chs. 15 & 16. We do not read about the innumerable company again until Ch. 19. There we read of the "servants" at the wedding feast of the Lamb - Vs. 5 & 6. The elders and living ones are mentioned again and again, the last time in Ch. 19:4, as worshipers. We have read of at least 3 rank of the church -

1 - 4 living ones and 24 elders - Ch. 4 & 5.

2 - The innumerable company - Ch. 7:9-17.

3 - The 144,000 - Ch. 7:1-8.

Chapter 8 – Judgment Proclaimed

With chapter 8 we begin to read of judgment in detail. Chapter 6 was more of an index of the judgments and chapter 7 contained two parenthetical events. Chapter 8 has the opening of the seventh seal which tells the terrible happenings of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th seals in detail.

V. 1: This is probably not a literal half hour of 30 minutes, but a brief time. In chapter 14 verse 7 we read of an hour of judgment referring to the time of great tribulation, but this is a short time of "silence in heaven." In contrast to this silence, we read in chapters 4 and 5 of the 24 elders and 4 living ones worshiping the Lord and the angels join in the praises, then every creature, it just builds and swells. But when this 7th seal is opened there is silence, the calm before the storm of judgments about to be poured out. The vengeance of an offended God and a rejected Redeemer are about to be executed and all heaven is in awe.

V. 2: The original Greek text says messengers instead of angels. We know that these are special messengers and not angelic beings because they stand at the altar. angels are never connected with the altar, because they do not need redemption. Also we never read that angels will judge the world, but saints will - I Cor. 6:1-3. The ministry of angels is to minister to the saints of God - Heb. 1:7,14.

They are ministering spirits.

We read of these special messengers again in chapter 17:1; 19:9-10; 21:9; and 22:8-9. They are so special and glorious that John fell down to worship one of them, but the messenger corrected John and let him know he was a fellow brethren and that only One is worthy of worship (Rev. 22:8-9). To these special messengers are given "seven trumpets. These are not the same as those in I Thessalonians 4, where at the trumpet sound the Lord will call the saints home, they are not connected with judgment. These 7 trumpet sounds are to signal judgments coming upon the world. The trumpets tell it or sound it out. As these messengers sound their trumpet, each sound has another story.

V. 3: "Another messenger" has a "golden censer" (gold speaks of divinity) and "much incense" was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all saints. Who is this one who is called "another messenger?" In the Old Testament it was the high priest who had the right to burn incense. This is the High Priest of heaven, Christ, Himself. Isn't this good? Our prayers are like sweet incense to God, a fragrant smell - Ps. 141:2.

V. 4: God keeps our prayers as a memorial, He remembers them and He is answering all the prayers of the saints. These are not just ordinary prayers, but particular prayers - "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" - Mt. 6:10. They ascend up to the highest heaven, to God. God's kingdom has to come upon this earth. Christ will have to come and rule. How will His rule begin? He will have to judge this world. He is forced to judge.

V 5: God answers these prayers of the High Priest and the saints. Remember reading how God accepted the offerings given in the Old Testament? He accepted them by fire. Remember Elijah's duel with the prophets of Baal? They called on their gods from morning to evening and nothing happened. Elijah put his offering on the altar and poured water all over it and around it. Then he called on his God. God answered by fire and burned up the sacrifice, the altar, the water and everything, showing He accepted that offering.

Read Lev. 16:18-19a, it is all figurative of the ministry and life of the Lord. The altar speaks of Christ and Him crucified. He has earned the right to pour out judgment, because He has died for all mankind. The messenger took the censer of fire and "cast it into the earth." The earth in Scripture often speaks of Israel and it will be the first place judgment will be poured out. "Voices, thunderings, lightnings and an earthquake" are the mutterings of God, which immediately precede judgment. Just as thunder and lightning go before a terrific storm. Romans 11:33 - How unfathomable, inscrutable, unsearchable are His judgments. How untraceable, mysterious, undiscoverable are His methods.

V. 6: The 7 special messengers prepared to call forth judgments.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

V. 7: "The first messenger sounded," has the same thought as the living ones saying "Come" in chapter 6. They are directing the judgments in order upon the earth, they will come in this way. Notice, it comes from heaven, showing God is over all and in charge of it all. What does it mean

"hail and fire mingled with blood" and the "third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass?" This refers to war breaking out upon the earth (Israel). Ezek. 38 and 39 tells us this same thing. The peace and safety will be shattered. Russia will come down against the nation of Israel and invade that land. The king of the south will come up too, then before long the king of the east will join in. It will lead up to the great battle. A third of the trees and green grass will be literally burnt up.

THE SECOND TRUMPET

Vs. 8-9: Not a literal mountain, but *as it were* a great mountain. In symbolic language of the Scripture, a mountain speaks of a nation. One great nation will go against other nations. The sea represents the Gentile nations. It is great warfare and blood shed - one thing leads to another. A third part of the sea (nations) become blood. A great portion of the world will be at war, which will culminate in Armageddon. Verse 9 speaks of a naval battle. This is also found in the book of Daniel. The Mediterranean is a strategic sea to have control of because of the middle east and we hear more about the gulf lately.

THE THIRD TRUMPET

Vs. 10-11: In chapter 9 verse 1 we will read of a star *fallen* from heaven, in other words already on earth. To him was *given* the key to the bottomless pit. That is Satan of course. Here in chapter 8 we read of when he is cast out of the heavenlies. Notice, it says, "burning *as it were* a lamp. II Cor. 11:14, Satan is a deceiver, a false light; in contrast to the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Falling upon the rivers," speaks of Satan diluting the people (religious people especially) through false prophets. II Thessalonians 2:10-12, that lie will be the man of sin that people will receive, the Antichrist. "Wormwood" is just a nick name for Satan. He has several names - that old dragon, serpent, etc. Wormwood is a bitter plant, an herb and very poisonous. That is what he will do, poison the minds of men. They will be deceived into thinking the Antichrist is actually God. and they will worship him. We are not told everything in this chapter. We must consider this book as a whole.

Later in the book we read how this man who is the Antichrist will be killed and raised from the dead by Satan. The world will wonder after him and say, this is Christ. Satan will deceive them. Well, he is deceiving people today, but he is not down here in person as he will be then. He is directing things from the lower heavens now and we see how powerful he is with his demons. But he and his forces will be right down here on earth at the time we are reading of. He will open the bottomless pit and bring out more demons that Jesus cast out and others cast out and sent them there already.

"The third part of the waters became wormwood." The rivers will become more polluted by the wars. We have had an example in the oil released in the gulf.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET

V. 12 - Something will cause the whole solar system to be smitten. We are not told what or how. We are only told the result. The sun will not shine a third part of the day and the night likewise. The terrific struggle between God and Satan will effect the heavens and the earth also as we read in the next verse. We know the smoke of battle always obscures the light. Later in this book we will read of terrible darkness, but this is just the third part, the beginning of judgment.

V. 13 - The original Greek text reads - "one eagle flying," instead of "an angel flying." It is not the Lord, but one of His servants empowered for swift travel like an eagle. The messenger pronounces three woes with a loud voice. They are the next three trumpet sounds. Judgment and power increases with each trumpet. The woes culminate in the bowls of wrath found in chapters 16-18.

Chapter 9 – Three Awful Woes

THE FIFTH TRUMPET

9:1 - The Greek reads - "And the fifth messenger sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star having fallen from heaven to the earth..." It had already happened (8:10) when Satan was cast out of heaven "burning as it were a lamp." He is a false light, a deceiver.

We know by comparing scriptures, that chapter nine begins a little before the middle of the seven years of tribulation. We will read more about what happens when Satan comes down to earth later in this book. Chapter 11 tells of great persecution of the two witnesses by the Antichrist after Satan comes to the earth. Ch. 12 Satan himself tries to destroy the 144,000. Ch. 13 the Antichrist is raised up from death by Satan, then begins the greater part of tribulation. It will be great tribulation when Satan gets down here.

Notice, "to him (Satan) was given the key of the bottomless pit." Who had the key? Only one Person, the Lord Jesus Christ - Ch. 1:18. He will give Satan this authority to open the bottomless pit. Why? To hasten the completion of judgment. Satan is just a tool that Christ uses for His purposes. The bottomless pit is just a temporary place for the fallen spirits anyway. It is not their eternal destiny, for it will be the lake of fire. The bottomless pit refers to the lowest pit of hell, where the wicked spirits are reserved unto the day of judgment - II Pet. 2:4.

Vs. 2,3 - The evil spirits are let out of the bottomless pit. When we think of all the evil forces in the world today, what will it be like when Satan is on earth and the evil spirits come out of the pit? Smoke arose "out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace." Some writers have thought there is a big furnace in hell and Satan stokes the fire. NO, the smoke refers to the evil spirits that come forth, darkening the light and even the air. "Unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."

Joel chapters 1 & 2 tell of this very same period of time. Demons come up from hell and will possess and empower wicked men. Joel 2:1-7,11,25 - God even calls them His army, because He causes them to serve His purpose. Of course they don't know that they are, for they are against God, but God is greater than all. Just like when Satan thought he had destroyed the Son of God when Christ died on the cross, but he was only used to accomplish God's Salvation for mankind. How marvelous are God's ways. Today Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers less they believe the gospel - II Cor. 4:4. How much greater in that day we are reading about. The power of Satan will be so strong. Men will reject God in the midst of judgment, even when they will know it is God's judgment. We will read this later. Also think of the terrible persecution the saints will have that are on the earth at that time. Even today in some parts of the world where there is very little gospel

light, the power of Satan is much stronger.

V. 4 - Notice, they are commanded not to hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing nor any tree. It is against nature for locust in the natural not to hurt anything green. The grass and trees speak of the saints. They could only affect those who did not belong to the Lord. "Only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." The seal of God means they belong to God, in contrast with the mark of the beast.

V. 5 - Again we read "it was given that they should not kill them." They are given authority, but it is limited. The unbelievers will be tormented five months. It will be like a slow death, yet, they cannot die.

V. 6 - Their suffering will be worse than death. They won't even be able to commit suicide. It's not a pleasant story. Does it not make us appreciate what we have been delivered from and rejoice all the more what the Lord has done for us? Praise the Lord!

Vs. 7-10 - Just think, this is just the beginning (the preparation) of a battle that will go on and will climax in the final battle, Armageddon. These evil spirits will stir-up men to war, taking away the peace and safety the world seemed to have achieved. "Their faces were as the faces of men." Evil spirits will get into the hearts of men and cause them to do terrible things. We wonder why people do such wicked things today. It is the power of Satan and his forces of course.

"Their shapes were like unto "horses prepared unto battle." Horses speak of power and they are ready for war. We also read of this in Joel, "the horses." On their heads were crowns like gold. Not real gold, it only looks like it. Crowns speak of the authority and power they will exercise. Hair as the hair of women tells us of their subjection and allegiance to their leader, Satan. In I Cor. 11, we read that women's long hair speaks of subjection.

"Their teeth were as the teeth of lions," showing great strength, powerful and able to devour. "They had breastplates as it were ... of iron." They are well fortified, armed with defensive equipment. "The sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." This sounds like an air battle. Their tails were like scorpions with stings in their tails and they had power to hurt men for five months.

V. 11 - These are names or titles of Satan. He is their king. Abaddon means Destruction and Apollyon means Destroyer. There is a counterfeit here in every respect. God has His King - Christ (Ps. 2:6). Satan is a king who is trying to rule. He is the king of the abyss.

V. 12 - This first woe (the 5th trumpet) will last five months - V. 5,10. It is a preparation period for more trouble. Armies will be organized and war will so alarm the people that they will seek death in vain.

The two remaining woes (V. 12) are the sixth and seventh trumpet sounds. So within the sounding of the sixth trumpet (Vs. 13-15) we encounter the second woe. During the fifth trumpet (V. 6) men desired death to end their suffering, but could not die. In the sixth trumpet sound, a third of all

humanity die.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET

V. 13 - The golden altar is the altar of incense and speaks of Christ and Him crucified. It is because of His finished work on Calvary, that God has given Him the power and authority to Judge mankind. He won that right by purchasing salvation for mankind.

Vs. 14,15 - We read of the four messengers before in Ch. 7:1. There they were holding back the winds of evil forces that they could not be loosed on earth until an appointed time. The sixth trumpet sound will signal the four messengers to let loose the four winds (the evil forces). It is God's set time, not an hour before and not an hour after. "The great river Euphrates" tells us where this warfare will begin and will occur. It is in Iraq.

In the first trumpet - a third part of trees and grass was burnt up (8:7). In the second trumpet - a third part of the sea became blood and a third part of ships were destroyed (8:8,9). In the third trumpet - a third part of the rivers and waters became bitter (8:10,11). In the fourth trumpet - a third part of the firmament was smitten (8:12). Now we read in the sixth trumpet - a third part of men were killed in battle.

Vs. 16-19 - The armies of the different nations will gather around that area (the middle east). They will number two hundred million. Why will they be gathered? To fight - Ch. 21:20-22. The devastation will be terrible for those nations will unleash all the powerful weapons they have, they will not hold back. "Breastplates" tell of defensive weapons - of fire, jacinth and brimstone. Today they have implements of war that are beyond anything I can imagine. "The heads of the horses were the heads of lions" very strong and bold. "out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone." Sounds like a satanic trinity. It could refer to radiation, chemical, gas or germ warfare. One thing is certain, there will be no over population problem then. For the population will be decreased by a third.

Vs. 20-21 - Will men repent as a result of judgment? NO, they are not changed at all by the terrible blood bath on the earth. How hard people get, even with God's judgment on them they repented not. We will read this time and time again in this book of Revelation - they repented not. Saints let us pray - "Lord revive me, stir me, enable me to be a blessing to others and tell them about Jesus." Let us tell it while we can for it cannot be long now - time is running out.

Chapter 10 – Christ Taking Authority On Earth

Vs. 1-3 - "Another" has been added by the translators, for the original text reads, "And I saw messenger strong coming down from the heaven." It is very clear that this is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is seen "Clothed (arrayed or invested) with a cloud." Remember what the cloud or clouds speak of? Heb. 12:1 - the saints. Oh, this is wonderful, the saints are His adornment. Praise the Lord! The saints then in glory will be associated with HIM in His taking charge on earth. We will be with Him and have a part in this - Ch. 1:7.

"A rainbow was upon His head" - He has a rainbow hat. What does this speak of? Mercy. There will be mercy to the repentant, even in the time of judgment. If any call on the name of the Lord, they shall be saved (whosoever will). But we read for the most part, they repented not - Ch. 9:20-21 & 16:9-11. "His face was as it were the sun" - He will see all the hidden things. He is the true Light and He will expel the darkness and bring to light every hidden thing. "His feet as pillars of fire" - fire speaks of judgment and pillars speak of strength. He has the power to punish the wicked and He will do so because they reject His mercy.

Having in His hand a little scroll having been opened - is how it is in the original text. This is the scroll of judgment we read of in Ch. 5:1-9. There we read of it rolled up and sealed with seven seals. Then we read of the seals being opened - 6:1,3,5,7,9,12; & 8:1. It is open in His hand. "He sets His right foot upon the sea" remember what is represented by the sea? Peoples or nations, especially Gentile nations. "And His left foot on the earth" - The Jews or Israel are represented by the earth. Christ is declaring, "This all belongs to me. I am master of the situation. I am sovereign here." "He cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth." In Ch. 5:5, He is seen as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. A lion roars before He pounces on the prey - Amos 3:4,8,14,15 & Jer. 25:29-31. The Gentle Jesus will roar from heaven as a lion in the time of judgment. What is His prey? Christ rejectors, they have rejected His love. When He roareth, seven thunders uttered their voices.

