Outline of the Book of Revelation

Introduction:

The final book of the Bible is titled, “The Revelation of John.” The word “revelation” (apokalupsis) means “an uncovering, a revelation, N. T.” (Liddell Scott 99). Arndt and Gingrich define revelation as a “disclosure [to expose or uncover]” (see also Moulton 42). The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines the word as “disclosures from God of the secrets of the heavenly world…” (Vol. 4; pp. 172). Revelation thereby falls into a category of literature known as apocalyptic (pertaining to prophetic disclosure). Other Bible books written in the apocalyptic style of Revelation are Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. The book of Revelation discloses is “The things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev. 1:1, 19) and the things that “are” currently taking place (Rev. 1:19). The four above mentioned Apocalyptic writings separate themselves from other prophetic Bible books in that they disclose divine revelation by means of symbolism. John, the author of Revelation, uses various numbers, symbols, and imagery to unveil the previous unknown. John speaks of seven churches, a dragon, a beast coming up out of the sea having ten horns, a beast coming out of the earth, and the great harlot that sits on a beast with seven heads and ten horns. Similarly, Daniel saw four great beasts coming out of the sea in a vision (Dan. 7:1ff). Ezekiel saw a valley of dry bones in a divine vision (Ezek. 37:1ff). Zechariah discloses eight apocalyptic visions by divine revelation as well (see Zech. 1-6). The challenge of all Bible students is to properly identify the meaning behind these disclosed visions that use symbolism and imagery.

Consider these Three Primary World Views of the book of Revelation:

E. B. Elliott wrote a four volume commentary titled Horae Apocalypticae (A Commentary on the Apocalypse) and published it in London during the year 1862. The fourth volume of this commentary gave an exhaustive overview of every major apocalyptic commentary in the history of Christian literature (i.e., from the days of John to the mid 1800’s). This fourth volume was termed, “History of Apocalyptic Interpretation.” E. B. Elliott concluded, after vast research, that there are three primary contending schools of prophetic interpretation; i.e., Preterists, Historcists, and Futurists. The chart below is taken from www.historicist-historicism.com and illustrates these three beliefs.

- **Preterists** believe that most all of Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled. They believe that the second coming of Christ occurred in 70 AD (The year Titus marched on Jerusalem and destroyed it). The Preterists believe that Nero was the beast (i.e., Antichrist) and that the “man of sin” found in II Thess. 2:4 has come and gone. The Preterists view the writings of Revelation as events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem.

- **A second view of Revelation and the antichrist is the Historcists.** E.B. Elliott defined Historicism as “that view which regards the prophecy [of Revelation] as a pre-figuration of the great events that were to happen in the church, and the world connected with it, from St. John’s time to the consummation; including specially the establishment of Popedom, and reign of Papal Rome, as in some way or other the fulfillment of the types of the Apocalyptic Beast and Babylon” (Horae, Vol. 4, p. 564). The Historcists believes that the Roman Catholic Church, specifically its Papal system, represents the antichrist.

- **Lastly, E. B. Elliot examined the Futurist view of Daniel, Revelation, and the antichrist.** Futurist “general characteristic is to view the whole Apocalypse, at least after the Epistles to the Seven Churches, as a representation of the events of the consummation and second advent, as all still future; the Israel depicted in it being the literal Israel; the temple, Apoc. xi., a literal rebuilt Jewish temple at Jerusalem; and the Antichrist, or Apocalyptic Beast under his last head, a personal infidel Antichrist, fated to reign and triumph over the saints for 3 1/2 years, (the days in the chronological periods being all literal days) [rather than years], until Christ’s coming
shall destroy him” (Horae, Vol. 4, p. 597). Many Futurists teach premillenialism; i.e., the believe that there will be a future rapture in which the saints of God will be taken from the earth. There will then follow seven years of tribulation and a battle of Armageddon when Christ shall come again with his saints to defeat Satan and the beast. Christ will then reign upon the earth for one thousand years. Futurists Hal Lindsey taught this in his best selling book, “The Late Great Planet Earth” as did Tim LaHaye in the very popular book series, “Left Behind.”

- The fourth approach of the book of Revelation is not examined by Elliot and is the view that this study shall take. Let us refer to it as the Revelation (just as the book reads). We shall note that there is no antichrist such as Nero, the Roman Catholic church, or some future antichrist who would reign for 3 ½ years discussed in the book of Revelation. Revelation is rather a book that instructs persecuted Christians to hang on to their faith because the wicked would soon be punished.

The Right Approach to Understanding Apocalyptic Literature

About twenty five non-canonical apocalyptic style literature books have been discovered. Our Bibles; however, reveal three apocalyptic books (as mentioned above) with small bits of this style of writing found in a few other canonical books. As the word apocalyptic is defined above we immediately note that God intended for His readers to understand what is written; i.e., the veiled information is disclosed. The student of God’s word approaches all divine revelation with the confidence of understanding, knowing, and practicing its principles (see John 8:32; I Cor. 14:33). When one sets out to read and understand Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and the book of Revelation he is challenged to call upon all previous Bible knowledge of principles and terminology. A proper understanding of these books, like any other Bible book, takes an approach of respect for God’s authorized word. We cannot be guilty of assigning meanings to passages that neither the context nor the entirety of the Word of God supports. Apocalyptic style writing is difficult to understand not impossible. Apocalyptic literature ought to be approached no different than any other book in the Bible. We know God intends for us to understand it. It is up to us to put the time and extreme effort into knowing its truths.

Why Does God Reveal His Truths Through Veiled Language?

The answer to this question can be found in the words of Jesus at Matthew 13:10ff. Jesus’ disciples had asked him why he spoke in parables and he answered, “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given...” (Matt. 13:11). The text reveals the fact that some had no true interest in God’s mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Those who are interested will “desire to see” the meanings of these Biblical mysteries and thereby dig deep to find the treasure (Matt. 13:17). While apocalyptic and parable styles of writing are somewhat different the principle remains equal. Mysteries are being revealed and those who desire to know will find the meaning.

A word on Inspiration

Revelation often focuses on exposing what will happen before it happens so that the saint of God will not be discouraged or dismayed but rather know that it is God’s will that these things take place (John 13:19; 14:29). The author of Hebrews tells us that God communicated His message to man in “divers manners” (Heb. 1:1). Prophets of God saw divine visions and had divine dreams wherein God disclosed to the world His plans (see Obed. 1:1; Joel 2:28ff; Amos 1:1). John and Ezekiel were “in the Spirit” when they were shown their apocalyptic visions (Rev. 1:10; Ezek. 37:1). Zechariah and Daniel saw by visions God’s revelations (Zech. 1:7ff; Dan. 7:1; 8:1; etc.). Nehemiah writes, “Yet many years didst thou bear with them, and testified against them by thy Spirit through thy prophets” (Neh. 9:30 / cf. Ezek. 1:3; 11:4-7). The Apostle Peter tells us that God “moved” men to speak divine revelation by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21). The Holy Spirit “entered into” (Ezek. 2:1-2) and “fell upon” (Ezek. 11:5) men causing them to know and speak the mysteries of God. The Bible is clear. God’s objective is to reveal to man His will so that there would remain no mysteries when it comes to our salvation. Whether one encounters apocalyptic, parabolic, or difficult text in general while studying the Bible always be aware that God intends for you and I to know these truths (Jn. 8:32; Eph. 3:3-4).
Theme of Revelation:

The thematic verse of Revelation is found in 17:14, “These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and Kings of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.” Though this book was written to Christians under immense persecution, it is applicable to Christians of all ages. Like other epistles, Revelation should be read, studied and applied for all times (Cf. Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27). Satan’s evil forces work just as hard today as they did then (cf. Rev. 17:12). The word overcome or conquer (nikao, Gr.) is found seventeen times in the book of Revelation. This helps us understand the thrust of the book. The Christian can overcome in the face of the most formidable difficulties faced (Rev. 12:11; 21:7). Comfort shall be found for those who wait on the promises of Jehovah (cf. Isa. 40:31). Revelation tells us that the true elect will win the war against Satan with God's help.