Vs. 4-7 - The seven thunders are intelligent beings, because John understood what they said. Their voices were like thunder telling about judgment. The Lord told John to seal them up and not write them down, it wasn't time yet for them to be revealed. "That there should be time no longer" - has the meaning of "No more delay of these things." Christ is assuming authority and He says, "It is time, we will not give them any more time." He gave them time to repent and they did not repent. He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" - II Pet. 3:9-10. His purposes must be fulfilled, they have to come to pass. If He didn't hurry and complete this, no one would be left to enter into the Millennium. He takes control of the whole earth - Jew and Gentile, the Gentile nations no longer have the right to rule.

Vs. 8-11 - All the things contained in this book haven't been fully told yet, they will be revealed as we go on. Notice John was to eat the book, it was to become a part of him (digested). It was sweet to the taste, because it was a book out of the hand of the Lamb. It was God's Word. John partook of the contents of the book (he ate it up). In this case, the judgments God declared to the prophets and what is yet to be fulfilled concerning the inhabitants of the earth. It became bitter to John's belly. John must prophecy a new prophecy. These different judgments will be revealed to us in the remainder of this book. John's experience here is just how the Word of God is to us today. As we feed on the Word, it is so sweet, just like honey. But when it is made real in our lives, and becomes part of us when it is digested, it begins to work and it is not so pleasant. We see how corrupt our flesh is. Trials come, persecutions, separations, etc. It becomes bitter - II Cor. 4:16-17.

Chapter 11 – The Two Witnesses

Vs. 1-4 - This is a continuation of chapter 10. The mighty messenger of 10:1 is the voice speaking in this chapter. The Lord Jesus Anointed taking His place as "the God of the whole earth" - V. 4. Remember this is symbolic, John is not actually given a measuring staff, this is how he sees it in vision. The measuring staff simply speaks of the Word of God.

John was told to "measure the temple of God, and the altar and them that worship therein" - revealing to him what is marked off for the ministry of the two witnesses. They are given to prophecy and to preach to their own people in Jerusalem where the temple is. Notice, they were not to witness to the Gentiles, "the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot" for 42 months (3 1/2 years). Compare Luke 21:20-22.

"I will give power unto my two witnesses" (V. 3), Christ gives them their authority and power to be His chief representatives to Israel in those days. They will witness 1,260 days (3 1/2 years), which is the first half of the seven year tribulation period. Just what are they witnessing or prophesying of? They are warning men against the false prophet and against making a covenant with the league of nations and of the coming of the Antichrist. Their testimony will be concerning the people of God, the temple and the worship at that time. They will no doubt be telling that the Scripture reveals what this man will do. That eventually his image will be put in the temple and they will be forced to worship it. They will measure with the Word of God (we are measured by God's Word).

We are not told just who these two witnesses are. We are given their characteristics and conduct. Perhaps they will be two specific people. "Clothed in sackcloth," which was the clothing of grief in the Old Testament. It certainly portrays the sorrow that will come upon that nation and how they should be in mourning. We read in Joel and Isaiah, "Howl for yourselves and weep." Jesus said to the daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children" Luke 23:28-31.

The message of the two witnesses will be of mourning and warning and repentance. This certainly is the mercy of God to Israel to give this message from the witnesses unto them. The two witnesses are the "two olive trees and the two candlesticks (V. 4), which we read of in Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14, the two anointed ones. Isn't this just marvelous, this prophecy was given in Zechariah's day. "Two olive trees" speaks of them being filled with the Holy Spirit, sons of oil. They will have a special anointing and will prophecy in the spirit and power of Elijah, like John the Baptist (Mt. 11:11-14; 17:10-13; Lk. 1:11-17; Mal. 4:5-6). They are called two candlesticks, spiritual luminaries. It takes olive oil for the candlesticks to bring light. They could be two men who lead a company of people. Two is the number of witness - Deut. 19:15 and John 8:17.

Vs. 5,6 - I don't think literal fire will come out of their mouth like a dragon, but if any man tries to hurt them, they will be able to pronounce judgment on them. If any man tries to kill them by the sword, that one would be killed by the sword. They will pray to God like Elijah and have power to punish those wicked rebellious people. These are the same miracles Moses and Elijah performed.

Just like God anointed Moses and Elijah for a particular time and ministry, He will anoint these two for His purposes at that time.

Some people mistakenly believe that these two will be Moses and Elijah come back to earth. That cannot be, because Moses and Elijah have their glorified bodies and could not be killed as the two witnesses will be (Lk. 9: 30-31). God doesn't have to bring somebody back from the dead. He always has material He can use. God will have two men at that time who will be faithful and on fire for the Lord. No doubt they will be Jews. Their ministry will stir up the false prophet against them. The Antichrist will be in the world then. I don't know, but perhaps the two witnesses will know who the Antichrist is and warn the people.

V. 7 - The Antichrist will kill them, but he can't hurt them until "they have finished their testimony of 3 1/2 years. Their being killed by the Antichrist after he comes back to life, means that they are killed at the middle of the seven year tribulation. Their ministry will counteract the testimony of the false prophet, who will be leading the nation Israel into an alliance with the false kingdom. We will read of the power of the false prophet when we get to chapter 13. What a time that will be! I don't plan to be here. Some may ask, Why the Lord allows the two witnesses to be killed when before this nothing could touch them? They have run their course and finished their ministry.

V. 8 - We know exactly where their bodies will lie, in Jerusalem where they probably were known as the prophets of doom. Why does God call Jerusalem "Sodom and Egypt?" Because of their disobedience and rejection of His witnesses. Sodom speaks of wickedness and Egypt of rebellion. No doubt this event will be telecast by satellite to all the world.

Vs. 9,10 - They will not bury them, thinking to add to their shame. They will celebrate their victory over them in giving gifts, because they won't have to listen to these men any more. (3 1/2 days corresponds with their 3 1/2 years of ministry.)

Vs. 11,12 - After 3 1/2 days God raises them up, they come alive. They hear those welcome words of the Lord, "Come up hither." We might say that they have the last laugh, triumphing over their enemies. Their enemies had to witness them going to heaven "in a cloud" (a cloud of saints). Whether they are saints already in heaven or some that have been killed, we are not told. We do know this, it is in the middle of the week of seven years and the souls under the altar are not taken up until after this.

Vs. 13,14 - God shows His displeasure at how they treated His witnesses. A great earthquake takes place and a tenth part of Jerusalem is destroyed and 7,000 die in the earthquake. The "remnant" are those who believed having received the testimony of the witnesses, this ends the second woe, every woe is increased judgment.

The Seventh Trumpet – Vs. 15-19

The sounding of the seventh trumpet announces the triumph of Christ's kingdom. Great voices in heaven proclaim the arrival of our Lord's eternal kingdom - established on earth as it is in heaven.

V. 15 - Let us compare this verse with Chapter 10:7, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh

angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." The culmination of divine plans at hand. How exciting this is to read! John is taken in vision to the very end of the tribulation period. In anticipation of that time, we can be assured that it will happen, for it is God's Word. Rom. 4:17b, "...God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." He does that because it is His purpose and His Word is yea and amen - II Cor. 1:20. It is sure, it is established.

Vs. 16,17 - The 24 elders fell upon their faces in reverence, worshiping and praising Christ as the Lord God Almighty. They know exactly what is happening and they thank Him for taking charge and reigning. Oh, what a day that will be!

V. 18 - The nations were angry, but their judgment is come (Ps. 2:2-9). The time for the wicked dead to be judged (Rev. 20:11-15). Also the giving of rewards unto the righteous ones (Isa. 62:11; Rev. 22:12).

V. 19 - What does John see in the temple of God in heaven when it is opened? The ark of His testament. What does that speak of? It speaks of His Word that shall be fulfilled. The lightings, voices, thunderings, earthquake and great hail means the continuance of judgment. In other words, judgment to come out of the book of judgments. We by faith look forward to the day when Christ shall reign. We rejoice in anticipation of His kingdom being established universally in every part and place.

The following verses are the proclamation of realized hope.

Ps. 119:89 - "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." God's Word is lifted above all the changes wrought by time, above all the shifting circumstances of life, above the state of the temporal and transient. His word is settled for ever in heaven.

God knows every detail about every thing that has happened in the past. He knows everything going on right now throughout all the vast reaches of space. He knows every event, from the smallest to the greatest, that will ever happen in the ages and eternities to come. Acts 15:18.

Where is God's Word settled? In heaven. It is beyond the reach of man. Mt. 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." The galaxies will pass away, but God's Word will remain and "All will be fulfilled" - Mt. 5:18. All God has spoken will be fulfilled in spite of man's unbelief or working against it.

Rom. 15:4 - "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." God's Word comforts our hearts as we lay hold of His promises to us. We patiently wait in hope for the fulfillment of His coming for us.

James 5:7-8 - "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." May we establish our hearts, be strengthened by the firm certainty of the final outcome. For the coming

of the Lord is very near. Let us rejoice in hope, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" -Heb 10:37. Be ready to answer when asked the reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear - I Pet. 3:15.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" Tit 2:13.

Heb. 6:18-19 - "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil..."

I Peter 1:3 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..."

Chapter 12 -Two Wonders In Heaven

V. 1 - The word "Wonder" in this portion means "A sign." So there appeared a great sign woman in heaven. Of course not a literal woman. She is symbolic. Her clothing bears this out (the sun, moon and 12 stars). God likens His people to a woman in scripture. In Isaiah 54:6-7 God speaks of Israel as a woman forsaken. In II Corinthians 11:2 the church is called a chaste virgin.

This sign woman represents all the family of God which is in heaven at that time. She is associated with the sun, moon and the stars. I Corinthians 15:35-43 helps us to understand this description. There we find a lesson on the resurrection. Verses 37-39 is an illustration given to help us to understand the spiritual. It is one of the greatest testimonies against evolution. Every plant has its own seed and its own body. It never changes or evolves from one to another. It is always the same, birds beget birds, fish beget fish, cows beget cows, etc. With plant life, we sow a dried up dead looking seed in the ground and wonder if there is life in it. But that seed planted will spring up and grow. So also is the resurrection - V. 42.

When God raises His people from the dead, they will have different glories. Some will have a glory like the sun (shine with the greatest glory). They have taken in more of Christ and will radiate more of His life. Some will have a glory like the moon and others of the stars, according to how they yielded and let God work in their lives. So we see ranks in the resurrection. Compare Song of Solomon 6:9 & 10; Also Philippians 2:15. The moon and the stars are glorious, but I want the sun glory don't you?

We are also reminded of Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:9). In it his family were figured by the sun, moon and 11 stars. This sign woman, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of stars - illustrates the family of God. The twelve stars could represent the Old Testaments saints, because the number 12 reminds us of Israel. We don't want to confuse the family of God with

the church. The church is just a part of the family of God, not the whole family. Ephesians tells us of the Jews and Gentiles being two different groups, but through Christ's death they are made one. The middle wall between them has been broken down. The believing Gentiles have come into the household of God which was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

V. 2 - The woman (the whole family of God) is giving birth to a child. Her travailing pain shows that this is during the midst of tribulation.

Vs. 3-5 - another "Wonder" or sign appears in heaven, "a great red dragon," which is Satan. I will comment of the heads, horns and crowns in the next chapter. A third part of the angelic beings have given their allegiance to Satan and he controls them. The woman that we first saw in heaven is now seen on the earth, because, part of God's family is still there. God is not through with humanity yet, there is a man child that is to be born. The devil is against God's people and is ready to devour the man child.

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron..." Let's compare Revelation 3:21 and 2:26-27. The man child will be the overcomers out of that Laodicea and Thyatira condition which will be a time of persecution and tribulation. A man child means "a manly son," not mature, still a child. It cannot be the church because the church is mostly already in heaven. It cannot be Christ (as many suppose). He was not born like this and caught up to heaven as soon as He was born. Comparing scripture with scripture - the man child has to be the 144,000. All of Israel, they are the third rank we have read of in Revelation. We read of them in chapter 7 being sealed with the Holy Spirit on earth. In chapter 14 they are seen in heaven. Chapter 12 is the only place this company could have been taken up to heaven. After Satan is cast out of heaven, he will persecute these people and try to kill them, but God translates them. They are represented by the five wise virgins of Matthew 25 that are ready for translation by having oil in their lamps and go into the wedding of the Lamb as guests.

V. 6 - The family of God who remain on the earth have to flee into the wilderness. It is as though they have given birth to the 144,000. A wilderness is a barren place. In Matthew 24 Jesus warned, when you see these things come to pass, flee from Jerusalem. Don't stay, come down out of the house top. Pray that it be not on a sabbath day, so you can travel farther than a sabbath's day journey. Escape (flee) for judgments are coming - Mt. 24:16-21.

God prepares a place for them and takes care of them for 3 1/2 years (Compare V. 14). After Satan comes down and looses the demon forces, from that time on to the end of the tribulation, these people will be preserved by God. They are the elect we read of in Matthew 24:22. If they were not protected, they would be killed and there would be no one on earth to receive Christ when He comes. They endure unto the end of those awful days and are saved by God in a miraculous way - Mt. 24:13.

War In Heaven

Vs. 7,8 - Often in this book of Revelation there is a going back to fill in the lose ends in the story. All of this is so we can get the connection or full story. We have already read in chapter 8, that Satan fell from heaven (8:10). Here we are told how it came about. There will be war in heaven, a

battle between the good angels and the bad angels. When Christ takes His throne in heaven (Ch. 4), Satan will know his time is short. He will redouble his efforts to defeat God. Of course this is still future, but John saw it in vision as though it already happened.

As the days go on toward Jesus' return, Satan is going to try that much harder to defeat the people of God, especially those who are looking for their Lord to come. If he can defeat them, in that measure Satan robs God. Satan and his forces are in the lower heavens now and have a place there (Eph. 6:12). But when this battle takes place, Satan will not prevail and shall be cast out of heaven. Satan and his forces have to be cast out, because Jesus must have complete authority in heaven before He can on the earth (Mt. 28:18). He will take what belongs to Him.

V. 9 – There is no doubt who the great dragon is, for his titles are given here. He is that old serpent, called the Devil or Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he will be cast out into the earth and the fallen angels that are in league with him will be cast out with him. You know, Jesus saw a vision of this which is recorded in Luke 10:18. Satan is not in hell today as some people have imagined. Verse 4 states that Satan's angels are a third part of the angelic beings of heaven. What havoc Satan has done.

Victory

V. 10 – The triumph of God's kingdom is foretold. There is going to be a loud shout of rejoicing when Satan, the accuser of the brethren is cast out, which accused them before God day and night. Job 1:9-11 - Satan went before God accusing Job, saying he only follows you because you give him everything he wants. Just take it all away and he will curse you. The Lord did and Job didn't. It was a severe test, but Job acknowledged his weakness and dependence on God by offering sacrifices. Satan will accuse you to yourself or he will use someone else to accuse you. Aren't you glad to know Jesus now is on the right hand of God interceding for us as our High Priest – Heb. 7:24,25; 8:1.

V. 11– This verse speaks particularly of the man child, but this is how all God's people overcome. There is no other way. We have no merit of our own. Our victory is "by the blood of the Lamb." And then "by the word of their testimony." The more we declare our faith and God's faithfulness the stronger we become spiritually in the face of defeat. If we are sick, we can declare "I am healed by the blood of the Lamb." That is the word of our testimony.

We even have to testify to Satan and show him what we believe, like Jesus did when tempted by the Devil, He said, "It is written..." We take hold of His Word and declare it as our own. We also read here that, "they loved not their lives unto the death." Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" – Job 13:15. What could Satan do then? The Apostle Paul said, "neither count I my life dear unto myself" – Acts 20:24. Sudden death is sudden glory. The Lord will not let you die until you have finished your course.

V. 12 – The heavens will have reason to rejoice because heaven will have been purged of Satan and his hordes, but what about earth? "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth. The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time – I Pet. 5:8. He has about 3 ½ years to do what he can – V. 14.

Vs. 13,14 – Satan goes after the family of God that are still on the earth. But God helps them, “two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness.” This speaks of great protection and propulsion. Ps. 91:4; Deut. 33:27; Isa. 40:29-31. Oh, praise God! Let us lay hold of His Word.

V. 15 – This no doubt will be an army he will send after them. Satan will put it into the heart of the Antichrist to persecute these people, hunt them down and to kill them. Satan knows they are God’s people and that they will inherit the earth. They will be the nation that is going to rule on the earth (Israel).

Vs. 16,17 – This probably will be an earthquake that swallows the army. Satan is so wroth he goes after those he could find left in Palestine – Mt. 24:16-20. Some will be killed (Compare chapter 6:9-11 with chapter 15:2,3). They are Jewish overcomers, they got the victory over the Antichrist and sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, praising Him for His ways.

Chapter 13 – Two Beasts

V. 1 – This is the third vision view point. There are 5 vision view points in this book. We have covered 2 already:

1st – (Ch. 1:10) John was taken in spirit to “*the Lord’s day*” and heard a trumpet voice behind him. Turning to see the voice, he saw the whole Church Age from the view point of the Lord’s day.

2nd – (Ch. 4:1) John was caught up in spirit through an “*open door in heaven.*” He beheld heavenly scenes from that vantage point and also earthly scenes.

This 3rd vision view point, John in spirit “stood on *the sand of the sea.*” He is on earth again beholding earthly scenes as they unfold from the beginning of the 7 years of tribulation to its close. We find a description of 2 beasts in this chapter, together they constitute the Antichrist as the usurping king and false prophet.

John saw the first beast “*rise up out of the sea.*” At the first this beast pictures the united world powers of that period. Perhaps it will be called the new world order, who knows? It will be the outgrowth of Gentile rule. “*The sea*” does not mean a body of water, but speaks of the nations of the world. We compare chapter 17:1-15, “*the sand of the sea*” speaks of the shifting, unsettled conditions of that time. That is the condition of this world, shifting, not steady. Nations today are leaning toward a global society, in an effort to build a stronger international order. This will lead up to the time when the Antichrist will come on the scene and unite the whole world under his leadership.

The time is soon for the first rank of the church to be called up to heaven. For we know by scripture that they will be gone before the Antichrist is ruling or the beginning of tribulations days - Rev. 3:10.

The beast has “*7 heads and 10 horns.*” This reminds us of chapter 12:3. There they represented the

satanic forces in heaven which rule those on earth. Here in chapter 13 we have the outward manifestation of those united nations ruled by the wicked forces in heaven. The “7 heads” refer to 7 nations that will rule as head of all the nations. Like the security council making decisions for the whole body of nations in the U. N.

The “10 horns” with crowns speak of smaller nations or kings (they have crowns or power to rule). Compare chapter 17:12. John saw this 7-headed empire in vision as it will actually be forming. Ten lesser nations will support this empire. The Antichrist will become the one world ruler as we will read.

“And upon his heads the name of blasphemy” - the name speaks for the character of this world empire. It will be blasphemous against God. It appears even more wicked in chapter 17:3 – “a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy.”

V. 2 – Daniel 7 describes the 4 world empires of Gentile times. The beastly features of those first 3 empires will be the basic features of the coming world empire. It will be swift as a *leopard*, operating with dashing rapidity, being devil empowered and controlled. It will be deliberate in movements (feet of a *bear*). It will roar like a *lion* speaking great things and blasphemies as we will read in verses 5 and 6. The mouth gives him away.

In Daniel 7, the 4th world empire is seen as a *dreadful, terrible and strong beast*. Also represented in Daniel 2 by iron legs and feet of iron and clay.

“The dragon (Satan) gave him his power.” Satan is the chief usurper of this Antichrist government. Verses 1 and 2 speak of the time when they will say peace and safety, all will seem wonderful. Verses 3 to 10 speak of the last half of the week of 7 years (Dan. 9:27).

V. 3 – We note a change, instead of 7 heads the Antichrist himself is the beast, the ruler or head of the world empire. Compare chapter 11:7 and 17:8,11. The beast is the Antichrist, the emperor, a dictator. “He was” when he receives the deadly wound. “He is not and goes to hell,” but he comes up, alive, “and yet is.” Raised by Satan’s power, it is a great miracle which will call forth the admiration of all the world.

V. 4 – There are devil worshipers even today. The devil causes this man to become so prominent and powerful that he is the center of attraction instead of the empire.

V. 5 – Notice, “There was given unto him” – Satan empowers him, but God allows it. God has the measurement of his time, just 42 months and no longer, which is 3 ½ years or 1,260 days. He has “a short space” – chapter 17:10. The duration of the devil is “a short time” – chapter 12:12. Think of this, the world will follow one who will only continue a short space, instead of turning to HIM who shall reign forever. They reject the true and run after the false – II Thess. 2:10,11.

V. 6 – His big mouth is mentioned over and over. He opened his mouth in blasphemy (1) against God, (2) his name, (3) his tabernacle, (4) and them that dwell in heaven. Four is man’s number and the number of the world in Scripture.

V. 7 – Some saints will be overcome by Satan, but he can only kill their bodies. Chapter 15:2 tells us they will have *“gotten the victory over the beast.”* They loved not their lives unto death, they are mostly Jews.

V. 8 – Everyone whose name is in the Lamb’s book of life will not worship him. They would rather die than worship him. Death is not defeat for the believer, but glory.

V. 9 – Notice the difference here from the statement uttered 7 times to the 7 churches (Chapters 2 and 3), *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”* Why the difference? Because all whom God will count as in the church will have been taken to heaven by that time. All who have ears to hear, will hear as dwelling on earth.

V. 10 – How people measure, God will measure back. Those enemies that kill will have to go into captivity and be killed also. God will see to it. Read Mt. 7:12 and Gal. 6:7.

This first beast is Antichrist as king, the national political ruler.

Another Beast

V. 11 – The beast of verse one will rise up out of the sea or nations, but this second beast will come up out of the earth. Often the “earth” speaks of Israel in the Scripture. So it is possible that he will be a Jew. But there isn’t much to be found to show that is true. But it is clear that he is a religious leader, the false prophet. Mt. 24:24 says that many false prophets will rise up, but this one is what all the others are only the forerunners.

The false prophet comes forth in a modest way from the established religious world, without observation at the first. Perhaps a priest, it is even possible that a Jew will become pope. That is just possibilities. But one thing is certain, he is a counterfeit of the dear Lamb of God.

These two beasts – the Antichrist as king and the Antichrist as false prophet will work hand and glove together. The second beast working for the first. Together they will influence the whole world, nationally and religiously. We find the second beast called the false prophet in Revelation 16:13 and 19:20. He is seen in Daniel 8:9 as a “little horn;” and in John 10:12,13 as a “hireling;” and in II Thess. 2:8-10 as “that wicked or lawless one.”

Notice in Revelation 13:11, he looks like a domestic beast (not a wild beast), like a lamb. A lamb is used for sacrifice. He will look so kind and lovely, but he has “2 horns.” Horns speak of power and he has a double symbol of power. We know by comparing scripture with scripture that he purposes to be cosmopolitan that he may win the Jews and Gentiles. He does not speak as a lamb, but as “a dragon.” His speech gives him away. He speaks like the old devil, because he is empowered by him.

V. 12 – “He exerciseth all the power of the first beast.” Where did the first beast get his power? Rev. 13:2, the dragon. Who is the dragon? Rev. 12:9, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan. The false prophet causeth people to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. Perhaps he will bring the Antichrist as king back from the dead, Satan will any way.

V. 13 – He will perform great miracles even making fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. How will he be able to do such things? Of course it will be by Satan’s power.

V. 14 – He will deceive men by deceiving miracles. Who is the arch deceiver? Satan. II Thess. 2:9 calls these miracles, “lying wonders.” Men did not believe the miracles that Christ performed, but they will believe these deceiving miracles by the false prophet. What is the essence of these two beasts? Self-exaltation, glorifying man. What is the essence of Christ? Others and glorifying the Father.

V. 15 – Gentile times began with an image, which Nebuchadnezzar had made (Dan. 2). Gentile times will end with another great image, the image of the Antichrist. It will appear that the false prophet will give life unto the image. The word “life” is not in the original Greek text, it reads “breath.” So in some deceivable way, the image will seem to breathe and speak. Mt. 24:15 informs us that the image will stand in the temple. In Dan. 9:27; 11:31 and 12:11, the image of the Antichrist is called the abomination that maketh desolate or the abomination of desolation. The image standing in the holy place shall be a terrible abomination.

Vs. 16,17 – Those who are written in the Lambs book of life will not worship the Antichrist or take his mark, but the unbelievers will (v. 8). Also compare chapter 14:9, “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

There will be some kind of devilish mark, the Satanic counterfeit of the sealing of God’s people that we read of in chapter 7:2-4 and 14:1. How does God seal His people? By putting His Holy Spirit in them, filling them with His power.

V. 18 – Six is the number of man. Human perfection comes short of God’s perfection. The number of God’s perfection is seven. The unbelievers will take His number 666 to buy and sell, when they could have taken of the water of life freely. Rev. 22:17, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Chapter 14 – The 144,000 In Heaven

After reading about the coming of the Antichrist and of the False Prophet in chapter 13, we read in chapter 14:1-5 an interruption in the general program. It is a heavenly parenthesis.

V. 1 – John looked and beheld the “Lamb” and with Him the “144,000.” The Lamb will be the

important figure in glory, because through His sacrifice mankind has been redeemed. Mankind could not be in heaven except by faith in Christ's death and resurrection. Notice, the Lamb "stood," He is the *conquering Lamb*. The Lamb is the great figure through-out this whole drama of Revelation. He is the One and only One found worthy to open the book of judgments (Rev. 5 & 6). He is the Redeemer, mankind are the redeemed ones. We will never be the redeemer. He will always be head and shoulder above everyone else and we would not have it any other way. Consider Phil. 2:6-11; I Tim. 6:15; Heb. 1:6-10,13; Rev. 5:8-14.

Remember we read of the 144,000 in chapter 7, when they were on the earth and being sealed (7:3-4) with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13 & 4:30). Now in chapter 14 they are in heaven. When were they caught up to heaven? It has to be the man child of chapter 12, the same company of believers from Israel. The Greek text says they had the name of the Lamb also. It reads, "And I saw, and behold the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a Hundred and Forty-four Thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads" (compare Chapter 7:3). Having the name of the Father, is their Jewish mark, having the name of the Lamb tells us they had accepted Christ, their Messiah.

In contrast to God's sealing of the saints, we read in chapter 13:16-17 that the unbelievers had the name of the beast (or his mark in their foreheads that they belong to Satan). Praise God, the sealing with the Holy Spirit of the saints is their anointing, filled with God's own Spirit. God desires to seal all His people with this precious gift. Sealed unto the day of redemption. God says, these are mine, they have my seal, my Spirit.

John 14:17 – the Holy Spirit dwelleth with all believers, for when they were born again they were in a new realm, the realm of the Spirit. For they were born of the Spirit. But God has a precious gift to give His people. The gift of His Spirit to *be in* each one who receives the gift of His Spirit. Then the Spirit not only dwells with the believer but *in* them. I like the illustration of a corked bottle being thrown into the water, it is in the water. But you uncork the bottle and the water fills the bottle.

Back to Rev. 14:1, they are standing on "mount Sion (Zion)," in Heb. 12:22 we read of the heavenly Mount Zion. The mount Sion of earth is southwest of Jerusalem. "Sion" means "a fortress, a monument." This company of Jewish believers stand with the Lamb on the heavenly Mount Sion, enjoying their eternal fortress of security and glory.

V. 2 – John hears the voice of heavenly joy and an orchestra "of harpers harping with their harps." Harps in scripture speaks of joy. Heaven will be a joyful place of praise.

V. 3 – They sung as it were a new song. It is peculiarly theirs, exclusively their song. No one else could learn that song. They will sing of victory and glory that only they experienced. For they lived and overcame in the new order of things set up by the Antichrist. It will be a song fit to be sung before the throne and before the living ones and the elders. What a wonderful scene we are privileged to read about now and will see and hear (experience) in heaven.

V. 4 – "Not defiled with women" does not mean that they are young bachelors. Women speak of religious bodies many times in scripture. For example, we will read in Rev. 17 of the Romish church

as the mother of harlots. So we see that the 144,000 are free from the spiritual contamination and corruption of their time.

“Virgins” speak of separation, they are not only separate from the world, but from religious entanglements that would defile them. They are truly born again, “redeemed from among men.” This company is special and distinct from the living ones and the elders, and from the multitude no man can number. They are unique and separate in their history, experience, and reward. They compare with the 5 wise virgins of Mt. 25.

They follow the Lamb whethersoever he goeth. Isn’t that sweet? They follow, but the Bride is with Him, walking with the Lamb. They are the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. Not the firstfruit of all the saved, but the firstfruits among the Jewish people in that new beginning with Israelitish people.

V. 5 – What a wonderful testimony, true Israelites. Compare what Jesus said of Nathanael in John 1:47, in other words having true faith and holding on to it. These are wonderful overcomers, for they lived in the time of hell’s worst lies, when the whole world had gone mad over lies. They stand approved, blameless before God from the midst of a condemned world. Yet they are by no means the highest class of saints. They come in at a period when the Bride is already made up.

They sing in the presence of the living ones and elders, thus expressing a lesser place. They have no crowns nor are they connected with the throne as the living ones and elders. Yet they have a distinction and glory which none but themselves can ever share. They are the particular witnesses for the Father and Son during those darkest days of Jacob’s trouble. They take the first rank with Christ in his special relations in the final redemption of the Hebrew race. They have the honor.

The Everlasting Gospel Proclaimed

Vs. 6-7 – Oh, praise the Lord! In His mercy He sends a messenger to preach to all the world the Everlasting Gospel. “Flying in the midst of heaven” tells us of the swiftness of the anointed messenger or messengers that shall go quickly all over the earth. Jesus also told of this in Matthew 24:14,31, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come...he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Oh, the grace of God!

The message is a three-fold exhortation, “Saying with a loud voice:” “Fear God,” don’t fear the Antichrist, fear the living God. “Give glory to Him,” for the hour of His judgment is come. “Worship Him,” don’t fall down before a man made image. The God that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water deserves honor. The Antichrist never created anything and can only play deceiving evil tricks with the things that are made. God’s Word cannot be bound, II Tim. 2:7-9. It liveth and abideth forever, Mt. 24:35. This is one of the very last calls of grace to an apostate world. His elect will receive and heed the message. Praise God!

V. 8 – We read of another messenger happy to announce the fall of religious Babylon. No one will have to fear that old mother harlot any more. Chapter 17 & 18 described her actual fall in detail and

who God uses to destroy that false church.

Vs. 9-11 – Another messenger announces the doom of the beast worshipers. We have already read that only the unbelievers will take the mark of the beast, those who are not written in the Lamb's book of life (ch. 13:8). How good is our God! In His kindness He warns the people not to take that terrific mark on themselves. First God send the messenger to preach the Gospel. Then He sends a messenger to announce judgment. Then this third messenger to warn people against receiving the beast as their God to worship. Ps. 86:5, "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."

How will God get these messages out to all people? We are not told, but it will go forth to all the earth. For God is not willing that any should perish, II Pet. 3:9,15. Just think of it, God in His grace and mercy to man, poured out His wrath against sin on His holy Son on the cross. He tasted death for every man, Heb. 2:9. But when men refuse God's Son, their sacrifice for sin, refuse God's salvation, He has no other choice but to judge them. Verses 10 & 11 describes the full and final consequence of those who reject Christ and accept the Antichrist instead. The terrific judgment coming upon this earth is described only in abstract form here, but in chapter 15-19 we will read of it in detail.

V. 12 – This will be a terrific time, because the image will speak and tell people to worship the Antichrist or be killed. Many dear saints having received the Word of the two witnesses will be martyred, some will miraculously escape and endure to the end of tribulation and be saved, Mt. 24:13. Both will be counted as overcomers (those who loved not their life unto the death and those who endured to the end of tribulation). The remnant of Jews in Israel will be tempted and tried and tested. It will take the patience of the saints to keep God's commandments and the faith of Jesus, and not worship the Antichrist and his image. There will be no more fence sitters at that time, they will either be hot or cold.