Date of writing:

Conflict exists around dating the epistle. Some believe the account of Revelation was written during the days of Nero, A. D. 64 – 68, and others believe the time was A. D. 91 - 96 while Domitian served as the Roman Emperor. Though evidence exists for the early date, it seems more apparent that the later date is appropriate. Revelation deals much with the persecution of the saints. During Nero’s days persecution occurred locally whereas during the days of Domitian it was universal (some; however, deny this too). Whether early or late it really doesn't alter the meaning of the book. The following external and internal proof is given for the later date:

External Evidence:

- The apostle Paul was in Roman prison with no apparent hostility to Christians from the Romans (AD 62 – 63).
- Nero is accused of setting fire to Rome July 10, AD 64. Nero, attempting to thwart the attention away from his deed, blames the Christians for the fire and they are persecuted locally.
- Paul is imprisoned a second time and suffers death AD 65 (Cf. II Tim. 4:6ff).
- Vespasian ruled as Emperor of Rome (AD 69 – 79).
- Titus, Vespasian’s son, besieged and conquered Jerusalem AD 70. Later, Titus succeeded his father Vespasian as Emperor of Rome for a short time (79 – 81 AD).
- Vespasian’s second son, Domitian, became emperor in AD 81 and ruled until AD 96. Domitian’s desire to be viewed as deity lead to many gross atrocities against society and Christians.
  - He proclaimed that Christianity was a crime against Rome.
  - Domitian persecuted Christians in and out of Rome.
  - Christians were exiled, put to death, tortured into a confession of the divinity of the emperor and some had their property confiscated (Rev. 1:9; 13:15-17).
  - John receives the revelation to relay to the suffering Christians that they may be comforted.

Internal Evidence:

- The apostle Paul wrote the church in Ephesus during the year AD 62. The state of the church appeared to be good. Paul commended the brethren of Ephesus, saying that he had heard of their faith and “the love which ye show toward all the saints” (Eph. 1:15). However, in the Revelation account, Ephesus had obviously made spiritual changes for the worse. John wrote that they had “left their first love” (Rev. 2:4). The time is obviously different.
- Another proof of a latter date is found in Colossians. Paul had commended the Laodiceans by telling the Colossians to “salute” them (Col. 4:15). No such commendation was given by the time Revelation was written. John had not one good thing to say about the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:14ff.

Though much could be said and proved regarding both the early date and late date, it seems apparent to this writer that the evidence for a late date outweighs the evidence for the early date. When the epistle was written, however, does not affect the marvelous words of encouragement in it.
Numbers and Symbolism in Revelation:

Apocalyptic literature, as discussed above, abounds in imagery and symbols to relay its message. Though there is not one single direct quote from the OT found in Revelation, there are approximately four hundred allusions to OT terminology. A familiarity with the OT, therefore, is a must in looking into and understanding the book of Revelation with its symbolism and numeric meaning. The interpretation of numbers is an important part of understanding the book of Revelation. The numbers used in revelation are, for the most part, symbolically used rather than literally. We know that there is no such thing as a dragon with seven heads; however, its symbolic use is effective in getting across a point. Likewise, the numbers of Revelation are not literal yet their purpose remains the same (i.e., to illustrate a point). The number seven appears to be the number that is mostly used throughout the book. Seven represents something that is full or complete.

Author of Revelation:

The apostle John is apparently the author of Revelation. John addressed the seven churches of Asia in 1:4. Secondly, John used the first person singular pronoun “I” on several occasions (cf. 1:9-12 etc.). There is no doubt as to John the apostle being the author of this book.

Overview of the book of Revelation:

The book of Revelation begins, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1). The Apostle John is commanded to write all that he sees, concerning the things that must shortly come to pass, in a book and to send it to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:11). Revelation reveals a panoramic picture of events that have occurred, are currently occurring, and events that are to "shortly come to pass." This historic and futuristic panoramic picture depicts the unveiling of a seven sealed book that only the Lamb of God was worthy enough to loose and reveal its contents. One by one the seals were loosed and revealed the reaction of the gospel message being preached in the world. Many, due to their acceptance of the truth, were ill treated and even killed. Before the seventh seal was opened and its contents revealed there was silence for half an hour (Rev. 8:1).

John saw seven angels with seven trumpets. The seven trumpets would sound one by one as humanity and the animal kingdom experienced death and great woe (Rev. 8:13). Those not identified as the elect of God would be tormented so that they might see their need to repent; however, the hardhearted sinners "repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:20-21). Jehovah had sent forth his prophets, apostles, and even His own son for man's salvation; however, man rejected His help and murdered the Lord's messengers (see Rev. 11:3ff). Their message tormented man because it exposed their shameful acts and demanded that they do the very righteous acts that they were opposed to.

The elect of God would not be spared by the wicked. Lurking in the shadows of darkness and filth is a beast that is identified as a ferocious red dragon, enemy to all humanity, filled with crafty deceit, and identified as Satan (Rev. 12:9). This ferocious beast had conquered the will of most of humanity with false religious teaching and worldliness (sexual immorality, lust for riches and pleasure of this world, vain glory, and pride - see I Timothy 4:1ff; I Jn. 2:16-17; Rev. 13:7-8; 14:8). Satan's passionate hatred for the saints of God and His church depicts his will to destroy even the elect of God (see Rev. 12:17).

Jehovah sends encouraging words to the saints dwelling upon the earth that are experiencing the onslaught of persecution, confusion of religious error, and the strong pull of worldliness (see Rev. 14:6 etc.). Jehovah reveals to the world that He will pour out His fierce wrath upon those who give in to the wine of Satan (i.e., persecution, false teaching, and worldliness) (see Rev. 14:9-10, 19-20). Jehovah's plea to man is that they would "overcome" the onslaught of the red dragon (see Rev. 2:7, 10 etc.). The book reveals the Lord's unwavering demand that His saints
maintain nothing short of a perfect and godly life in order to receive His reward (see Rev. 2:4, 14, 20; 3:3, 15-16; 18:4).

God's mercy and forbearance is depicted once again in the pouring out of seven bowls of wrath upon the ungodly yet their agony in the flesh was not enough to change their minds from a sin sick life. John writes, "and they repented not to give him glory... or of their works, but rather blasphemed God because of the plagues" (Rev. 16:9, 10, 21). One of the seven angels that had one of the seven bowls of Jehovah's wrath showed John, in the spirit, the demise of Rome and all other future powers that set themselves in array against God's divine will and purpose for man (see Rev. 17 all). One who takes a rebellious posture against Jehovah is destined for failure, misery, and great anguish (see Rev. 17:14).

Each generation of saints are called upon to remain sanctified from the filth of the world and have no fellowship with their unfruitful works of darkness (Rev. 18:4). Such sanctification and holiness will not come without gargantuan battles against our ancient foe the devil. He will bring his masses against the saints in every generation likened unto Armageddon, Gog, and Magog (see Rev. 16:16; 19:19, 20:7ff). The Lord's true elect will always be in the minority of those who refuse to be drunken with the wine of worldliness and false teaching. The message of Revelation is that we would see what the world does not see. There are horrific eternal consequences to giving in to Satan (see Rev. 20:10-15) and glorious rewards for the elect who overcome him (see Rev. 21-22). Christians of every generation should not drink the world's Kool-Aid of lust, vainglory, pride, and religious confusion (I Tim. 4:1ff; I Jn. 2:16-17). While worldliness and false doctrines may have appear comforting and enjoyable at the end it has a sting of eternal death. Know assuredly that God's promises are true. We too can overcome Satan's ferocious onslaught of wickedness if we would only keep God's commands come what may in this life!

Chapter I

Prelude:

Revelation chapter one sets out to prove the validity of the message that John delivers to the seven churches of Asia. Secondly, chapter one delivers an initial message of hope for the persecuted church. Thirdly, John reveals a heavenly vision of twelve parts. Chapter one reveals John’s commission to write down all that he sees that is and that is to come. This first chapter reads as a mother who is speaking to her disheartened child with words of tender encouragement. One may; however, look at Revelation chapter one as a general addressing his troops and telling them that even though the battle appears to be lost they will without a doubt prevail. The child and or troops have no better recourse than to pick themselves up and move forward in the battle.