V. 13 – This is true of all saints of all ages, but especially true of those who lose their lives for their faithful obedience in those terrific days of tribulation. Death will be a blessed release and they will be rewarded with sweet rest. "Yea, saith the Spirit" – the Spirit confirms it. Remember the souls under the altar, they cry "How long, O Lord...dost thou not judge and avenge our blood." He tells them, until the others are killed. These are the others that will be killed for Jesus sake – 6:10,11. We have it so easy. No one kills us, but maybe a little with their tongue. But some believers are being tortured and killed for their faith today in some parts of the world. The Lord has allowed it. I still believe all things work together for our good. Perhaps the down turn of the economy will work good and some will turn to the Lord as a result of trouble coming their way.

V. 14 – In the rest of this chapter we see Jesus coming symbolized. The Lord Jesus Christ is the "Son of man" seen coming in judgment. Here in just a few verses tell of the end time judgment. It will be more fully explained in chapter 15-19. The white cloud speaks of a host of glorified believers associated with Jesus when He is revealed from heaven. On His head is "A golden crown." He will be King of kings then and Lord of lords, the judge of this earth. "In His hand a sharp sickle," a sickle is used at harvest time. Today is the day of grace, but then will be the real harvest time of judgment.

Vs. 15-17 – These messengers, redeemed humanity agree with Christ in the judgment. Harvest time is very near. Wickedness has become common, it is no longer shocking as it was formerly. It is close, all around, even in our neighborhoods. How patient the Lord has been to put up with all the wickedness in this world. There is religious wickedness also. Great men in the religious world make wicked statements against the truth and there is so much greed and fakery and religious show, etc.

Vs. 18-20 – The altar-fire is the fire of divine justice. The messenger of the altar-fire is outraged by earth's wickedness and cries for vengeance. Such iniquities, blasphemies and abominations as the Antichrist develops, have no parallel on earth. The sharp sickle of judgment strikes and the vine of the earth is cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. Armageddon is God's winepress, the most terrible battle of all ages – Joel 3:9-14; Isa. 63:1-6. So many nations with their armies gathered to the mad slaughter and so powerful the instruments of war, that blood will flow even unto the horse bridles for a circuit of about 200 miles. The valley of Megiddo also called Jehoshaphat, will be the battle field. Jerusalem and the holy land will suffer untold chastisement.

Chapter 15 – The Seven Last Plagues

V. 1 – John saw “another sign in heaven, great and marvelous.” It is 7 messengers having the 7 last plagues. These messengers are saints. Seven is a representative number, for they include all the saints who fully judge the world in preparation for the fulfillment of God's promises. These saints will judge with Christ the rejectors of His love. What do we learn from this? Self-judgment comes first – I Cor. 11:31-32. If we judge ourselves (by the Word), we will be able to help Christ judge this world.

The sign John saw was not just the messengers, but also what they have, “the 7 last plagues.” The number seven in Scripture represents fullness or completeness. In these 7 last plagues is the fullness of God's wrath. Just think of how long God has offered His grace? Over 2,000 years, but then the full measure of His judgment will be poured out on those who rejected His grace. Also “last” plagues means there were former ones (chapters 8 and 9). That was the beginning of sorrows, but now we read the fullness, God's wrath is “*filled up.*” So they are great and marvelous. His judgment is just and it will come to a completeness.

V. 2 – We have read of a sea of glass before in chapter 4:6, but there it was not mingled with fire. It was like crystal and spoke of the laver of regeneration – Titus 3:5. Man can only reach God and come before the throne through regeneration, being born again. “Mingled with fire” speaks of fiery trials. These dear saints were persecuted by the beast, but they had gotten the victory over him, they are beast overcomers. The Lord had allowed tribulations to come upon them through Antichrist persecution. They got the victory over him, and his image, and his mark, and the number of his name. They refused to take his name on their foreheads and hand and they were killed. He took their lives, but they had the victory. Oh, praise the Lord! They are seen having the harps of God.

You know, Christ's death seemed like apparent defeat at the hands of His enemies, but in dying He

conquered Satan with his own weapon, death – Heb. 2:14. These dear saints we are reading about, *counted not* their lives dear unto themselves. They chose death rather than worship the Antichrist. It seems like defeat, but it is glorious victory. These saints are the souls under the altar (6:9-11) and the dear ones of chapter 12:17 - “the remnant of her seed” and also the two witnesses of chapter 11. Read also 13:7,15; 14:13 & 20:4.

Vs. 3-4 – “They sing the song of Moses,” telling us they are Jewish believers. They know Moses song which is found in Ex. 15:1-19 and it extols God’s greatness. They have come to know Jesus as their Messiah, for they also sing “the song of the Lamb.” He is the real Passover Lamb.

The King James Version says, “King of saints,” but the Greek text says, “nations.” We know as referring to the end time, He will be the King of the nations. Also verse 4 says, the nations that are left after the wholesale destruction by terrific warfare and plagues that God will pour out will come and worship before Him and acknowledge Him as the true and living God and that He is Holy and Righteous – Jer. 10:7 and Ps. 86:9-10.

Vs. 5-6 – This tabernacle includes all the glorified saints in heaven. For chapter 21:22 tells us, the Lord Himself will be the temple. These 7 messengers are judging priests – Rev. 5:10, full overcomers joined to Christ, in judging the world. Clothed in pure white linen, speaks of their priestly office and their holy character. Their breasts girded with golden girdles means affection or mercy restrained. Rev. 1:13 describes Christ clothed in this manner. He comes as *Judge* and they come as judges. They agree with Him, that He is righteous in judging the world and they carry out His judgments.

Isaiah 28:21-22 states that judgment is God’s strange work. God does not want to judge people (II Pet. 3:9; Jn. 3:16). Christ bore all the judgment due mankind on the cross. But when men refuse to accept Him as their sacrifice, He must judge them. He is forced to do so. He would be unrighteous, unholy, if He did not judge this world and all its wickedness. His holy government demands His judgment.

Vs. 7-8 – One of the four living ones are not a different company from “the seven messengers.” One instructs the others, showing the co-operation of this group of saints. The “living ones” speak especially of their priestly character and as the seven messengers of their official work as judges, I Cor. 6:2,3. The Greek text reads 7 golden bowls instead of vials. Vials are small, but bowls could be bigger. They are *full*, it is the culmination (as the number 7 indicates) of God’s wrath.

The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power.” Smoke indicates fire. If we set a fire, the smoke comes up. God’s judgment being poured out, the smoke is seen. We read a powerful description of God’s power and wrath in Psalm 18:8 (vs. 7-15). God’s glory is even witnessed by His judgments. His *Shekinah glory* appeared as a cloud of smoke – Song of Sol. 3:6 and Isa. 6:4. Shekinah means “resident.” He made His presence known to the people of Israel by a visible symbol. As seen on Mount Zion and in the tabernacle, etc. (a glowing brightness).

Why was no man to enter the temple? They were not allowed to come into God’s presence in intercessory prayer for a Christ rejecting world at that time. There can be no interference with God’s judgment. For the cup of iniquity will be full to the brim. The bleeding Lamb will become a roaring

Lion – Isa. 31:4. Oh, how long-suffering God has been with man, but when the time of judgment has come, His fury must thunder forth.

Chapter 16 – God Wrath Poured Out

Chapter 15 was an introduction or preparation for this chapter 16, the culmination of God’s wrath. We read in chapter 8 of their commencing or beginnings. These last bowls, God’s severest wrath are poured out: war, devastation, famine, poverty, deadly diseases or plagues. Compare Jer. 25:15-16.

Since Revelation 16 is a chapter of culminations, we find the appropriate word “great,” eleven times.

Great voice – V. 1 & V. 17

Great heat – V. 9

Great river Euphrates – V. 12

Great day of God Almighty – V. 14

Great Earthquake – twice in V. 18

Great city – V. 19

Great Babylon – V. 19

Great hail – V. 21

Great plagues – V. 21

V. 1 – Notice, that all are united and in agreement in this judgment, the 7 messengers and the 4 living ones of chapter 15:7. How wonderfully these glorified saints work together. It is important to note that it is the *great voice* heard out of the temple calling the shots, saying to the 7 messengers, “Go your way and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth.” WOW! The bowls are full to the brim – Ch. 15:7. Not only full, but without mixture – Ch. 14:10. In other words, poured undiluted into the cup of His indignation.

V. 2 – “Poured out...upon the earth.” The earth refers especially to Israel. To Israel is the promise of the earth. To Israel were the blessings promised first and also the judgment. Upon apostatized Israel the severe judgment of God will fall first. We know by scripture the great battle will start the judgment which will be inflicted on those with the mark of the beast, that worshiped his image. “A noisome and grievous sore” – the Greek text reads “an evil and malignant ulcer.” These visitations of wrath will succeed one another, each one preparing the way for the next, each one more dreadful than the preceding one.

V. 3 – The second messenger poured out his bowl upon the sea, which speaks of the nations. We just can’t imagine what great warfare that will be. It begins in Israel and will spread to the nations. The ravages of war will be so terrible, that the nations will seem like a sea of blood and death. Everything will be blood, blood, when all the implements of war are unleashed.

V. 4 – The third messenger poured out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of waters and they became blood. These speak of religious bodies. Rivers and fountains of water should bring

refreshing, but those false religions have poisoned the people. No wonder God has to judge them.

Vs. 5,6 – This may be the messenger of V. 4. Anyway, he boldly declares that God is just in all His acts of vengeance and praises Him for having thus judged. Yes, some religious bodies have destroyed and shed the blood of the saints. Many were killed in the dark ages of the church and also during religious wars. Isn't that unbelievably sad, yet true? This messenger (one of the full overcomers) agrees with God and says they deserve what you give them. They shed enough blood, let them drink it. Rev. 13:10; Mt. 7:2; & Gal. 6:7. It is always fulfilled, they that sow so much evil will have to reap it.

V. 7 – Often in scripture the altar speaks of Christ or Calvary. Calvary confirms the messengers witness of God's righteousness. Christ bore the judgment due mankind to redeem them. Men who reject their Redeemer and worship the Antichrist deserve judgment. Religions that poisoned men's minds and shed true believers blood are worthy of their fate. Christ is righteous in pouring out His judgment on those who worship the beast because of Calvary. Christ and all the saints in heaven agree. The Lord is true and righteous and His judgments are just. He shed His precious blood for all mankind and if they reject Him, God must judge. Many modernists call themselves Christians, and yet they deny the blood sacrifice. God will have to judge them severely.

Vs. 8,9 – We feel sometimes when it is so hot and sultry that we can hardly stand it. But when He pours out His judgment on the sun, it will be so terrific, men will be scorched with fire. Did this cause them to fall on their knees and ask for mercy? NO. They repented not and even blasphemed His name when He was the One who had power over these plagues. Some people think that during tribulation there will be the greatest revival. Some even teach that the devil will repent and be saved. That's not what the Word of God says. Over and over we read, they repented not. Such teachers do not know the Word of God as they should. We do need revivals, but saints, let us pray, 'Lord revive me.' We should also be telling what we know of His Word.

Vs. 10,11 – How wicked and rebellious they will be. For they know there is a God, because they blasphemy the God of heaven. Is this not further proof of God's justice in judging them. The Greek text says ulcers for sores. The darkness will hinder them from going for aid and relief. Blackouts in great cities stops everything.

V. 12 – The Euphrates was the boundary line of Israel. God said from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates is your land – Gen. 15:18. So the meaning here is that the boundary or restraining line will be removed from the eastern nations. What is behind it? Russia, Iran, Red China and etc. How terrible it will be when all those godless vile nations come against the Holy Land. It will be at God's appointed time, they cannot come one day sooner, Zech. 14:1-2. God will permit miracle working demons to influence kings and people to go against Israel in that final world war. Compare Ch. 9:14,15.

V. 13 – Here is a trinity of evil – the dragon is Satan, the beast (the Antichrist as king), and the false prophet. What does this mean that 3 unclean spirits like frogs comes out of their mouths? Their tongues will be so devilish, full of deceit and lies. They have power in their tongues, evil spirits that will not appear unclean and frog-like to men, but wise and eloquent.

V. 14 – These evil spirits will gather, persuade the whole world to come to battle. It takes something to persuade all nations, the US has not been able to do this, neither the pope. But these evil spirits get the job done. They seem to work miracles confirming their deceitful utterances. God pronounces them spirits of demons, unclean like frogs (slimy messengers of darkness, croaking).

V. 15 – At Christ revelation to the world, He comes as a thief. This is not how He comes for the rapture of the saints. We are waiting for Him. He comes as a thief only to those who are not waiting for Him. “Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” This speaks of salvation. They only have His garments when born again, the garments of regeneration.

The “blessed” mentioned in verse 15 are those who are found ready when Jesus reveals Himself from heaven to the world. The church will be revealed with Him, for they make up the clouds of saints that accompany Him. “*Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments*” (V. 15). They have kept themselves in strict readiness by watchful expectation and not letting themselves be defiled from the abominations around them. This secures for them a share in the blessings. For those last day saints of Israel there is a danger that they will not be ready which would be their shame before his all searching eyes. They could lose their reward, even after enduring those awful days.

V. 16 – “*Armageddon*” means, “hill of slaughter.” It is in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which means “Jehovah is judge.” It is also called Jezreel or “it will be sown of God.” It is the place where some of the greatest battles were fought in Old Testament times. It is north of Jerusalem. That great, great battle of Armageddon will be fought there. The kings of the earth will be gathered there (V. 14).

V. 17 – Praise the Lord! The end of judgment of the living wicked has come. We will read the details of it in chapters 17 through 19. Then we will read in chapter 20 the judgment of the wicked dead.

V. 18 – The voices are the redeemed who stand in agreement with God in His judgment of men who refused His grace. “*There was a great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth.*” In the last several years there has been more earthquakes all over the world, even in places where they have never been before, but then will be the greatest one ever.

V. 19 – the earthquake will divide the great city of Jerusalem into three parts. The prophet Ezekiel was told to shave his head and beard, dividing the hair into three parts showing the judgment of Jerusalem (Ezek. 5:1-11). We know the great city is Jerusalem because other cities will fall also, the cities of the nations and Babylon, (religious Babylon will especially be given the cup of the fierceness of God’s wrath).

V. 20 – What an earthquake, we can hardly imagine this. There are some big isles like Australia and mountains like the Rockies, etc.

V. 21 – Hail weighing a talent (50 lbs. And up) will fall upon men (my Bible reference gives 125 lbs). The plagues God put on Egypt were only a little picture of the plagues of the end time. All

nature arises in triumphant agreement with God in His visitations of wrath. The earthquakes from beneath the earth and the hail from the skies. When God poured out His wrath because Christ was made sin for us – there was convulsions in the natural world (Mt. 27:45-54).

There is no repentance of men, they blasphemed God. They are not ignorant that it is God's judgment they are experiencing, how wicked man is.

Chapter 17 – The Scarlet Woman

Chapters 17 and 18 tell of the judgment of Babylon, which is Rev. 2:22 in detail. It is also spoken of in chapter 16:4-7 & 19b.

V. 1 – This is one of the seven messengers we read of in chapter 16 that had the seven bowls of God's wrath. The messengers are identified in the last part of V. 14 – *“And they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”* They are the full-overcomers of chapters 4 and 5 figured by the 4 living ones and 24 elders. They are not angelic spirits, but redeemed humans. This messenger says to John, *“Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore...”* Some people call the Bible an obscene book because of such language as this. But the Bible is God's Word and it is words of truth. God tell us how He views things. Man does not want to hear the truth, only wanting to hear sweet words of flattery and lies. God tells it how it is.

Religious bodies are likened to women in scripture. Some times in a good sense, like the bride of Christ. In this place, this woman is, *“the great whore,”* and refers to combined Christendom with Catholicism as the head. Notice where she sits, upon many waters. Verse 15 tells us what this means. She sitteth on many people, multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

V. 2 – Catholicism is known as the most powerful church and it is. Kings, Queens, Presidents, even the Soviets call on the Pope. She is the mistress of the world and makes all nations drunk with her fornication. She talks so sweetly about “peace on earth.” The Pope travels all over the world spreading its influence and seducing masses of people and leaders of nations. He talks about peace and yet confirms the teaching of “The Church” as it is called.

“The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” Wine is intoxicating and the whole world is now intoxicated, they all want peace. We want peace also, but the right kind of peace, not man made, it wont last. For we know by scripture, when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction will come – I Thess. 5:3. True and lasting peace will only come to pass when the Prince of peace reigns. Some dear saints are taken up with the ecumenical movement, it does sound good. They talk so much about love for one another, even among Pentecostals. They don't understand that everyone who belongs to Christ is already one in Him. They are members of one body, the body of Christ.

Many compromise the truth so they can fellowship together. The result is not unity, but confusion. May we stand for the truth and not compromise. We all enjoy fellowship and it grieves us when fellowship is broken. But we want fellowship in the perfect will of God and not otherwise. We love

all God's people, but let us stay faithful to the truth as we have been taught. We must be faithful to God, our first love is to Him, then we will show it to man. Sad to say, many put their fellowship with others first.

Some would say the Apostle Paul went along with Jewish law and tradition when he had Timothy circumcised. Yes, but those Jews were ignorant of the truth and Paul was being a testimony to them that he walked orderly. He desired to win those Jews, so they would listen to his message and be saved. Another time Peter who knew the truth was not faithful to it, but separated himself from the Gentiles to appease Jewish legalists. Paul withstood him to the face. Peter knew better, he was responsible and was guilty of compromising the truth.

V. 3 – John was carried “*away in spirit (not in body) into the wilderness.*” This is the forth vision view point. The wilderness speaks of the wilderness condition of the world where the nations operate. John sees “*a woman set upon a scarlet coloured beast.*” This is the woman of verse one, the “*great whore.*” The scarlet color refers to the blood thirstiness of this beast. It is full of names, but what kind? Of blasphemy, of cursing. This beast refers to Gentile nations turned against God. It is the revived Roman Empire with 7 heads and 10 horns. We have already learned in our study that “*heads*” speak of nations or leaders of nations. “*Horns*” speak of power, here they refer to kingdoms that have power. The 10 horns are the same as the 10 toes of the dream image in Daniel 2. There we read of the stone cut not with hand (Christ) cast on it and it went to pieces.

V. 4 – Her description sound beautiful. Purple and scarlet colors are prominent in Catholicism, giving the appearance of religious royalty. The people think it is all so wonderful, some don't know any better. Much rich adornment is mentioned here: gold, precious stones, pearls, and a golden cup. There is none so rich as the Vatican with its expensive art, idols, etc. She is rich and powerful. The Pope has a ring that ones kiss when they bow to him, even kings bow and kiss his ring. Her golden cup is filled with “*Abominations and filthiness of her fornication.*”

V. 5 – No wonder it is a mystery, a beautiful woman robed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, but riding a blood thirsty beast. It is strange, it is a mystery. Notice the great whore is the mother of harlots. Who are these harlot daughters? They are all the Protestant denominations that follow in mothers' footsteps. Even the churches who use to be fundamental have turned out to be just like mother, flirting with the world while claiming to be espoused to Christ.

V. 6 – Isn't this a shocking statement? But true; she is a hard boiled woman. Dear Christian martyrs have died at her hands. Many suffered imprisonment and were burned at the stakes, and much more. Yes, this mother whore has shed much blood especially during the dark ages of the church. Much has happened inside the convents that has been kept secret and covered up. Some who have escaped that system have told things they knew and witnessed. “*When I (John) saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*” The Greek text reads, “I wondered having seen her a wonder great.” Great amazement would be a better translation. Certainly John would be amazed to see such in vision.

V. 7 – The messenger asked John why he was so amazed, for he would tell him the mystery of the woman and the beast.

The Mystery of the Woman and the Beast

V. 7 – The messenger informs John that he would tell him the mystery of the woman and the beast that carried her.

V. 8 – It seems like a riddle. We read of two stages in the description of the beast. The first stage is the revived Roman Empire, itself. The second is the person that becomes the head of it, the Antichrist, himself. “The beast that thou sawest was,” refers to the beginning of the 7 years when the Antichrist will be one of the seven kings. “And is not,” he receives a deadly wound by the sword. That will be in the middle of the 7 years. Where will he be if he is not? In hell, in the pit of the abyss, but he shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, his deadly wound healed, “and yet is.” It will be a great miracle that will cause unbelievers to wonder after him – Rev. 13:3-4, 14. Now we understand the riddle.

There will be a 7 headed empire, the Antichrist empire, although he will not be revealed until he ascends out of the bottomless pit. There will be a wonderful time of peace on earth. They will say at last we have peace and safety. Then what will happen? Sudden destruction will come – I Thess. 5:3. A little before the middle of the 7 years, trouble will come. We have read of the seals being opened, the trumpets sounded and the bowls poured out. Trouble will come like a mountain tossed in the sea, and the sea being turned to blood, etc.

In vision John is standing at the middle of the 7 years of tribulation when he sees these things. Dan. 9:27 says in the midst of the week (speaking of the week of 7 years), which agrees with John’s view point of these happenings.

V. 9 – “the 7-heads are seven mountains.” I think it is interesting that Rome, Italy is built on seven hills, but we know from scripture that mountains speak of nations. The woman sits on the 7-headed empire. In other words, she is in the drivers seat, controlling them by her influence.

V. 10 – Of the seven kings, “five are fallen” (dethroned in war by another more powerful), “one is.” The Antichrist still in the pit of the abyss is the other that “is not” yet come; “and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.” Then it will no longer be a 7-headed empire, but one empire ruled by one man. “A short space,” he will be given 42 months, which is 3 ½ years – Rev. 13:5.

V. 11 – The Antichrist will be one of the seven and will become the eighth when he is raised from the dead and rules the revived Roman Empire.

Vs. 12,13 – These 10 kings are the 10 toes of Daniel 2 on the dream image. They are allied with the Antichrist, the culmination of the revived Roman Empire. God calls it that way. It is not called the Roman Empire any more, but in God’s eyes it is still. All those nations come out of the Roman Empire and will be united with the Antichrist.

V. 14 – “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” Praise the Lord! Jesus will be victor over the Antichrist and his horns. God let them go so far and no farther. Read Ps. 2:2-9 and Dan. 2:44.

V. 15 – “The waters,” all humanity at that time.

V. 16 – The Antichrist and the 10 horns turn on the woman (Christendom) and destroy her. She has claimed to be the bride of Christ and she has to be judged before the true bride can be married to Christ.

V. 17 – Don't you just marvel at God's ways, the 10 kings and the Antichrist are just doing God's will and don't know it. Even Satan and all his hordes have to obey God. He uses them as his tools, in that way they are His servants.

V. 18 – She has reigned over kings and nations for centuries. She has had great power. The German Kaiser was made to walk bare foot over mountains in snow to ask the Pope's forgiveness. She has crowned kings. Her prelates pretend to live in celibacy, yet she boasts of her children. She claims to be the teacher, ignoring the Holy Spirit. She claims to be The Church, making herself a harlot. She also has shed the blood of saints, etc.

Chapter 18 – The Fall of Babylon

V. 1 – There is no doubt who this Messenger is, the same One we saw in chapter 10:1. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. He comes from heaven to take control of the judgment of the great harlot, Himself. In chapter 4 we read of His enthronement in heaven to reign as God Almighty. In chapter 10 we read of Him descending in His glory and power. With His right foot upon the sea and His left foot on the earth to take control of all things on earth. In chapter 11:16 we read of the 24 elders worshipping Him and saying, “We give thee thanks O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” In this 18th chapter we read of His coming, having great power to finally judge the great whore. The glory of His person illuminated the earth.

During this Age in which we are living our Lord is walking as Judge in the midst of the church (Ch. 1:10-20). Chapters 17 & 18 tells us of the time that Christendom will be judged and why.

V. 2 – Just think, Christ Himself will rejoice that the false deceitful bride is fallen. For she claims to be the bride of Christ. If He rejoices, should we not agree with Him. In chapter 15:6 we read how the redeemed human messengers are seen with their breasts girded with golden girdles. Which shows that their affections are restrained when judgment time comes. How long-suffering God has been for many centuries, when thousands upon thousands have been slaughtered by false religion. We should pray for the ignorant people in those systems or system to come out. Some don't know any better. It is our duty to warn them and pray for them.

That great system had become “a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” Birds speak of heavenly messengers and that is what the church was meant to be, but every unclean and hateful bird is found in her. For centuries she has been a stronghold for false messengers, though claiming to be true.

This is how God sees Christendom, as Babylon the great (17:5 – MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH). Babylon means “confusion.” She claims to be the gate of God, the means of God getting to man, but by her works and teaching she actually spread confusion.

V. 3 – Yes, she is guilty of spiritual fornication with the nations and kings of the earth. The merchants of the earth have gotten rich by her. The religious peddlers in Christendom are an abomination. She also has her hand in the world economy and politics of course.

V. 4 – God in His great mercy calls His people to come out of her before He judges her. There are many dear people of God in those religious systems. God does not recognize Christendom as His church. For years He has been calling His people out of sectarianism unto Himself. This will be His final call.

Vs. 5-7 – Her attitude is “I sit a queen,” in other words, I rule, I am in control of peoples and nations (17:15). She is so powerful today that you would think she would never see sorrow. She claims to be The Church, the only teacher and true witness of Christ, but she will receive the most terrible judgment because her sins are enormous. She will be paid back, rewarded according to her works.

Vs. 8-10 – God has been patient for centuries, but in His time judgment happens fast (V. 8 says, “one day” and V. 10 says “one hour”). We also read the prophesies of the overthrow of Babylon in Isaiah and Jeremiah. They will have their final fulfilment in the judgment of the great whore.

Vs. 11-13 – The religious peddlers lose their gain and the economy of the world will be greatly affected. Their profiting in all those delicacies, and precious things, and wealthy merchandise, including the souls of men is terrible. How many people do you suppose she is guilty of enslaving? And how many is she is guilty of sending to hell? Only God knows the exact and total sin of Babylon. The church was to be the witness of God in the world, liberating men by proclaiming the good news, but Christendom is guilty of profiteering with the bodies and lives of men and women while enriching herself. All these precious things listed here might be an imitation of the beautiful inward work of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, which figures the true bride of Christ.

Vs. 14-18 – This judgment hits the profiteers in the pocketbook and they will not like losing their business. It will be something when those 10 kings destroy the powerful city that has ruled nations for centuries (17:12,16,17).

V. 19 – We have read “one hour” several times now (Vs. 10,17,19). It will be sudden judgment and short. Just think, that system was built up in centuries, but destruction will come in “one hour.” We wonder what will be used to destroy the beautiful and wonderful city.

Vs. 20-21 – As we read in Jeremiah 5:63-64, so shall it be with religious Babylon. God has a marvellous memory. It was centuries and centuries before He spoke the same symbol that He uses here. The Word of God over and over agrees, it fits perfectly.

V. 22 – They ground their flour in olden days with a millstone. We don’t know much about that as

we buy our flour at the store. But it has to be ground at the mills. Anyway God uses simple language so people can understand.

V. 23 – No more burning of religious candles, no more weddings, for the religious system will be no more. All nations were deceived by her sorcery or magical arts. Religious wickedness is worse than other forms.

V. 24 – How sad, but now we understand verse 20. God will avenge, praise His Name. This chapter seems to end on a sad note, but that isn't the end of the story In chapter 19 we will read of the wedding of Christ and His true bride.

Just as the beast is the usurper, trying to reign in Christ stead, so Christendom is the rival of the bride of Christ. She must be judged before the marriage of the real bride can take place.

(Fox's Book of Martyrs and Haley's Bible Handbook records the wickedness and sins of Christendom, even of the saints put to death by her).

Chapter 19 – The Hallelujah Chorus in Heaven

Vs. 1-6 – There is a change in the vision John was viewing, from the earthly to a heavenly scene. "And after these things," after the destruction of Babylon (Chapter 17 & 18) which was an earthly event; John "heard a great voice of much people in heaven." A shout of triumph bursts forth from some of the heavenly saints. "Alleluia," which means "praise ye Jah" (used in the sense of victor – He was and is). This is the highest praise found in the Word of God.

They praise God for judging that great harlot, the apostatized church headed by the mother church, Catholicism. God "hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (Chapter 18:24). No doubt the voice of much people includes those who have suffered persecution at the hands of Babylon. They glorify God for His divine justice saying, "Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God." Note the title "the Lord our God," we will have more about His titles in this chapter.

His judgments are "true and righteous" (V. 2), for the great whore did corrupt the earth. She pretended to be Christ's church and His voice in the earth as a purifying influence, but God charges her with corrupting it. The great false religious system had to be judged. Who did God use for her judgement? Chapter 17:12,16-18, those ten kings united with the Antichrist destroy her and her judgment will last for ever and ever (V. 3).

The four living ones and the 24 elders which figure the full overcomers of the true church agree with God's judgment and say "Amen" (V. 4). Again they fell down and worship God, "Alleluia" He is victor. It is a privilege to fall on our face before Him and give Him the glory He deserves.

"A voice came out of the throne" (V. 5), this must be the 4 living ones for they alone are see "in the

throne” (Chapter 4:6). What does the voice say? “Praise our God, all ye his servants.” Praise Him for taking rulership and reigning. The full overcomers seem to always lead the heavenly hosts in worship – 4:8-11; 5:8-9; 11:16-17. We will see three groups of saints at the wedding of the Lamb in this chapter. The “servants” are one group.

All the host of heaven respond to the call to “Praise our God” (V. 6), “as the voice of many waters,” Oh, what a great sound that will be. Have you ever heard water falls, it is a terrific noise. “And as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” The praise just builds (Isa. 9:6 is fulfilled). Here is another title, “Lord God omnipotent,” Omnipotent means, “all powerful.”

The marriage of the Lamb

The crowning event of the Lamb’s reign will be His marriage (V. 7). With the false bride judged, the marriage to the real bride (a company of full overcomers) takes place. “His wife hath made herself ready,” the Lord can not marry just anyone. Not everyone in the body of Christ will be the bride company, because they are not making themselves ready. Oh, we want to be ready, we desire to be in that company. It is not just that we know this truth about the bride company in theory. NO! It is yielding to the Holy Spirit so that the Word God is made practical in our lives – Rom. 8:13 & Gal. 5:16.

Verse 8, in the Greek text reads, “for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” For everyone who is born again receives a robe of righteousness, being clothed with Christ’s righteousness. That is our standing, accepted in the Beloved. He washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. But they are not the bridal robes. The bride has made herself ready. She has made her bridal robe of fine white linen, her righteous acts. The Word made practical in her life, is manifested in her works of faith. The Greek for “fine linen” here means “brilliant,” bright white.

The bride is making her garment today and sending it on ahead. Her righteous acts are laid up to her account, awaiting the wedding day. So we read, “to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen.” It is the linen she made all her days on earth.

“He saith” unto John (one of the full overcomers), “Blessed (fortunate) are they which are called unto the marriage (V. 9). The called ones are the guests, another group present at the wedding. This makes three groups: servants– V. 5; the bride company– V. 7; guests– V. 9. Some will miss the wedding (Mt. 25:10), for they answered the call too late for the marriage supper. May this be a warning to us, consider II Cor. 11:1-3.