I. Revelation Prologue / Words to Encourage the Downtrodden (1:1-3):

A. “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw” (1:1-2).

1. The Godhead (Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit) is evidenced in the fact that “God” gave “Jesus” this “Revelation.” The word revelation (apokalupsis), as discussed in the introduction, means a disclosure or uncovering of that which was previously veiled or hidden from man.

2. The information disclosed to the servants of God had to do with things that would “shortly come to pass” and, as we shall see at verse 19 of this chapter, “things that are” occurring at the time of this writing. This disclosure to God’s servants was “signified” (semaino) = “to shew by a sign, indicate, make known, point out; 2. absol. To give signs, make signals” (LS 727). The disclosed information handed from God to Jesus to his servants was signified (made known) by His angel.

3. John, after receiving the revelation, bore witness to all that he saw and heard as is recorded in this book. The contents of Revelation are thereby of divine origin.

B. “Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand” (1:3).
1. The word “blessed” (makarios) is the same Greek word found in the beatitudes (see Matt. 5:3-10). Makarios = “happiness, those with good fortune” (LS 484). Those who would read the divine words of Revelation, hear, and keep the laws therein are identified as happy and of good fortune. These encouraging words are a fit way to begin a book that reveals hope and encouragement for Christians who were being heavily persecuted and discouraged. There is hope and this revelation tells you about it!

2. The reason for hope and encouragement during excruciating hard and trying times is that “the time is at hand.” God has seen the tears of the saints as they lose loved ones and their property (see Rev. 7:17). The time when Christ would come again and bring home his saints to glory was “at hand.” The author of Hebrews said, “and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh” (Heb. 10:24-25). Each day that passes brings the day of Christ coming closer at hand... indeed it draws nigh.

II. John Addresses the Seven Churches of Asia (1:4-8):

A. “John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loves us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1:4-6).

1. We are now introduced to the first use of numerical symbolism in the book of Revelation. John addresses the seven churches that are in Asia (identified at Rev. 1:11). Why seven? “Seven is used for any round number, or for completeness, as we say a dozen, or as a speaker says he will say two or three words.”\(^1\) It is apparent that when John speaks of the seven churches of Asia that he speaks of the universal church of Christ. Revelation 1:13 confirms this in that Christ is depicted as being in the midst of the seven churches (He is in the midst of all the church as its head). Below are some examples of the many times that we find the number seven in the scriptures.

a. Jacob served seven years for Rachel (she then belonged to him) (Gen. 29:20).

b. There were seven years of plenty and seven years of famine in Egypt (Gen. 41:53f).

c. The Israelites marched seven days with seven priests blowing seven trumpets at Jericho (Josh. 6:8ff).

d. There were seven loaves to feed the four thousand and seven baskets to pass around the food (Matt. 15:34f).

e. If the above explanation be true, the seven churches would certainly represent the whole of God’s church and the seven spirits would represent the completeness and perfectness of the Holy Spirit (reveler of divine truth) (Cf. Zech. 3:9 compared with Zech. 4:6, 10)!

2. The scriptures teach that truth is to be established at the mouth of two or three witnesses (see Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; II Cor. 13:1). John reveals the threefold witnesses of Revelation to be God the Father (He that is, that was, and is to come – compare Ex. 3:14 where God tells Moses that He is called, “I AM.” The name I AM illustrates the eternal existence of God the Father), God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit (the seven spirits before the throne of God).

3. John then reveals five things about Jesus before giving a doxology, “to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen” at verse 6.

a. “Who is the faithful witness” (1:5). Again the word “witness” means testimony. Jesus gave an accurate testimony of the things God told him (Jn. 3:32; 8:14; 18:37).

b. “The firstborn from the dead” (1:5). Jesus was the first to die and be raised never to die again (I Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18).

c. “Ruler of the kings of the earth” (1:5). God had promised that his Son, Jesus, would be made “My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth” (Ps. 89:27). Jesus is indeed the potentate of all creation (see Acts 17:24).

d. “Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood.” Without this loving sacrifice, man could in no way have fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5ff). Jesus set us free from

\(^1\) Smith, W. Smith’s Bible Dictionary pg. 608
the bondage of sin (Matt. 26:28; Jn. 8:32). The cost of mankind’s redemption was the precious life blood of Jesus (Eph. 1:3-7). The word “loosed” (lusanti) (NM 956) = “loosen, unbind, unfasten” (Moulton 255). Those who use the KJV Bible will find the word “washed” which is supported by the Strong’s Concordance. The thought is the same; i.e., forgiveness.

e. **He** who “made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father.” All Christians within the universal church of Jesus Christ comprise a kingdom (Col. 4:11). Each member that comprises the kingdom of God is identified as a priest (see I Pet. 2:9). As God’s priests within His Kingdom, we make spiritual sacrifices unto the Lord (see Heb. 13:15).

f. “To him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1:6). The word glory is “doxa” (Gr.) meaning “splendor, brightness; the kingly majesty which belongs to him as the supreme ruler” (Rev. 1:6).” (Thayer 156). The fact that Jesus’ rule and kingdom (Dominion) is perpetuated into eternity brings to mind the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy in his dream (Dan. 7:13). Daniel said of the Son of Man that “there was given him dominion, and glory and a kingdom.” Isaiah said there would be no end of His kingdom (see Isa. 9:7). The Lord is worthy of such doxological statements.

**B. “Behold, he comes with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen” (1:7).**

1. The phrase “cometh with the clouds” is to be comforting in two aspects. First, surely it includes the second coming of Jesus when he would bring his beloved and obedient saints home to glory (a rest from their labor and hardships of this life) (see I Thess. 4:13ff).

2. Secondly, the language is similar to passages in the OT that describe Jehovah’s wrath against the ungodly of the day. Examples of this are found in (Isa. 19:1; Ezek. 30:3 etc.). This second thought gives comfort as well. The Romans, who were responsible for the current distress, will be judged by God. These individuals will mourn for their foolish handling of the Savior of the world as all the ungodly of all time will do (Jn. 12:44ff; II Thess. 1:6ff). Those who “pierced” the Lord and did not repent at the preaching of men like Peter (see Acts 2:23).

**C. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (1:8).**

1. The eternal existence of God is everywhere depicted in the Word of God (see Jn. 1:1ff; Eph. 1:3ff; etc.). God is the beginning and end and the one who is, was, and is to come. He always has been and he always will be.

2. With the one true deity on the side of the saints who is it that shall move us to fear (see Rom. 8:31-39).

**III. John Explains why he is Writing this Revelation (1:9-16):**

A. “I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1:9).

1. John introduces himself to the seven churches (if the number seven represents perfection or completeness then John is really addressing the universal church of Christ). There are to be four common denominators with all God’s priests:

   a. First, those of like precious faith who have obeyed the gospel have a wonderful connection and fellowship. So close is this fellowship that the Bible terms us brothers and sisters (see I Cor. 1:1-2).

   b. Secondly, John shared (was a fellow partaker) with the saints in “tribulation.” As stated below, secular history puts John on Patmos due to being exiled there by Rome. Tribulation was and is the lot for all Christians and those who make it to heaven will not enter in by any other means (see Acts 14:22).

   c. Thirdly, John shared in their common place as priests in the “Kingdom” of God. God’s kingdom was the church here on earth. All those who obeyed the gospel were added to God’s kingdom and recognized as its citizens (see Eph. 2:18-20).

   d. Fourthly, Christians are all connected together in our common struggle against evil and the fact that we are “patient” (i.e., our hope is in Christ and thereby we wait patiently for the fulfillment of his promises). The prophet Isaiah wrote, “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew
their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31).

2. John was in the “isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and testimony of Jesus.” It is likely that John had been placed on this Island either for safety sake or due to being exiled for preaching the gospel. “Revelation is the only NT book whose author stated its place of writing... The isle of Patmos was one of the many places to which Rome banished exiles. According to a tradition preserved by Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. V. 30), Eusebius (HE iii. 18-20), Jerome (De vir. ill. 9), and others, John was exiled there in the 14th year of the reign of Domitian (AD 95) and returned to Ephesus on the accession of Nerva (AD 96)” (ISBE, v. 3, pp. 690).

B. “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea” (1:10-11).

1. John was “in the Spirit” indicating that God was delivering the divine revelation by means of His Holy Spirit (see Ezek. 2:1-2; 3:12-14; 8:3; 11:24; 37:1; I Pet. 1:21). John’s revelation occurred on “the Lord’s day.” The “Lord’s day” is mentioned for the first time in the Word of God and no doubt is to be applied to the first day of the week; i.e., Sunday. It was Sunday that Jesus arose from the dead and it was Sunday that the first Pentecost after the Lord’s resurrection occurred whereby the church was established (Acts 2:1ff.). It was also Sunday (the first day of the week) that the saints assembled for worship (see Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2). What other day could properly be designated, “The Lord’s Day?”

2. While John was on Patmos, in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, he heard a great voice telling him to write all that he hears and to deliver it to the seven churches of Asia (see map above).

C. “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle” (1:12-13).

1. John turns to see the source of this thundering voice and he sees one likened unto “a son of man.” The term “son of man” is often used in both Old and New Testaments to identify Jesus (see Dan. 7:13; Matt. 11:19).

2. Consider the fact that God’s wilderness tabernacle had one candlestick holder with seven candles (Ex. 25:31ff). Secondly, Solomon’s temple had ten candlestick holders each holding seven candles (I Kings 7:49). The spiritual tabernacle, God’s kingdom (i.e., the church) is also represented by candlesticks (see Heb. 9:11).

3. Seeing that that which is under consideration is the seven churches of Asia it stands to reason that the symbolism of candlesticks and the son of man is Jesus standing as the potentate in the midst of his church. **Though he may seem far as they experience this great persecution he is truly in the midst of them!**

4. The Lord’s clothing is that of a king (robed in royal apparel).
D. “And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters” (1:14-15).

1. White is the color that depicts holiness and purity. Isaiah wrote, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18).

2. Jesus is depicted as one pure and undefiled by the filth of the world. The Lord’s “eyes were as a flame of fire” (fire purifies and has the potential to devour all within its path). Jesus gives man instruction and demands their purification by his piercing eyes of flaming fire. Those who reject him will be consumed with fire.

3. Jesus’ feet are likened unto “burnished brass.” Burnished brass is sparkly and shiny (see Ezek. 1:7). The Lord brings glory everywhere his feet trod.

4. The Lord’s voice is as “many waters.” Such a noise is fearful for it is colossal in sound (see Ezek. 1:24) (Daniel saw a similar vision / Dan. 10:6).

E. “And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shines in his strength” (1:16).

1. As the Lord of glory stood in the midst of the churches John sees him holding “seven stars” which represented “the angels of the seven churches” (see Rev. 1:20).

2. The “sharp two-edged sword” is mentioned again at Revelation 2:12 (Jesus possesses the sharp two-edged sword). This sword can either be the word of God (see Heb. 4:12) or a literal weapon used to wage war (Ps. 149:6). Certainly Jesus has truth with him and he has come to wage war against those who persecute the saints (see II Thess. 1:8). It seems that Isaiah’s remarks regarding the wielding of this sword would indicate a weapon to slay the wicked (see Isa. 11:1-5). Revelation is a book that will depict, in graphic language, the wielding of this two-edged sword by the Lord in battle against the ungodly (see Rev. 14:20). Jesus will come to wage war against the ungodly with this two-edged sword (see Rev. 2:12, 15).

3. The Lord’s “countenance” i.e., his facial expression or characteristics, “was as the sun shines in his strength.” The brightness and power of the sun is known by all and one can scarcely even look upon it.

IV. Jesus commanded John to write what he was seeing and Experiencing (1:17-20):

A. “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not: I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades” (1:17-18).

1. As John turns to see the source of the mighty voice and sees the Lord in his glorious apparel and shining as the sun for brightness he falls at his feet as if he were dead. John is terrified... he is a sinful man not worthy to be at the feet or in the presence of the Almighty. The Lord is power defined.

2. As John laid speechless and dead still for fear the Lord touches him and tells him, “Fear not: I am the first and the last.” If one were to doubt the deity of Jesus Christ then doubt no more. Three times we find Isaiah quoting from Jehovah God as he said, “I am the first and the last” (see Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12) (see study # 1; The Deity of Christ).

3. Again, Jesus is “the Living one.” Though at one time Christ was crucified and buried in a tomb he was, after three days, raised from the grave never to die again. At John 11:25 Jesus said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live.”

4. Jesus tells John not to fear because he is God, he is alive, and he has “The keys of death and of Hades.” To further give John cause not to fear the Lord explains that he has the keys to open the doors of death and Hades. The King James Bible uses the word “hell” here as it does at Acts 2:31; however, the Greek is hades. The word “Hades” is used at Matt. 11:23-24 and Luke 16:23 to indicate a place of torment for the souls of the wicked. The word Hades is also used to describe the place for disembodied souls of the righteous (Acts 2:27-31). “Hades” (hades) = “The invisible abode or mansion of the dead; the place of punishment, hell; the lowest place or condition” (Moulton 6). Context determines whether one is speaking of the place of torments or place of comfort for the dead (see study # 2; Hades).
5. Secondly, the word “death” (thanatou) = “death, the extinction of life, whether naturally or violently” (Moulton 195). The point is that Christ occupies supreme power and sovereignty over the realm of life and death. Jesus has the power to use the keys of death and Hades to put man within its confines (i.e. to allow a man to die either naturally or violently and to place them in the realm of the dead). There is no need for man to fear the wicked of any generation when such a one is on our side.

B. “Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches” (1:19-20).

1. The all potentate Lord of lords tells John to write all that he has seen and will see regarding the things that are currently taking place and things that will come to pass latter.
2. Jesus tells John that the seven stars he saw him holding in his hands represents the angels of the seven churches and that the seven candlesticks were the churches themselves (see Rev. 1:12, 16). Some believe these seven angels to be individuals who would receive and relay the message of John to the church (cf. R. Lenski and J. T. Hinds). Others believe the “angel of the church” to be the “the spirit of the church personified” (see H. Haily and A. Plummer).
3. There may very well be a connection between these seven angels and the seven angels that stand before God in Revelation 8:2 (they are given trumpets) and found again at Revelation chapters 15-17 and 21 (they are given last plagues). Furthermore there seems to be a close relationship between these seven stars, seven angels, and seven Spirits (Holy Spirit – see Rev. 1:4 and 3:1).

Concluding Thoughts:

Having none other than the truth, John embarks upon enlightening the church of the Lord regarding the awful ordeal they face. They are not to fear or loose hope; however, because the Almighty is in the midst of them and will save them. Those who have no patience will fall for eternity and those who wait on the Lord will be eternally rewarded!

Chapter 2

Prelude

Revelation chapter two reveals the potentate position of Jesus Christ among the churches. Four of the seven churches are examined in this chapter. The study illustrates God’s demand for man’s absolute perfection and the rewards and consequences for doing such. Jesus had said on the Sermon on the Mount, “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). The Apostle Peter wrote, “But like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy: for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:15-16). Those who do not so live are recognized as being in sin (I Jn. 3:4). Herein is the beauty of the new covenant in Jesus Christ. Man can be forgiven of sins and recognized as perfect and holy in the sight of God (see Heb. 7:18-19).