This full overcomer looks so much like Christ (V. 10), possessing His characteristics because of being changed from glory to glory by the Holy Spirit while beholding Jesus, II Cor. 3:18. John thought it was Christ and fell down to worship. But this one will not rob His Lord of the glory due Him. “See thou do it not,” I am just a redeemed human being. Just one of those precious full overcomers, “Worship God.” He is the worthy One (Compare V. 5). God made Jesus the supreme object of worship of redeemed humanity because He died for all mankind.

The Rider upon the White Horse

Vs. 11 – The use of symbols in the vision John sees helps him and also us to understand it. He saw “heaven opened,” it was God’s time for Jesus to be revealed to the world. God would have the world to know His choice, His Man. His Son is revealed as the Almighty One (Ps. 2:6-9). We are not told how soon this will take place after the “marriage supper.” It would seem that immediately after the marriage supper, the Lord gets up and comes forth with the armies of heaven following Him. Some think it could be a year, because we read in Deut. 24:5 that a groom could not go out to war for a year after the wedding according to the laws of Israel. But the honeymoon could be after the battle of Armageddon which would be the Millennium. It really makes no difference. When it is God’s time, He shall be revealed.

We read here that He sat on a “white horse.” Of course there won’t be a literal white horse. A horse speaks of power and He shall come forth in power. White speaks of holiness and righteousness. “He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True.” Here is another title. He has this name because by His life on earth, He was proven to be Faithful and True. He has the right to judge and make war. “In righteousness he doth judge and make war.” His judgment is righteous because He is righteous. His discernment is absolute and intricate.

This is not the same white horse of chapter 6 that speaks of nations bringing in a “peace and safety” plan. Jesus will come to overthrow all their schemes and plans that He may bring peace. A holy war will be waged. We hear this term used by heads of countries, as if to say that God is on their side or that they are fighting for God. That their’s is a religious war. Nonsense! But this will be a holy war. For the Almighty will come in judgment to the wicked of this world.

V. 12 – “His eyes were as a FLAME OF FIRE.” All things are naked and open unto His eyes – Heb. 4:13. He knows the hearts of men and their motives. “On his head were many crowns.” This is quite a contrast to the 10 crowns the Antichrist will have. Christ will have universal dominion. “He had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.” What is that name? Could verse 16 indicate what it is and where it is written? I will not guess because I might be wrong. Besides it says no one knows, but He Himself.

V. 13 – “He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood,” this tells us of severe judgment. Isaiah 63:1-6 gives a description of this time. God will descend on the armies of those nations assembled at the battle of Armageddon and great will be the slaughter of men at that time. “And his name is called The Word of God,” another title of Christ - Jn. 1:1 and also I Jn. 1:1.

V. 14 – These are all the saints in heaven. It is not called one army, but the armies of heaven. They follow their captain, they join Christ in His judgment of the world. They are upon white horses, meaning they come in His power. They are clothed in fine linen white and clean, clothed in His righteousness. This is not the same linen clothes of the bride (V. 8) The Greek text in V. 8 is brilliant, lustrous, (her righteous acts), but here it is white, light , and refers to our righteous standing in Christ. Even the word “clothed” is different. In V. 8, there was given to her a brilliant other garment. In V. 14, the word clothed is “endued” or “invested” as with authority and power. But of course the bride company is included in the armies of heaven.

V. 15 – This will be the great battle of Armageddon. It will finish up the war, there will be no more wars after that. Christ will rule with a rod of iron – II Thess. 1:6-10.

V. 16 – On His vesture or official royal robe and on His thigh (the symbol of strength) a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” I Tim. 6:14-15, the King of those being kings and Lord of those being lords. We long for that day when He assumes all authority that has been given to Him by the Father more than 2,000 plus years ago (Mt. 28:18).

Vs. 17-18 – Another supper, this one is for all those vultures and unclean birds – Lk. 17:37. The birds of prey will feast on the bodies of all that came against the Lord, cleaning up the earth after the slaughter.

Vs. 19-20 – It is hard to believe that men could be so wicked, but they are Satan inspired. The two false leaders (the Antichrist as king and Antichrist as false prophet) will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire which burns with sulphur or brimstone. They don't go to hell first, but right into the eternal abode of the wicked. They don't die first, they are cast there alive to burn for ever.

V. 21 – The rest were killed with the sword of him that sat on the horse. And what is that sword which proceeded out of His mouth? All He has to do is speak their judgment and they are slain. The sword is the Word of God.

Then all the fowls were satisfied fully with the eating of their flesh. We know by Ezekiel that Israel will be seven months burying their bones – Ezek. 39:11-29. People who insist on resisting and rejecting the Lord, their end will be terrible. But “blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” – Ps. 2:12.

A Review of Things found in chapter 19

Two Songs:

The first song (Vs. 1-4) is the song of the fall of Babylon (the judgment of the great whore) by the voice of *much people* in heaven in a great song of triumph. It begins with “Alleluia” (praise ye Jah) in the sense of the victor (He was and is). “Salvation and glory and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.” He is the worthy One, because “true and righteous are His judgment.” He judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication. Does God get angry? YES, with righteous anger. He will avenge the blood of His servants that she shed - Rom 12:19.

The second song (vs. 6-8) is the triumph song that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. It also includes the marriage of the Lamb. More voices in this song. It is the voice of a great multitude and sounds like many waters and of mighty thunderings. Again this song begins with “Alleluia” and end with the wedding. The Greek text reads “Hallelujah; because our Lord God, the Omnipotent reigned.” We should rejoice, we should exalt and give glory to HIM; because the marriage of the Lamb is come and the wife of Him prepared herself. It was given to her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints.

We have read that part of the heavenly saints volunteer to shout in triumph over the harlot, but the choir leaders summon all to rejoice because the Lord God Almighty reigns. The lowly Man of

Nazareth rules – Isa. 9:6 – “the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father; The Prince of Peace.”

The saints are more occupied with His personal glory (His reign and marriage) than with the destruction of His foes.

Two Suppers:

The first supper is the supper of the Lamb (the marriage supper). There are three groups of saints at the wedding: servants – V. 5; the bride – V. 7; and the guests – V. 9. We make our choice which group we will be in.

The second supper is the supper of God – Vs. 17,18 & 21. So great will be the slaughter of men in that battle, the fowls of heaven will be invited to eat their flesh. They help clean up the earth. God slew men with His “sword” which “proceeded out of his mouth.” Just think everything we see and know came into being that way – Gen. 1 – “God said,” and “the Spirit of God moved” and “it was so” and God pronounced it “good.” He spoke everything into being.

Two Armies:

The first army is Christ and His army – Vs. 11, 14. When Christ is revealed to the world, He comes from heaven with His armies, all the saints in heaven. He comes forth conquering and to conquer. He assumes all authority, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords – Isa. 11:4.

The second Army is the Antichrist and his armies which are the allied evil powers gathered against Christ and His army – V. 19. The greatest battle of all the ages will be fought and the greatest victory will be won.

Two Triumphs:

The first triumph is over religions Babylon – Vs. 1-4. Apostatized Christendom will be judged.

The second triumph is over political Babylon – Vs. 20-21. It will be proven forever that man is a failure religiously and nationally. Man’s very best, brightest, mightiest and richest is a horrible stench in God’s nostrils – II Thess. 2:3-4, 7-10. Jesus Christ shall then reign in and over the earth as He had been in heaven – chapter 4. He shall reign in righteousness and peace for 1,000 years – chapter 20.

Titles of Christ in chapter 19:

The Lord our God – V. 1, title of supreme honour and glory.

The Lord God omnipotent – V. 6, Jesus the once lowly Man of rejection will reign as God Almighty.

The Lamb – V. 7, by His sacrificial death for sinful men He earned this name.

Faithful and True – V. 11, proven by His life on earth, thus He has the right to judge and make war.

The Word of God – V. 13, John 1:1.

KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS – V. 16, the universal Emperor.

Also V. 12 – He has a name that no man knows, but He Himself.

In chapter 19 we saw the Great Conqueror with the conquerors coming down from heaven, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Victorious in the last great battle – Armageddon, and with Him the Millennium will begin outwardly. For Christ reign will begin when He is enthroned in heaven, as we read in chapter 4. But the world will not know it until His revelation to the world – Rev. 19. Between chapter 4 (His enthronement) and Rev. 19 (His revelation to the world) is the tribulation period.

God is very merciful, but He is just and righteous as well. When men disregard warning and entreaty, then they meet God's justice.

Chapter 20 – The Millennium

This chapter covers 1,000 years and falls in 4 parts.

- 1 – Vs. 1-3 Satan imprisoned
- 2 – Vs. 4-6 Believers reigning
- 3 – Vs. 7-10 Satan loosed
- 4 – Vs. 11-15 The wicked dead judged

V. 1 – John in vision sees a messenger come down out of heaven. It is Christ Himself. He has the key (which speaks of authority) to the bottomless pit. There is no doubt that this is Christ. For in chapter 1:8 He says He has “the keys of hell and of death.” The bottomless pit is the temporary abode of the wicked dead. Christ also has a great chain in His hand, which speaks of the mighty binding power He will use against Satan.

Vs. 2 & 3 – Also there is no doubt who Christ lays hold of, “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan.” These are titles of our adversary. Christ casts him into the pit of the abyss or hell and shuts him up for a 1,000 years. A seal is set upon him “that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” My wont this world be different during the millennium with the arch deceiver locked up? The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2) wont be around to stir up all kinds of trouble. He will not tempt and deceive men or nations to go to war. After the 1,000 years, “he must be loosed a little season.” Notice the word “must.” There are many absolutes in the Bible. Like we read in the gospels – Jesus must go to Samaria, etc. We will understand this “must” later on in the chapter. So we have read of Satan's imprisonment for the millennium and now we will read of the believers reigning in the millennium.

V. 4 – The “thrones” refer to the thrones of the saints. They will reign with Christ and judge the world at His command. The martyrs that were beheaded because they witnessed of Jesus and spoke the Word of God are pointed out especially. They lived and reigned. We read of the souls under the altar in chapter 6:9-11. They were told to be patient until your brethren will also be martyred. Here we read of the brethren killed during that terrific time of the Antichrist's reign. They were faithful and chose death rather than take the mark of the beast and bow to his image. There will be some

dear saints at the end time that will be beheaded, but “they *lived* and *reigned* with Christ a thousand years.” Of course not in the same way as the church, not in the same nearness, but they will reign just as all saints will reign with Him in some measure. Those precious ones have special mention and a special place. But how much better to escape all that and be kept out of that hour coming upon all the earth, the tribulation period.

V. 5 – (But the rest of the dead *or the remaining dead* lived not till the thousand years were finished), that would be the wicked dead. It is clear from the Greek text that this statement is a parenthesis. This remark is interjected to give us understanding of what happened to the rest of the dead. We will read of them later in this chapter. The next statement – “This is the first resurrection” – all the saints who will be raised at the beginning of the millennium are in the first resurrection. You can read Verses 4-6 together without the parenthesis.

V. 6 – Praise the Lord! All those resurrected in the first resurrection are children of God, and the second death hath no power on them. What is the first death? It is our death with Christ. I Cor. 5:14 – If one died for all then we are all dead.” If we died with Him, we escape the second death. Those who refuse to accept His death in their place will go into the second death which is the lake of fire. Verse 14 tells us the lake of fire is the second death.

Six times the number 1,000 appears in this chapter (Vs. 2,3,4,5,6, & 7). It is the millennium, for the word means 1,000 years. We will consider the names in scripture for the Age of the Millennium. “The kingdom of heaven” - Mt. 3:2 & 4:17 was at hand and would have come to pass if Israel had received their Messiah; because of their rejection the Church Age came in as a parenthesis. It is also called the age of “regeneration” - Mt. 19:28. Now individuals are being regenerated, but then the whole world will be regenerated. We read a nation will be born in a day and the earth as a whole will be transformed. Also known as “The kingdom” – Acts 1:6, the Messianic kingdom for which the Jews looked for and are still looking for, the Kingdom Age. We also read “The times of restitution” or “restitution of all things in Acts 3:21. During the millennium the Lord will restore, the temple will be built (Ezekiel gives the measurements) and Israel will be the head of all nations and not the tail any more – Deut. 28:13 & Isa. 60:12.

The following citations tell us something of the nature and character of the Millennium. Isa. 2:4 – there will be no more soldiers, they will become farmers and gardeners. Isa. 9:7 – it will be a wonderful time of peace, justice and righteousness. We can hardly imagine it, there is so much crookedness today at all levels. Isa. 11:8-9 – they wont have to be afraid of anything. Isa. 11:10 – a time of glorious rest, but blood will flow to the horse’s bridle first before this time can come. We don’t want to be here when the blood flows. We can be ready and the Lord made a way of escape. We want to go up when he comes for the first rank of the church. Isa. 32:1 – there will be a righteous King. No political parties fighting nor one king against another. Isa. 33:24 – there will be no sickness. Isa. 65:20 – just think how old the people will be. God will judge outward sins. He will give them 100 years probation and if they don’t yield they will be cut off. Micah 4:4 – everyone will have their own land. No fear because there will be peace. They wont have to be afraid to go out at night or have to lock up, there will be no robbers, etc.

Sorry to say, there will not be absolute perfection, because the human heart is the human heart and

has to be born again. Many babies will be born during the millennium and just like you and I they will be born sinners. The old creation will still exist and some will feign obedience. All will have to worship Christ, all will have to submit themselves – Ps. 18:44. Everyone will submit at that time – Ps. 66:3; 81:15. We read in Zech. 14:16-19, each nation will have to send an ambassador to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. Zech. 14:10 & Rev. 16:20 tells of great changes in the earth physically.

Vs. 7-9 – At the end of the millennium that old devil, Satan, shall be released out of the bottomless pit where our Lord cast him (V. 3). Has he reformed because of his imprisonment in hell? NO! He has not changed one bit. In fact he comes up with a vengeance because of his confinement. He goes all over the world to *deceive* the nations and to gather them together against Christ and the saints and Jerusalem.

Satan has always been deceiving people. He started with Eve and has been at it ever since. Just before the millennium his deception of the nations will climax with the craft and power of the Antichrist and the miracles of the false prophet. The result then will be the nations gathered for the battle of Armageddon, but Christ with the armies of heaven will defeat Satan and cast him into hell for a thousand years.

Verse 3 tells us, “He must be loosed a little season.” Why? As long as Satan was chained there was no outward rebellion against God. Satan was not present to deceive and incite people against Christ and His rule during the millennium. Satan will find a vast number of people “as the sand of the sea” who have only feigned obedience to Christ during His reign. They have not been born again. God will use Satan to gather together His enemies to one location for their judgment. It is the final purging of those living on the earth. God has Satan on His leash to do His bidding and then puts him out of commission for ever as we will read. So we come to understand why Satan “must be loosed a little season.” There is no war this time, as with Armageddon, for that will be the last war. God will do a new thing.

V. 9 – He will send fire down from heaven and devour them all. *Zap!* It will be a quick end. God knows how to handle His affairs. We read in Ezekiel 38 and 39 of the nations represented by Gog and Magog that will fight against “Christ at the beginning of the millennium. Those nations are again represented by Gog and Magog at the close of the millennium (V. 8). Gog was a son of Japheth, which means, “let him spread out.” Gog means, “high, to cover, to surmount, to top.” Magog was the land of Gog and means, “covering, overtopping.” Satan is always working in men to *exalt* themselves above God and go over the top, thus proving themselves to be children of Satan. What will be their end? Hurlled to the lowest pit, hell. This will be Satan’s last hurrah and man’s last chance to show to whom he owes allegiance.

V. 10 – Does it sound like the devil gets saved as some claim? NO! The lake of fire will be his eternal abode, eternal fire and punishment. The beast and false prophet will already be there (19:20). They will soon be joined by the wicked dead that are in the lowest sheol, hell (Vs. 11-15). How long will their torment last: It will be day and night for ever and ever. Where is the lake of fire? I don’t know, but God knows, His universe is big enough.