I. The Letter to the church in Ephesians (2:1-7):

A. “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things saith he that holds the seven stars in his right hand, he that walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:”

1. John’s mission is to write the revelation of Jesus Christ to the Lord’s church (see also Rev. 1:11, 19).
2. The “angel of the church in Ephesus” is one of the seven stars that Jesus held within his hand (Rev. 1:16, 20). The “seven golden candlesticks” have been identified as the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:11-12, 20). Ephesus was to remember the sovereign position of Jesus Christ among the churches.
3. The first revelation is to be written to the church in Ephesus:
   a. “Ephesus was well situated to become the chief commercial center of western Asia Minor, for it had ideally positioned passes which gave immediate access for trade both N and S to the Hermus and Maeander river valleys... So prominent was the city that during the early Christian period the population of Ephesus probably exceeded a quarter million” (ISBE; vol. 2, pp. 115).
   b. Ephesus is known as the “temple keeper of the great Diana (Artemis)” (Acts 19:35). Diana was identified as the Greek goddess Artemis by the Romans. She was a hideous multi-breasted woman that supposedly fell from the heavens. A temple was built to her and became known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Diana was known as, “The Greek goddess of wild animals, wild nature, chastity, and childbirth, and the Ephesian goddess of fertility, superficially with little but the name in common... One month every year was entirely devoted to impressive ceremonies in honor of Artemis. No work was done during this month, and there were athletic games at the Stadium, plays at the Theater, and concerts at the Odeon” (ISBE v. 1, pp. 307).
   c. We are first introduced to the city of Ephesus as Paul travels there with Priscilla, Aquila, Gaius, and Aristarchus during the year 53 AD. A church is established before Paul completes his second tour of preaching. Paul would later return to Ephesus and spend three years there preaching (see Acts 20:31). The church in Ephesus experienced much trouble at the hands of wicked men (see I Cor. 16:8-9 and II Cor. 1:8-10). Paul would later write an epistle to the Ephesians outlining their responsibility to wage war against Satan and his demonic angels during his Roman imprisonment AD 62-64.

B. “I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name’s sake, and hast not grown weary” (2:2-3).

1. Jesus said, “I know thy works...” Only deity could know all the works of every church in the world. Such statements illustrate the omniscience of the Lord (see study # 3; Omniscience). The author of Hebrews said, “but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13).

2. The Lord reveals six attributes of the Ephesian church (one short of perfection). That which the Ephesians lacked was repentance due to leaving off their first love:
   a. “I know thy works;” i.e., I know all that you do. The word “works” (ergon) = “anything done or to be done; a deed, work, action” (Moulton 165) (see study # 5; Works and Grace).
   b. “Thy toil and patience:” The Ephesians were workers in the kingdom of God and were so with patience endurance.
   c. “That thou can not bear evil men:” The word “bear” means “to support” (LS 148). The Ephesians were more of the mind to expose rather than support (Eph. 5:11). Support can come in many forms. Some may support evil men by not shaming them in their sin, by providing a pulpit for their erring message, and by befriending them in their error.
   d. The Ephesians “tried them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and did find them false” (2:2): The word “try” here is important and means to “put to the test” (LS 616). Things taught are to be tried and tested against the word of God. No man is above reproach (I Jn. 4:1). The Ephesians tried these false teachers and found them false.
   e. The Ephesians withstood the onslaught of false teachers and trials with patience and continued the work of the church without “growing weary” (2:3).
   f. The sixth attribute is listed below.
C. “But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent” (2:4-5).

1. Though the Ephesians could be commended in many areas they were overall condemned due to having “left thy first love.” Their first love was their initial purpose and convicted spirit as they entered into a covenant with Jehovah God to keep his laws and be faithful all the days of their lives (i.e., when they were baptized for the remission of their sins). The Ephesians’ sins against the Lord are not mentioned; however, the very idea reveals God’s demands for man’s absolute perfection (see Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:15-16). The Ephesians had “fallen” from grace. Consequentially they are called upon by Jehovah God to “repent” of their sinfulness (see study # 4; Can a Christian Fall from Grace?).

2. A solemn warning is distributed to the Ephesians. “Repent” else the Lord “will move thy candlestick out of its place.” Interestingly, Ezekiel speaks of the glory of Jehovah being removed from Jerusalem due to the refusal of His people to repent (Ezek. 10:18-19). The thought is crystal clear. Jesus is depicted as dwelling with the church as long as it remains in fellowship with him through repentance and a right mind of humility when in error. The church that rejects repentance through a spirit of humility has lost its fellowship with the Lord (see I Jn. 1:5ff). The passage illustrates the idea that though God is patient and longsuffering He will not forever suffer the errors of any.

D. “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (2:6).

1. The sixth commended trait of the Ephesian church was that it “hated the works of the Nicolaitans.”

2. Who were the Nicolaitans? “Followers of a deviant form of Christianity in Asia Minor, who were sharply condemned by John in his letters to Ephesus (Rev. 2:6) and Pergamum (2:15)...whether ‘Nicolaitan’ was a real party name or just John’s own cryptic designation – was absorbed into some second-century manifestation of Gnosticism.” (ISBE; Vol.; 3, pg. 533 – 534).

3. Apparently the “works” of the Nicolaitans was a form of “teaching” (Rev. 2:15) that was contrary to the teachings of Jesus. Teachers of false doctrines are to be marked and turned away from (Rom. 16:17) because they are enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18-19).

4. Notice the strong language: “thou hatest” and “I also hate.” The one who does not hate false teaching is not commended by the Lord (Cf. Rom. 12:9) (see study # 6; The Christians’ Attitude Toward Sin and False Teachers).

E. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcomes, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God” (2:7).

1. The Ephesians, and all Christians for all time, are called upon to “hear” and obey and thereby be blessed (see Rev. 1:3).

2. The message of hope is that whoever “overcomes” to him shall be given the tree of life. To “overcome” (nikao) = “to conquer, overcome, vanquish, subdue, prevail!” (Moulton 277). The verse infers man’s ability to conquer and prevail against the enemy; i.e., Satan. Whatever sin that caused the Ephesians to be viewed as those who left their first love can be overcome. Those who do prevail will be “given to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.” Notice the workings of God’s grace. One must overcome before being granted God’s gift of the tree of life (see study # 5). Man must choose God’s help unto victory. God will not accept half hearted or partially convicted servants.

a. This tree of life is that which was lost by the sin of Eve and Adam (Gen. 3:12-24).

b. The victorious saint that overcomes will have access to this tree in Paradise of God (heaven Cf. Rev. 22:2) (see study # 7; Victory in Jesus).

II. The letter to the church in Smyrna (2:8-11):

A. “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived again;” (2:8).

1. Smyrna was located approximately forty miles north of Ephesus. It was said to be second only to Ephesus for seaport trading. Nothing is known about the establishment of the church, and it is found only in chapter two of Revelation. Mount Pagas in Smyrna was the location of a picturesque acropolis which occupied a temple to the female deity of Rome (Roma). “The temples of Zeus and
Cybele were linked by a mall said to surpass all others of the ancient world.” (ISBE; Vol. 4, pg. 555)

2. Once again Jesus is said to be the “first and the last, dead, and lived again” (see Rev. 1:4, 9). Those of Smyrna are reminded of the Lord’s eternal existence.

B. “I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan” (2:9).

1. The same Lord that knew all things about the church in Ephesus knows all about the church in Smyrna.

2. The Spirit reveals three things about the church in Smyrna:
   a. The church was experiencing “tribulation” (i.e., a form of affliction or distress by the ungodly).
   b. The church was experiencing “poverty (but thou art rich).” The Christians in Smyrna were poor by the world’s standards but rich by Jesus’ standard. Their treasure was in heaven (Matt. 6:29). No doubt in the pagan environment they lived it was difficult to make an honest living apart from something associated with Roman idolatry.
   c. Thirdly, the Spirit states, I know “the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” Part of the tribulation the Christians in Smyrna faced was the railing and slanderous tongues of those who claimed to be Jews yet were unbelieving. The true Jew was a Jew inwardly. The apostle Paul said of inward Jews that they are, “circumcised in the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:28-29). These blasphemous Jews were a “synagogue of Satan.” The synagogue was a meeting place whose origin reached back to 70 BC while Israel was in Babylonian captivity. In the days of Jesus and the apostles, Jews continued to use the synagogue to assemble and communicate the Law of God. The Lord referred to their assemblies as of Satan here because of their rejection of the Christ. These same Jews were the ones Jesus referred to as being of “their father the devil” (Jn. 8:44) and were continuing to follow his lead. The idea appears to be that there were some laying claims to being God’s people; however, they were not as was made evident by their works.

C. “Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life” (2:10).

1. As the devil was the true father of the faithless Jews, he would use them to accomplish his evil ends. Some of the Christians in Smyrna would face the wrath of the devil in the form of tribulation and imprisonment (2:10; Cf. Acts 10:38). In this tribulation, the Christians’ faith would be tried for a figurative ten days (the fact being that it would have an end). The admonition from the Lord is, “fear not the things which thou art about to suffer” (Rev. 2:10a). Jesus did not want to see a retreat in faith but sought to prepare them now and strengthen them for their tribulation that could in no way measure up to what awaited them and us in heaven if we will but endure.

2. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10b). The “crown of life” is equivalent to the “incorruptible crown” (I Cor. 9:25), “the crown of righteousness” (James 1:12), “the crown of glory that fades not away” (I Peter 5:4). This is not a crown of royalty, but a crown of victory! The word “crown” (stephanos) means “a crown, reward, prize” (Moulton 376). As the enduring athlete achieves the reward of a crown for victory; so the Christian for a faithful enduring life (see study # 7).

D. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death” (2:11).

1. Again, the challenge of the Spirit to his audience is that they “hear” (read and keep God’s laws – Rev. 1:3 / these are the blessed).

2. “He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.” To “overcome” is to be victorious over Satan (see notes above). Note that those who do not overcome are subject to the pain of the “second death.” A second death infers a first death. All die physically as a consequence to Eve and Adam’s sin (Gen. 3). If some shall suffer a second death, this, too, presupposes a bringing back to life (Cf. Acts 24:15). Since all will be resurrected from their first death, all will spend eternity in one of two places; heaven or hell. The second death is defined as the lake of fire in
Revelation 20:14 and the destiny of all the wicked in Revelation 21:8 (see study # 8; The Eternal Abode of the Wicked).

III. The Letter to the church at Pergamum (2:12-17):

A. “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword:” (2:12).

1. Pergamum was located approximately 70 miles north of Smyrna. The acropolis of this city had a library second in volume only to the great library in Alexandria of Egypt. There was a large theater and temples to Dionysus, Athena, and Demeter atop the acropolis as well. An altar of Zeus erected as the highest point of the acropolis stood 40’ tall. “This lofty pagan shrine could have been the ‘Satan’s throne’ of Rev. 2:13, either because it was of imposing height or because it symbolized Rome’s power administered at Pergamum from 190 until transferred to Ephesus by Hadrian A.D. 129.” (ISBE; vol. 3, pp. 769). Besides the pagan deities, there were imperial cults of emperor worship as temples were erected to Roma and Augustus. Nothing is known of the church in Pergamum except what is here said. It is likely that as Paul preached in Asia for three years that the fruit of his labor included Pergamum and Smyrna.

2. Note once again that Jesus identifies himself as the one wielding the “sharp two-edged sword” (see Rev. 1:16). Jesus wields the final weapon of vengeance against the ungodly pagan world. His word is the final word of authority.

B. “I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s throne is; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth” (2:13).

1. The Lord assesses, by divine knowledge, the condition of the church in Pergamum.

2. Jesus considers two positive attributes of the Pergamum church:

a. “I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s throne is” (2:13). Pergamum was considered the political capital and official center for Asian imperial cult worship of Roman deities. “Three temples to Roman emperors explain Pergamum’s title of ‘thrice temple-warden.’” (ISBE; vol. 3, pp. 769). Pergamum was, therefore, known as Satan’s throne.

b. Jesus knew that the Christians in Pergamum “holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth” (2:13b). The Christians of Pergamum were not ashamed of the name of Jesus Christ and held to it even in the face of difficult times. One such Christian, Antipas, held to the name of Jesus and was persecuted to the point of death. The Lord speaks highly of such men of faith. The Christians did not “deny my faith” which is none other than the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The word “deny” (arneomai) = “deny (to declare untrue; to refuse to believe; reject… to refuse to recognize or acknowledge; disavow), to decline to give, refuse… to say No, decline, refuse” (LS 118). They held true to the word of God in difficult times.

C. “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication” (2:14).

1. The apostle John had earlier said, “whosoever goeth onward and abide not in the teachings of Christ hath not God: he that abides in the teaching; the same hath both the Father and the Son” (II Jn. 9). There were some Christians of Pergamum; however, who were “holding” to these erroneous teachings, and the church was tolerating it.

2. The “teaching of Balaam” occurred in the book of Numbers 22. Balaam was hired by the king of Moab (Balak) to curse Israel. When Balaam was unable to do so, he counseled Balak to cause Israel to curse themselves by partaking in the lascivious worship with the Moabites (which included fornication) (Numb. 31:16). Balaam gave Balak the information needed to cause Israel to stumble (sin) in participating in idolatry and fornication. A stumbling block is used metaphorically as any person or thing which one is (‘entrapped’) drawn into error or sin; to put a stumbling block in one’s way, i.e. to do that by which another is led to sin” (Thayer 577). Apparently there was some sort of group that believed that they could participate in imperial worship and fornication and remain in good standing with Jehovah God. They tempted the Lord’s
people with this erroneous doctrine and therefore placed a “stumbling block” in the path of good Christians.

D. “So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth” (2:15).

1. The “teachings of the Nicolaitans” failed to infect the church at Ephesus but was successful in infiltrating the church of Pergamum (see Rev. 2:6).

2. Compromise with truth is never praised by Jesus. The Lord told the Christians in Pergamum to “repent.” The repentance was to come from two sources: First, those in error were to “repent”, and secondly, the members of the church were to repent for tolerating false teaching and practices. False teachers of any form are never to be taken lightly. They are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17) and counted as enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18-19). Pergamum’s sin was that they were not marking and turning away from such and neither were they correcting the problem the teaching was causing in the church. All the Christians in Pergamum (the errorist and the tolerant members of the church) were subject to Jesus’ coming and “making war against them with the sword of my mouth” (2:16). The Lord’s judgment would be made against any and all who did not take a firm stand against this error.

E. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcomes, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives it” (2:17).

1. Those with hard hearts and sympathetic ears to the false teachers would not hear; however, those who loved truth honestly (Luke 8:15) would hear and make the proper changes in life. Notice again the plural “churches.” This represents the fact that this message is for all of the Lord’s people. Do not compromise nor tolerate false teachings.

2. “To him that overcomes, to him will I give:”
   a. “The hidden manna.” The Lord provided manna in the wilderness way for Israel and kept some for a remembrance within the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 16:33; I Kg. 8:9). Jesus said that he was the manna from heaven and whoever partook of that bread would be in heaven (Jn. 6:33ff). Those receiving this heavenly manna would be those in the glories of heaven.
   b. “I will give him a white stone” (2:17b) (possibly a token of the Lord’s approval).
   c. “And upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it” (2:17c). It may be that the name written on the stone was the name of Jehovah God. “The meaning then probably is, that to the true Christian-the victor over sin- there is given some pledge of the divine favor which has to him all the effect of assurance, and which others do not perceive or understand (such as the forgiveness of sins; jcr)... The true Christian understands this; the world perceives it not.”

IV. The letter to the church in Thyatira (2:18-29):

A. “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass;” (2:18).

1. Thyatira was located 40 miles southeast of Pergamum. This city was the home of Lydia, the seller of purple, that Paul had converted outside Philippi (Acts 16:11-15). Thyatira was famous in the ancient world both for its highly organized trade unions and for its special technology for producing ‘purple’ (Turkish red) dye from the madder root rather than shell fish” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 846). “Purple” was “the most highly prized dye in the ancient world obtained from the secretions of four mollusks native to the eastern Mediterranean... Various shades could be produced by mixing secretions from different species, by adding salt or other substances, or by using procedures such as double dyeing... The importance of this industry can be seen in the name Phoenicia, which derives from phoinikous, “red-purple.’ Since approximately eight thousand mollusks were required to produce one gram of purple dye, purple cloth was extremely expensive, and the Bible refers to it almost exclusively as used by kings or for cultic purposes” (ISBE v. 3, pp. 1057). “It was apparently first founded as Pelopia, a shrine of the Lydian sun-god Tyrinnmus. This solar-deity
background might plausibly underlie the description of Christ as having eyes ‘like a flame of fire’ and feet ‘like burnished bronze’ (Rev. 2:18)” (ISBE; vol. 4, pp. 846).

2. The spirit of Jesus that addresses the church of Thyatira is that of the Lord’s flaming eyes and shiny brass feet. The Lord is to be feared and glorified.