V. 11 – After the thousand years are completed, comes the great white throne judgment. The saints will never come before this great white throne judgment. It will be for the wicked dead only. A “throne” speaks of authority and “great” would mean supreme authority. “White” speaks of holiness, righteousness and of justice. Christ as God Almighty (Isa. 9:6) sits on this throne, “from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.” The whole old creation must *pass away* forever from His presence. There will be some real transformations in the earth and heaven. We will read more of this in the next chapter. There will be some great changes in the earth at the beginning of the millennium, a time of restoration. But at the end of the millennium there will be a complete renewal.

V. 12 – The wicked dead stand before their creator to be judged, they have no standing in Christ. The book of life is opened to prove they never accepted Christ as their Savior, for their names are not found in it (V. 15). God is a good bookkeeper and double checks. He looks in the books where their wicked deeds are recorded and also in the book of life. He is a righteous God and does not judge anyone unrighteously. Judgment is God’s *strange* work (Isa. 28:21-22). He does not like to judge, but He must because he is righteous. Did not Christ die for all men’s sins and save all who will receive Him?

Notice, the wicked are judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” So we see *ranks* even amongst the wicked. The Lord knows their works and has them recorded. God has given all judgment over to Christ (Jn. 5:22 & I Cor. 15:24-26).

V. 13 – Many bodies are in the sea, those thrown over board, buried at sea and shipwrecks, etc. They so doubt were eaten by sea creatures or de-solved to nothing, yet the sea will give them up and they will come forth out of their watery grave. Some have had their ashes cast into the sea, but God will bring them up. He can do it, He is a God of miracles. “Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.” “Death,” speaks of the grave, the receptacle of the body. “Hell,” speaks of the holding place of the soul and spirit, the bottomless pit, the pit of the abyss, lowest sheol. So we see the wicked, dead are brought up body, soul and spirit to be judged.

V. 14 – Both body and spirit are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. There will be no more graves and no more hell. The phrase eternal hell is unscriptural. The lake of fire will be unending.

V. 15 – Thank God we still have time of grace. We can still tell people about our Savior, so they can escape that horrible place. Once in a while someone listens and receives Christ as their Savior. All who accept our first death with Christ, will escape the second death.

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

Chapter 21 – The Eternal State

New Heaven and New Earth

V. 1 – There is just an introduction into the New Universe in chapter 21 and 22. Not a lot of detail is given, perhaps because we cannot really handle it. Compare II Pet. 3:10-13, when the day of the Lord comes, “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up...”. We also read in Heb. 1:10-12, the heavens and the earth shall perish...they shall wax old as doth a garment.” Does not the increasing number of earthquakes make it evident that “old age” is fast coming upon this earth. Isaiah 34:4 declares, “The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll.” There is going to be a marvellous renewal. Acts 3:21 says, “...until the times of restitution of all things...” or restoration.

In the millennium there will still be sin and corruption. A sinner will die at age 100. Sin is the reason Gog and Magog will happen. But in the eternal state everything will be in a perfect state – “and there was no more sea.” When God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1) there was no sea. But a great devastation occurred (Gen. 1:2), “the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” So the seas did not exist when the earth was first made. Isaiah 57:20 says, “the wicked are like the troubled sea.” Revelation 17:15 tells us that the waters or seas speak of the troubled masses of people. But in the eternal state there will be *no more old creation* (Isa. 65:17). Praise God!

V. 2 – What a vision John saw. This is the city Abraham looked for (Heb. 11:10), the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem. It is also “my darling” for which Jesus longed (Psa. 22:20 & 35:17). The holy city, the new Jerusalem is seen here in vision as a “bride adorned *for her husband.*” At a royal wedding the bride has adornments, a train and attendants, etc. The adornment of the bride of the Lamb is the other saints. Two facts suggest this, first, we read the enormous de-mentions of the city (Vs. 15-17); secondly the enumerable company of Revelation 7:9. So the vast size accommodates the enumerable company. We also see a picture of how other saints become an adornment of the bridal saints in Song of Sol. 6:1, 8-9, 13 and also in Psalm 45:9,13-15. All the saints in heaven are a part of that city.

V. 3 – Here is what the name “Emmanuel” actually means, “God with us” – “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men.” The tabernacle in the wilderness was God’s place of meeting with men then (Ex. 25:8). It was just a shadow of the holy city mentioned here. While Jesus was on earth, He was God’s tabernacle among men (II Cor. 5:19) “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” In John 14:9, Jesus said, “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” During Jesus absence, His followers have been God’s tabernacle (II Cor. 6:16), “for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” For ever all the saints will be the dwelling place of the triune God in the city in the sky.

V. 4 – We know there will be no tears in heaven. So what does it mean, that “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” The rest of the verse tell us, “for the former things are passed away” – sorrow, pain and death. Only glory by and by, only glory by and by, every heart ache gone for ever. Only glory by and by.” What a future is ours!

V. 5 – Yes, in the eternal state, God will make all things new, never to be old any more. It will always be new. Time will have ended, eternity begun. Our natural mind cannot understand this, so

the Lord verifies it, “these words are true and faithful.” For they are the words of the “Faithful and true One (Rev. 19:11). We have a faithful God and what He says will come to pass. Believe it! This will be the final result of redemption. Was it worth while, Jesus dying on that cruel cross? YES, the Lord will be with all His saints and they will be gathered round Him.

V. 6 – Judgment is done, everything is done. Praise the Lord, He is reigning! Alpha and Omega, He is the beginning and end and all in between. He is everything! We wish more were thirsty for the living water.

V. 7 – “He that overcometh,” means the whole new creation, all the redeemed viewed as a whole, inherit all things. All who believe overcome in some measure. There is quite a contrast between overcomer and unbelievers (V. 7-8).

V. 8 – The overcomers inherit all things, but the unbelievers have their part in the lake of fire. Mark 16:16 – “He that believeth *not* shall be damned.”

V. 9 – A description of the Lamb’s wife is found in Rev. 21:9 through 22:5. This portion connects us with the marriage supper (Rev. 19:9). This one who came to John and talked with him is one of the seven messengers which had the seven bowls (19:9-10 & 22:8-9). It is one of the full overcomers, he told John *not* to worship him, for I am one of your fellow servants – worship God! So we know for sure he is a redeemed human being.

The New Jerusalem

V. 10 – This is the fifth and last vision view point. This is a heavenly scene. What does the bride look like? John saw a city coming down out of heaven from God. Does this sound odd to you? We must remember these are symbolic statements. I Cor. 2:14, it takes the Spirit of God to make us understand it (I Cor. 2:10). Christ is everything and God uses various descriptions and symbols for His people. He calls them the bride and her adornments (21:2); the holy city, new Jerusalem (Vs. 2 & 10).

V. 11 – A Jasper stone looks something like a diamond with hues of purple and green at times. The glory of this city appears like a big diamond coming out of heaven. A small diamond is beautiful, but this is big, a big city like a diamond. There is no darkness in this city, for it is a city of light, radiant, bright shining, having the glory of God. Compare verse 23, “the Lamb is the light thereof.” A precious stone glimmers in the light which brings out the varied lustres and hues. What makes up a city? People and their dwellings.

Vs. 12-13 – It will be somewhat similar to the earthly Jerusalem. It will be surrounded by a great high wall, not of stone, but a wall of saints. I Peter 2:5, “Ye also, as lively (or living) stones are built up a spiritual house...” They are of Israel and possibly are the 144,000 of chapter 7 and 14. Compare Verse 17. There are 12 gates (3 on each side) and at the gates 12 angels; and the names inscribed are the 12 tribes of Israel. Israel are the gates, all the blessings of God to the world came through Israel. Christ was born a Jew of the seed of Abraham, of the lineage of David. Salvation comes through the Jews (Rom. 11:12,15). Through their fall, salvation came to the Gentiles. So how much more through their fulness; the receiving of them will be life from the dead.

V. 14 – In other words the wall is built upon the apostles of the Lamb. Jesus said the 12 apostles shall sit on 12 thrones and reign over the 12 tribes of Israel. They were the first to preach the good news, the gospel of Christ.

Vs. 15-16 – The city is four-square like a cubit. A cubical speaks of perfection, solidity and durability. The length, breadth and height are equal – 12,000 Furlongs. It is immense, room for the three companies of saints we have seen earlier in Revelation. The first company of chapter 4 and 5; the innumerable company of chapter 7; and the 144,000 of chapters 7 and 14.

V. 17 – See why we say the wall is possibly the 144,000 of Israel. The measurement is according to the measure of a man, that is of the messenger, which refers to redeemed man.

The city is made up of saints housed in their glorified bodies. They are pictured here as living stones with all the colors of the rainbow. Together they are seen as a brilliant *jasper* stone, clear as crystal (Vs. 9-11). The *jasper* stone means, “He will be made prominent.” We read in chapter 4:3 that Christ will be enthroned as Almighty God to reign – “He that sat was to look upon like a *jasper* and *sardine* stone” (Christ in His glory). He is the glory and light of the holy city (21:23). What brings out the different hues of precious stones? LIGHT. Christ’s glory and light is seen in each saint or living stone that makes up the city.

Vs. 18-21 – We see no dross there, all is clear and pure. There are three classes of the rarest minerals (*jasper*, *gold* and *pearl*) describing the beauty of that city. They express its worth, it is solid, not subject to decay. The believers will be on exhibit there forever. They will manifest the qualities of Christ that has been developed in them during their life on earth (that inward work). This is true with ALL the saints, whether overcomers of Israel or not. Their beauty will be according to how much they yielded to the Holy Spirit’s work of developing the Christ life in them.

Some saints will compose the city and street of gold, some the wall of jasper and others the gates of pearl. The first foundation is *jasper*. That stone was also on the breastplate of the high priest and had the tribe of Naphtali (meaning ‘my wrestling’) inscribed on it. The manifest glory which shines forth from Christ upon the Father’s throne is the result of the great wrestling of His soul in the garden of Gethsemane. Faced with being made sin, He won the victory, saying “not my will, but thine be done.”

He was obedient even unto the death of the cross. His work on the cross laid the basis for what was to be brought forth by His resurrection. In a wrestling term, we might say Christ threw Satan down and pinned him. When He ascended He made a show openly of Satan’s defeat, Col. 2:14-15. Christ prevailed, He came forth the head of a New Creation. Praise God! How do we prevail with God? By depending on Him in our helplessness and weakness taking hold of His strength – II Cor. 12:9-10. The *jasper* stone is clear like a diamond, with hues of color. Some saints have such a clear and transparent quality, which is the bright and precious characteristic of Christ displayed in them even now. How much more when they have their glorified bodies.

The second sapphire, in Hebrew means “to scratch or polish, hence to write and number.” In Greek

it means “telling out, a recounting.” How interesting, the Old Testament (Hebrew) figures a recording and the New Testament (Greek) a telling out. The *sapphire* is a deep heavenly blue. In Exodus 24:10 we read under God’s feet there was a paved work likened to a *sapphire* stone, like the body of heaven in clearness. In Job 28:16 it says the *sapphire* is very precious. In Ezekiel 1:26 and also 10:1 the throne of glory is said to have the appearance of a *sapphire* stone.

The bride sees this beauty of the *sapphire* in her Beloved – Song of Sol. 5:14, “His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with *sapphires*.” Belly is more correctly translated “bowels” and is called the heart in Psalm 40:8. The heart is the inward seat of the affections. Concerning the Nazarites (set apart ones or separated unto the Lord, “their polishing was of *sapphire*” – Lam. 4:7. The beautiful *sapphire* displays the body of heaven in its clearness. God dwells there and God is love. Love fills the heart of the Bridegroom, like precious *sapphire* gems. Love was the costly grace He manifested on the cross. And those of us who would be Nazarites in our walk must have that same heavenly grace, that same sweet spirit.

The third a chalcedony, is light colored with variegated colors like clouds. It means “copper like” and speaks of durability. Christ endured the cross – Heb. 12:2-10. He endured for the joy set before Him. How are we to endure? “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...consider Him that endure...lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds...” If ye endure chastening God dealeth with you as with sons. Shall we not be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?” For He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Some have this quality of Christ working in their lives today and are durable, not a fading veneer. The Lord does not care for feigned faith, a veneer of love, a pretended yieldedness. This beautiful quality will be exhibited in some for eternity.

The fourth an emerald is green and speaks of resurrection and means “enamelled” to cover with a glossy surface. In the breastplate, Reuben’s name was engraved on the *emerald* stone. Reuben being Jacob’s firstborn, he looked on him as his might and the beginning of his strength, the excellency of dignity and power. Leah named him Reuben, “see a son.” In Isaiah 9:6 God proclaimed the gift of His Son. “Unto us a Child is born: unto us a Son is given.” His Son is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person; His first-born; His only begotten; pre-eminent in dignity and power; a tried stone. Col. 1:17-18, in all things He has the pre-eminence. God looked on our affliction and has bidden us – “see a Son.” I John 3:1, Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” We may not show forth but a little of His resurrection life today, but some day Christ’s resurrection life and power will be on display in the saints.

The fifth stone, sardonyx has the color like a healthy finger nail, kind of rosy. It means “ruddy” suggestive of health. The glorified humanity of Jesus will be thus on exhibit forever in the saints. In Solomon’s Song, we read of the Shunamite, who typifies the bride of Christ and Solomon pictures Christ. She is found there sleeping and hears the voice of her beloved, knocking and saying open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled. But she is so occupied with her beauty and status that she loses him. By that I mean, when she finally gets around to opening the door, after admiring herself, he is gone.

She then searches for him, longing for him. The watchmen smote and wounded her; the keepers of the wall took away her veil. She had not had the right spirit of submission that the veil speaks of. She had been so taken up with herself. Now she realizes her mistake and says, "I charge you, I daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell him, I am sick of love." Her attention is now on him instead of herself. They ask her, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" She responds, "my beloved is white and ruddy (healthy), the chiefest among ten thousand" – Song of Sol. 5:10. When she gives him his rightful place in her heart and affections, he describes her saying, "thy temples are as a piece of a pomegranate with thy locks" – Song of Sol. 6:7. The inside of a pomegranate is healthy looking with the crimson color of blood.

Christ as a man was cut off in the prime of His life. He was not an old man, He was 33 or 34, healthy. He was spiritually healthy also, the delight of His Father. He was doing the Father's will, even when it meant the death of the cross. Phil. 2:4-11, He was submissive. He knew He was facing the cross and prayed in the garden, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Lk. 22:42). "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." He would that we be spiritually healthy – III Jn. 2. If your finger nails are healthy they have a ruddy look, which shows a good circulation of the blood. To have that good circulation, the heart must be right, pumping the blood. To be spiritually healthy our heart must be in tune with Him. Most important, that we are in submission to our Lord and head. The full overcomers are not only learning submission to Him now, but they more than any others will fall down before Him and worship Him – Rev. 4 & 5. His bride will be in perfect submission to Him for ever. It is her most attractive feature. Why? Because His life is one of submission to the Father and she is most like Christ.

The sixth stone is the sardius, which is reddish flesh colour approaching white. It's meaning "red ones" suggests the unfading newness of the new creation, "all things new" – V. 5. The first three letters of the Hebrew word for "Adam" (Gen. 5:2) the name God gave to man, the head of the old creation is one of the titles of the Lord Jesus Christ. In I Cor. 15:45-47, Christ is called the last Adam, the head of a new creation. All who receive Christ, possess that new creation life that shall live for ever and in due time it will be manifest, no more old creation.

The sardius stone in the breastplate of the high priest had the tribe of Judah inscribed on it. Judah means "praise." Praise, worship and glory to God are leading objects God desires in individual believers. Satan tempts God's children to divide their life into two distinctive portions. So that Christ is worshipped on appointed days or hours. Other than these times, Christ is neglected. May we realize our princely calling. It seems rare to hear the Lord praised, for Christians to be so captivated by Him and determined to know nothing else save – "to me, to live is Christ." We read in Heb. 2:12 that the Lord Jesus Himself is the first to praise God for His bringing forth a new creation – "In the midst of the church will I praise thee." May we contemplate on His joy and yield the fruit of our mouth in praise and thanksgiving and shine forth with the beauty of this stone.