B. “I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first” (2:19).

1. Once again, the omniscient Jehovah God knows all things.

2. The Lord knows of Thyatira’s:
   a. The Lord knows their “works” (ergon) again indicated their deeds and actions.
   b. The Lord knew of Thyatira’s “love” (agape) {they had a care and concern about their fellow man’s physical and spiritual well being}.
   c. The Lord knew of their “faith.” No where in the Bible do we find faith dwelling on a deserted island all alone. Faith is made evident by man’s obedience to the gospel message (see Jn. 3:36; Acts 13:38-39; Heb. 11:1ff).
   d. The Lord knew of their “ministry” (diakonian) = “One who renders service to another” (Moulton 91). Apparently the Thyatirans had a reputation of caring for each other’s needs.
   e. The Lord knew of their “patience” (hupomone) = “patient endurance, perseverance, the enduring of affliction” (Moulton 418).
   f. Lastly, the Lord said, “thy last works are more than the first.” Unlike the church in Ephesus (Rev. 2:4), the brethren at Thyatira had increased in their zeal to serve Jesus and he thus commends them. Their progression of faith; however, was overshadowed by their tolerance toward the wicked woman Jezebel.

C. “But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols” (2:20).

1. Seems odd that the brethren at Thyatira had not lost their zeal for Jesus yet tolerated a false teacher in the church whose leaven was evident (see study # 6). The word “sufferest” (eao) = means “to let, allow, permit, suffer to be done... to let be, let alone” (Moulton 110). The etymology of the word involves the idea of allowing a ship to sail on its own (sort of like cruise control). No one bothers it... the ship just sails with the wind. While the Thyatirans knew of Jezebel they did nothing about her error. They instead permitted her to continue teaching and seducing (planao) = “to lead astray, cause to wander; to go astray, wander about, stray... to mislead, delude” (Moulton 326). Here we see the power of erroneous teaching. Though the saints of Thyatira were commended for their faith, love, and so forth they had nonetheless permitted themselves to be seduced, with Jezebel’s teaching, to practice idolatry and to commit fornication. No doubt there were Christians getting involved in the idolatrous culture that was all about them and even participated in the act of fornication with the other idolaters. The worship of idols was often accompanied by fornication. The fornication that existed among the Christians of Corinth was directly associated to idolatry. It may very well be that the sun god Tyrimnus was worshipped in this fashion.

2. The name “Jezebel” was the name of King Ahab’s wife who was an idolater and one who persuaded others to worship Baal and the Ashera (II Kings. 16:31ff). “The kind of character, therefore, which would be designated by the term as used here, would be that of a woman who was artful and persuasive in her manner; who was capable of exerting a wide influence over others; who had talents of a high order; who was a thorough advocate of error; who was unscrupulous in the means which she employed for accomplishing her ends; and the tendency of whose influence was to lead the people into the abominable practices of idolatry.”

3. Jezebel was obviously involved with this and teaching that it was OK due to her claims of being a “prophetess” (Cf. II Tim. 3:1-7). The brethren of Thyatira should have put her to the test against the word of God; however, they rather tolerated and played with her. All those today who tolerate

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3 Barnes, A. Barnes’ Notes. A Commentary on the book of Revelation pg. 83
false teachers who bring erring doctrines regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage cause the simple to lay in a bed of fornication and eventually loose their souls.

D. “And I gave her time that she should repent; and she wills not to repent of her fornication. Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works” (2:21-22).

1. The Lord was not willing that any should perish but come to repentance (II Pet. 3:9). The times of God’s longsuffering, however, had now ended with Jezebel. He “gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication.”

2. The consequence of an un-repenting sinful life are given in Rev. 2:22, “Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works.” The time of Jezebel’s repentance was past, yet those who had been seduced by her teaching continued to have the opportunity. The word “tribulation” (thlipsis) = “distressing circumstances, trial, affliction” (Moulton 195)... “To press, squeeze, pinch; metaphorically to oppress, afflict, distress” (LS 367). The life of these adulterers was going to take a change in the direction of distress, trials, and affliction. Sometimes the only way for man to be moved to repent is through manifold trials of life (James 1:1ff; 1 Pet. 1:6ff).

E. “And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searches the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works” (2:23).

1. There appears to be a distinct difference between Jezebel’s “children” and those who had been influenced with her seductive teachings even committing fornication and idolatry. The “children” are apparently those who are in the same boat with Jezebel as far as God’s longsuffering and patience goes. These un-repenting children will be killed with death (eternal spiritual death / the second death in the lake of fire). These have obviously died in their sins and are reserved in Hades for the Day of Judgment.

2. All the churches of Christ are to know that God is He who “searches the reins and hearts” of men. God has the omnipotent capacity to look within a man or woman’s heart and determine whether they deserve death or life. He is the sovereign potentate of life and death. When man comes to understand this they shall glorify his majestic name.

3. Notice that God “gives unto each one of you according to your works.” God’s gracious gift of eternal life belongs to those whose “works” (i.e., actions and deeds) are in line with his laws of perfection. Those whose “works” are evil shall not inherit the kingdom of God (see I Cor. 6:9ff) (see study # 9; Conditional Salvation).

F. “But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden” (2:24).

1. There were members of the church in Thyatira who did not tolerate, give ascent, or practice the things that Jezebel taught. The Holy Spirit refers to her teachings as, “the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say.” No doubt Jezebel and her followers considered their teachings in matters of religious faith “deep things” yet John deems it “deep things of Satan.”

2. Those who reject all that Jezebel represents would not be burdened with the afflictions of those who had accepted them (for insight into this examine Acts 15:28-29).

G. “Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come. And he that overcomes, and he that keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father: and I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches” (2:25-28).

1. The faithful saints of Thyatira who have not given heed to Jezebel’s seducing doctrines are encouraged to “hold fast till I come” that faithful obedience until Jesus comes to take them home to glory. Those who “overcome and keep my works unto the end” will be rewarded with eternal glory (see study # 9).

2. Notice that John uses the word “works” now seven times in this chapter. Each time the word entails man’s duty to perform deeds and actions in accordance with the standard of truth that God revealed through the apostles and prophets. Those whose deeds and actions remain faithful to the Lord until the end of their living days on this earth shall be “given authority over the nations: to
rule them with a rod of iron...” To the Ephesians, the Lord said that those who overcome He will give them the “tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God” (2:7). To the brethren in Smyrna, if they overcame they should not “be hurt of the second death” (2:11). To the faithful of Pergamum the Lord promised to give them the “hidden manna, a white stone and a new name” (2:17). Now to the faithful of Thyatira that overcame, they are promised “authority over the nations” (2:26-28).

**a.** There shall be a common reign with Christ and Christians (Cf. Rev. 5:9-10; Eph. 2:6). Jesus will reign over the nations with a “rod of iron.”

**b.** The one who overcomes shall be given “the morning star,” a statement that indicates the glorification of the Christian in the end of times; for we shall be as Jesus (Cf. Rev. 22:16).

**Concluding Thoughts:**

The all sovereign and potentate Lord lays out his demands even in the midst of intense persecutions. The Christian must overcome or else suffer the eternal consequences. The tribulations of this life will soon pass and eternity’s doors await us all. Where will you be in eternity?

**Chapter 3**

**Prelude**

Revelation chapters two and three reveal a real time picture of the churches during John’s day. Christians were being persecuted and tempted by materialism and many had fallen from grace. Jesus divinely exposes all the dark deeds of the churches and calls upon them to repent. The Lord reveals their strong points; however, he lovingly tells them what they need to hear that they may enjoy the blessings of salvation. Once again, the study illustrates God’s demand for man’s absolute perfection and consequences for making the choice to do so or not.

**I. John addresses the church of Sardis (3:1-6):**

**A.** “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead” (3:1).

**1.** Sardis, the capital of the region of Lydia, was located thirty miles south and southeast of Thyatira. “In continuation of the ancient Asiatic fertility cult of Cybele or Demeter, there is a fourth century Ionic temple of Artemis imitating that of Diana of the Ephesians; though never completed and damaged by an earthquake in A.D. 17” (ISBE; vol. 4, pp. 336). The seven Spirits here represent the perfect Holy Spirit as indicated in Revelation 1: 4 of this study. The seven stars represent the seven angels of the churches (cf. notes on 1:20 above).