Chrysolite is the seventh stone and means "gold stone." It is yellowish green and very transparent (yellow speaks of glory and green of resurrection). The glory of the resurrection of Christ will shine forth through the chrysolite garnishing of His glorified people.

The eighth is the beryl stone, a sea green (a bluish green colour). The meaning in the Greek, "She

will impoverish.” It will be manifested in the saints, by the resurrection and translation power of Christ which impoverished the devil, displacing Him to make room for the saints in the coming glory. In Song of Solomon 5:14 the Shunamite answering the daughters of Jerusalem when asked “What is thy beloved more than another beloved?” one of the reasons she gives, “His hands are as *gold rings set with the beryl*.” In Ezek. 1:16 & 10:9 the chariot wheels rolling in majesty in every direction connected with the cherubim of glory are described as the colour of the beryl. Also in the high priest breastplate the tribe of Dan was engraved on the beryl stone. Dan’s name means judgment. I Cor. 5:12 speaks of church discipline in judging them that are within and I Cor. 6:2 & 3 tells of their future authority in judging the world. We exercise judgment today, but not according to our thinking, for flesh cannot judge flesh, that is an unrighteous judgment. We must judge according to the Lordship of Christ. He is the head of His church. The mind of our Lord is expressed in His Word. As to that future judgment of the world, the saints will be the executors of HIS judgment. The Lord Himself as the Lion of the tribe of Judah will leap suddenly on His prey, coming forth with the armies (saints) of heaven to judge the nations. This slumbering world will be surprised by the sudden outpouring of His vengeance – Rev. 19:11-16; & II Thess. 1:7-9.

The full overcomers are seen in two aspects in Rev. 4 & 5. As elders on thrones (kings) and the living creatures as (priests), judging and ruling under the King of kings and Lord of lords. If we are to judge the world, we are responsible to exercise self-judgment – I Cor. 11:31. How do we judge ourselves? *By the Word of God*. Every fresh review of our helplessness and sinfulness humbles us and we look to HIM, THE Author and Finisher of our faith, our faithful High Priest. He prays for us before the Father, who by the Holy Spirit through the Word keeps our hearts alive to our constant need of dependence on HIM.

Topaz is the ninth stone, yellow green, and means “affliction has fled away” – 21:4. The saints will appear as eternal proof that He “took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses” – Mt. 8:17. In the high priest breast plate, Issachar’s name was engraved on the topaz stone. His name means “hath given hire or recompense.” This wonderfully fits the meaning of the stone. Remember when Abram fought a great battle against 4 kings to rescue Lot – Gen. 15. Abram lifted up his hand to Jehovah, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that he would not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet of the captured booty, lest the king of Sodom should be able to say, he had made Abram rich. It had all been in the strength of God that he gained the victory. After these things, the word of the Lord came to him in a vision saying, “Fear not Abram: I am thy shield and they exceeding great reward.” God is the reward and the rewarder of faith. The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself is the true Issachar. He trusted God and has been delivered, having finished the work God gave Him to do and glorified His name on the earth – Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:8-9.

There is a prize set before us – Phil. 3:14. What is the prize? Paul says, “That I may win Christ, and be found in him” Vs. 8-9. Paul, like Abraham, despises wealth, honour, fame, and what is far more ensnaring, His own self-righteousness – Phil 23:9. Paul counted all things but loss, and suffered the loss of all things. He counted them but dung compared to the glory and beauty of Christ his Prize, his crown of righteousness, his crown of life, his crown of glory, his exceeding great reward.

The tenth stone is chrysoprasus. There is some confusion as to what stone this is. It means “golden or divine achievement.” The divine achievements of the Cross and the operations of the Holy Spirit

will stand out bold and bright for God to glory in and for angels to wonder at forever.

Jacinth stone is the eleventh and has been described as orange-red. Yet, it means “hyacinth: blue.” Unger’s Bible dictionary says it may be a deep yellow or possibly blue and could be the ligure stone in the breast plate. Brother Copley described it as violet in colour. I didn’t find anything convincing on it except the meaning of the name. I feel if it means “hyacinth: blue” then it must be blue. The colour blue in the tabernacle tells of Christ, the heavenly One, the One from heaven, of His heavenly characteristics. Blue is also a colour associated with Royalty, though He once dwelt in a body of limitations on earth. This beauty of Christ is seen in the saints pictured by the jacinth stone.

The twelfth is the amethyst stone which is violet or purple and means “dream stone – literally I shall be brought back – as from a dream.” A strong blue and a deep red compose this colour. Our Lord will occupy His throne, earned by the sacrifice of Himself, after patiently waiting, as if it had been but a dream. Benjamin’s name was engraved on this stone in the breast plate of the high priest. Rachel named him Benoni, “son of my sorrow” as she was dying; but Jacob named him Benjamin, “son of his right hand.” He was the only son Jacob named. A type of Christ, whom God has given a name that is above, every name. After the millennium instead of Christ and His people appearing as a gigantic full grown man (Eph. 4:13), or the armies of heaven (Rev. 19:14), they will be seen as a majestic cubical city expressive of rest from labour, peace after war, prosperity unchanging and enjoyment undisturbed, unceasing and eternal. The saints are all God’s workmanship. They are all begotten of His Spirit, and shaped and fashioned into living stones (from the dark quarries of a fallen world and transfigured from glory to glory by Him.

V. 21 – Some saints will compose the city and the street of gold, and some the wall of Jasper and others the gates of pearls. Notice there is but one street which speaks of being of one accord. It is of pure gold, in perfect purity, such as cannot be reached by any earthly refinement. For it is as it were transparent glass.

V. 22 – John saw no temple in the city. Worship will no longer be through symbols, veils, or ceremonials. Deity will then come forth from behind all veils. For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. The worshippers there will have direct communion with His manifested glory, which encompasses them. They will have come into the holiest of all.

Vs. 23-27 – There will be no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God and the Lamb will illuminate it. The city will be to the nations a gigantic luminary. These scriptures indicate that the heavenly city will come down over the earthly Jerusalem. The earthly Jerusalem will be patterned after the heavenly Jerusalem. So the nations can come in somehow. I can not explain it, it is another miracle of God. Kings will have to come in the gates (through Israel) – 21:12.

Men talk of Christian nations, but there is no such thing and never will be until the New Earth appears and the New Jerusalem comes into view. Then all nations shall walk in the light of the Eternal City of the Eternal King. They will then devote everything of greatness and glory to the service and honour of that city. There shall be no night in the eternal city nor anything that defileth. The old creation cannot enter and make it dirty. It is “holy” and no one can ever set foot upon its golden streets who is not enrolled in the book of life of the Lamb. The Lord speaks in such simple

language so that we can understand.

CHAPTER 22 – The Last Sayings of Christ

V. 1 – “And he showed me,” this is the same messenger we read of in chapter 21:9 that was speaking and showing John the New Jerusalem (one of the full overcomers). “A *pure river of water of life*,” in Ezekiel 47 this same refreshing is flowing out of the house of God in the earthly Jerusalem during the millennium. This is the *refreshing water of life* (pure and clear as crystal) *referring to the Holy Spirit*. In John 7:38-39 the Holy Spirit is referred to as rivers of living waters. It proceeds out of the throne of *God* and the *Lamb*, filling and forever rejoicing the saints of the holy city. They will never thirst again. We see the three persons of the Godhead (God, the Lamb and the Holy Spirit).

V. 2 – Remember this is symbolic language, don’t try to reason this out with your natural mind. Man will be glorified, and with the Lamb, he will be finally satisfied. There is nothing he could want. Just as the *River* figures the Holy Spirit, so the “*tree of life*” figures Christ. The Tree “bare *twelve manner of fruits*,” a variety that fully satisfies. Man will hunger no more. It, the Tree “yielded her *fruit every month*,” we will be dependent upon the Lamb through out eternity in blessed communion. How precious the care and attention He gives to His people.

The *leaves* of the tree are “for the healing of the nations.” The word “Healing” in the Greek is *therapeutic nurturing*. We could read this as, the leaves of the tree are for the nurturing of the nations. As the fruits add to the *joys of heaven*, the leaves add to the *joys of earth*. There will be no need for healing medicines, for the Tree of life (Christ) will be the *eternal preventive*. Just as Christ is more to some saints today than to others – He is bread to some and only manna to others – so He will be the nourishment as fruit to some and as leaves to others.

V. 3 – “No more curse,” the precious Lamb of God redeemed us forever from the curse, being made a curse for us – Gal, 3:13-14. All sin and its consequences will be *No more*; for righteousness will reign, “the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.” “His servants shall serve him” – some only know the Lamb *now* as a Master to be served. They learn little of real worship and fellowship with Him. They will have that *same* relationship in eternity, attendants to the throne. (Compare I Kings 10:4-8, it says, Happy are Solomon’s servants that continually stand before him and hear his wisdom.) Others will have a far closer place with Christ, even as they enjoy Him now.

V. 4 – “They shall see his face.” Praise God, we will see God – I Jn. 3:2. God and the Lamb shall ever be before us in the eternal estate. “His name shall be in their foreheads,” yes, sealed as being His. Praise the Lord!

V. 5 – Again we read, “there shall be no night there – 21:25. The repetition, emphasizes this as special, a glorious blessing. There will be no power shortage there – “for the Lord God giveth them light.” His brightness will ever illuminate the heavenly Jerusalem and all its inhabitants shall themselves be light. They shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever –

Dan. 12:3. “And they shall reign for ever and ever.” Saints, we are going there. Everyone whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life will be there and reign with Christ in some measure. But if we overcome we will inherit *all* things, reign conjointly with Him, closest to Jesus.

V. 6 – “He” (the messenger of 21:9 and 22:1,6,8-9), is a redeemed human messenger, glorified, a full overcomer. He assures John, you can count on these things, they are true, they are faithful, because they are the sayings of the Faithful and True One – 19:11. They will come to pass. Remember John was carried right to the very time these things were happening. He no doubt thought they were going to happen right then. As to time, saints we are right on the very threshold of these things coming to pass – especially chapter 4 and 5, then the rest of this book. When they do begin to happen, they will happen *fast*, very quickly, one thing right after the other.

V. 7 – These are the words of Jesus. When the time comes, He will come quickly and will not tarry – Heb. 10:37. He wants us to be ready, because He will *not* wait around then, for us to come around. Notice the word “keepeth,” it means “guard.” There is a blessing to those who guard and keep the prophecy of this book – 1:3. We are blessed when we *read* these things and we are blessed when we *keep* them. Why? Because it speaks of the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. Some say this book is sealed, NO – V. 10. Then there are others that say it has already been fulfilled, that is because they don’t understand it. The Lord wants us to read this book and to understand what is in it. Jesus Christ went to the trouble as it were to give this Revelation of Himself to John, to show unto us – 1:1-3.

Vs. 8-9 – John is *not* in his glorified state when he sees all these things. He made a mistake here and also in 19:10, for which he was corrected in both instances. There is only One who is worthy to be praised and no one knows this better than the full overcomers (4:9-11 & 5:7-14). In chapter 1:17 when John fell down at the feet of Christ, he was not corrected, only encouraged. The bridal company will not allow any to worship them, they fall down before Him and cast their crowns at His feet, The Worthy One.

V. 10 – The prophecy of this book is not sealed. We have the unfolding of the Revelation of Jesus Christ because we are in the end time. Compare chapter 1:1 and also verse 3. We have been reading it, let us hear what is in it, what the Spirit saith unto the churches. May we keep those things that are said, be awake to the time in which we are living. Let us be yielded to the Lord and let Him work His Word in our lives by His Spirit; so we will be ready for the rapture, for our redemption draweth nigh. The time is at hand, it is imminent.

V. 11 – This is spoken when Christ has come and judgment has been given. Men’s eternal condition is determined by their own choice. There will be no second chance after death or at the judgment.

V. 12 – Three times in this chapter Jesus says, “Behold I come quickly” (Vs. 7,12,20)). In verse 7, Christ pronounces a blessing on those that keep the sayings of this book. In view of His coming we are to keep this prophecy. The word “keepeth” here has the meaning to take care of, to guard, to protect, to defend, to look after, to watch over, to lay hold of. Selah! In the 12th verse, Christ says, He will reward the faithful ones when He comes. In the R. V. it gives for the word “reward” as “wages.” It will be a proportionate reward, according to every man’s work.

V. 13 – Christ announces Himself as God, the eternal One. I am the beginning and the culmination of *all* things. “First” could also mean “chief,” for none can supersede Him in any way.

V. 14 – The original Greek text reads, “Blessed are they that have washed their robes.” That is the only way we will enter into the paradise of God; we wash our robes by faith in Jesus’ blood (Titus 3:5-7 & Rev. 1:5). Only the righteous enter into that city and partake of the tree of life. Who does the tree of life speak of? Christ. Oh, blessed communion (access) with our Lord, we may enter into for eternity.

V. 15 – “Without” is outer darkness, out of God’s presence. The wicked are excluded, outside. There will be a final separation. Those who have rejected Christ and never have been born again, can *never* come near “the new heaven and the new earth” (Rev. 21:1).

V. 16 – Jesus words: I appreciate the fact that Jesus used the personal pronoun “I” seven times in this last chapter of Revelation (Vs. 7,12,13, twice in 16,18,20). He assures us that he has spoken. That settles it for me, how about you? Again Christ reveals Himself as the Eternal One, “I am the root...of David, or before David. David sprang from Him as to His deity. But as man He is “the offspring of David” or son of David. To Israel especially He will be “the bright and morning star.” The morning star appears very early, at the dawning of the day. In II Pet. 1:19, He is called “the day star.” Israel will endure the night of tribulation that is coming on the earth. Then he will appear unto them (their Day Star), their hope and deliverance.

V. 17 – The bride is in tune with the Spirit and says “Come.” The ones who really long for Jesus to come are able to say right now, “Come Lord Jesus!” “Let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come.” Thank the Lord, some have been made thirsty. Isn’t this wonderful, right at the very end of Scripture is the invitation for “whosoever will” to drink of the water of life freely, “let him take.” The lord is so gracious and not willing that any should perish (II Pet. 3:9).

Vs. 18-19 – No one whose name is written in the Lamb’s book of life can ever be blotted out. We know this truth by many, many other scriptures, these verses speak of those who have rejected the things this book speak of (that Jesus is the Lamb of God and the fact that He will reign). For example some false teachers who pose as prophets of the last days say, the resurrection is past already or that Christ has come already and His kingdom is begun, etc. God’s Word is sacred and we don’t dare tamper with it.

V. 20 – Three times we read Jesus “testifieth” in this chapter (Vs. 16,18 & 20). That is invincible assurance that this prophecy is Divine and shall be fulfilled. That fulfilment is at hand, “Surely I come quickly.” It will take place speedily when the Father gives His Son the go-ahead. John responds, “Amen!” so be it. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Can we truly say from our heart – “Amen – even so come, Lord Jesus?”

V. 21 – The Old Testament ended with the pronouncement of a curse (Mal. 4:6). Mankind was in a hopeless condition and needed the Lord to come – the only hope of the world. The New Testament ends with the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” What makes the difference from

curse to blessing? Christ has come, the Saviour of mankind, the fulfilment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament. Gal. 3:13-14, he was made a curse that we might be blessed. Praise the Lord! The Lamb of God came and took away the sins of humanity and made it possible for us to dwell in paradise. The first paradise, Eden, Satan got in there and disrupted things. But the heavenly paradise, Satan can't get in there, for there will be no old creation, only the New Creation will be there. Christ did not just restore us to Adam's innocence, but He has made us holy, giving us a sinless life.

The Bible begins with "God created" and it end with the grace of our Lord Jesus Anointed be with you all, "Amen!" (an eternal yes). We will forever worship God and the Lamb, and all things new will be eternally true!

"Amen"