**2.** As the omniscient Lord knew the “works” (i.e., deeds and actions) of the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum and Thyatira so he knows the works of those in Sardis.

**3.** The brethren in Sardis had a “name that thou livest, and thou art dead.” The age old question arises as to how someone can be considered alive but yet dead. The answer is found at Ephesians 2:1-5. People who walk after the course of this world are spiritually dead whereas those who have obeyed the gospel and are following God’s laws are recognized as alive. The brethren of Sardis had a reputation of being followers of God; however, they did not keep His laws. Though they deceived man they could in no way hide their error from the omniscient God.

**B.** “Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God” (3:2).

**1.** The remedy to Sardis’ problem was to be “watchful” (gregoreuo) = “attentive, vigilant, circumspect [heedful of circumstances or consequences], watchful” (Moulton 82). At Acts 20:26-31 we find the same Greek word as Paul admonished the elders of Ephesus to be gregoreuo. False doctrines and teachers were assaulting the church throughout Asia with the doctrines of Balaam, Nicolaitans, and Jezebel. Each Christian was to be “watchful” (see study # 10; Watching and Warning).
2. The small bit of faith that remained in their hearts was to be rejuvenated before it was everlasting too late.

3. The horrific words that describe those of Sardis are, "I have found no works of thine perfected before my God." While the Lord found some works that could be commended on behalf of the four previous mentioned churches there was absolutely nothing perfect about those of Sardis. The Christians at Sardis did not do the works (i.e., deeds and actions) of God’s law. Such a verse illustrates, once again, God’s demand for man’s absolute perfection.

a. The word “perfected” (pleroo) is a present tense verb (indicates the ongoing action) (Friberg 745). Pleroo means “to complete, perfect, accomplish, come to an end, be fully arrived... full development” (Moulton 329).

b. The brethren in Sardis were not fully developed or complete in any of their works (actions and deeds).

C. “Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (3:3).

1. The Lord calls upon the brethren in Sardis to remember how they at one time “received” the gospel message and obeyed it to their salvation (see I Cor. 11:23; 15:3; Eph. 4:19-21; II Thess. 2:15). Such a remembrance ought to spur them back to keeping God’s laws and repenting of those errors that they had so foolishly fallen into.

2. “If” Sardis does not remember their first love and return to obedience through a spirit of vigilance then the Lord shall return at a time that they least expect it and they will be found guilty (see study # 9).

D. “But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy” (3:4).

1. It is somewhat interesting to note that John writes to the church of Sardis saying that “I have found no works of thine perfected before my God” (Rev. 3:2). Now; however, he states that there were a “few names that did not defile their garments.” The word “defiled” (moluno) = “to stain, sully; to defile, contaminate morally, pollution” (Moulton 272); “stain, defile, make impure, soil. Unclean, unwashed... unsoiled garments as symbol of a spotless life (Rev. 3:4)” (AG 526-527).

“To pollute, stain, contaminate, defile; in the N.T. used only in symbolic and fig. discourse: of those who have kept themselves pure from the defilement of sin, Rev. 3:4 (cf. Zech. 3:3); who have not soiled themselves by fornication and adultery, Rev. 14:4” (Thayer 417). “To stain, sully, defile... to become vile” (LS 518). Jude commanded that brethren in a state of defilement were to be admonished by those who “hate even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 23). The word “defile” is used throughout the OT to identify those who walk in sin. Said sinners are depicted as “unclean” (Lev. 16:16, 30), “defiled” (Lev. 18:30), “impure” (Lev. 22:21), and having a “blemish or imperfection” (Lev. 22:21). The holy nature of God is depicted in His “abhorrence” of those who walk in sin (cf. Lev. 20:23). There were only a few who had not defiled their garments with sin (i.e., they did not continue in sin).

2. Those who display a spirit of abhorrence toward sin, like God, shall “walk with me in white for they are worthy.” The child of God has always been instructed to hate sin and keep oneself unspotted from the world (see Deut. 7:26; Rom. 12:9; James 1:27) (see study # 6). White, as we have already discussed at our notes in Revelation 1:14-15 (see Isa. 1:18), is a figurative word indicating cleanness and holiness. Those who live the perfect life are worthy to walk with the Lord in white for all eternity!

E. “He that overcomes shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches” (3:5-6).

1. Once again, the admonition of the Holy Spirit through Jesus is that man “overcome” (i.e., be victorious over Satan’s lures and afflictions of this life). Those who are victorious over Satan shall be “arrayed in white garments” (no defiled or soiled stains shall find their way to such a one in heaven – heaven will be devoid of Satan).
2. God keeps a ledger of all who are faithful and those whose names are not written therein shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone for all eternity to suffer unimaginable pain and affliction (see Ps. 69:28; Rev. 20:15).

3. Note that those who “overcome” and are not “defiled” by the lust of this world shall not only walk with the Lord in white garments but Jesus will “confess their names before my Father and his angels.” Jesus addressed this subject in Luke 12:8ff. Note that confessing the name of Christ carries with it far more than a simple statement of, “I believe that Jesus is the Christ.” Confessing Christ before men involves overcoming, works, and being undefiled from sin (see study # 11; Confessing the name of Jesus).

II. John addresses the church of Philadelphia (3:7-13):

A. “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that opens and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none opens” (3:7).

1. The city of Philadelphia was located 28 miles southeast of Sardis. The city had a world-wide reputation for its grape growing and wine production. Consequently, one of the principle deities of Philadelphia was Dionysus, the Greek god of the vine and of wine. Philadelphia had so many pagan shrines and festivals to various deities that it was known as the “Little Athens” in some circles.

2. The Lord is depicted in three ways to the Philadelphians:
   a. Jesus is “holy.” The word “holy” (hagios) = “separate from common condition and use; dedicated... hallowed... sanctification, sanctity... separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify, regard or reverence as holy...” (Moulton 3).
   b. Jesus is “true” (alethinos) = “unfeigned, trustworthy, true” (Moulton 15). The Lord’s promises can be counted on because there is no lie within him.
   c. Jesus has “the key of David.” Our study of the word “key” at Revelation 1:18 produced the meaning as that of power and authority. David’s power and authority is transmitted to Jesus as the seed of David (Isa. 9:6-7; Lk. 1:32ff). Jesus had the power to “open and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth.” Jesus rules in heaven and on earth with the keys of power and authority (Matt. 28:18):
      i. He is head over the church (Eph. 1:20-22)
      ii. He has the keys to death and Hades (Rev. 1:18).
      iii. He, therefore, is the open door to heaven to those who so chose to follow his rule (see Luke 13:24ff).

B. “I know thy works (behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut), that thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and did not deny my name” (3:8).

1. Again, the omniscient Lord knows the works (i.e., deeds and actions) of those at Philadelphia.
2. Jesus tells those of Philadelphia that he has “set before thee a door opened...” The word “door” is used in scripture to metaphorically represent opportunity (Cf. Acts 14:27; I Cor. 16:9; II Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3). The Lord, by means of the gospel message, had opened doors of opportunity so that men may be saved, added to the kingdom of God, and occupying a true hope of being in heaven.
3. The brethren were depicted as having “little power,” yet it was sufficient to accomplish good works towards Jesus. The brethren had “kept my word” (i.e., Jesus) and were recognized for their faith.
4. The Philadelphians did not “deny” the name of Jesus Christ (i.e., rejected his authoritative words) (see also the church of Pergamum for being similarly commended – Rev. 2:13).

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

1. A “synagogue of Satan” existed in Philadelphia as there was in the church at Smyrna (Cf. Rev. 2:9). The Lord referred to their assemblies as of Satan here because of their rejection of the Christ. These same Jews were the ones Jesus referred to as being of “their father the devil” because they denied or rejected the Lord’s words (Jn. 8:44). The only true Jew was the one who was a Jew inwardly (Rom. 2:28ff). Those who claim to be God’s people yet reject His authoritative word are living a deluded life and there is nothing but eternal damnation awaiting them (see study # 6).
2. The idea of making these deluded Jews come and worship at the feet of the saints and to “know that I have loved thee” illustrates the fact that these unconverted Jews must be brought to know that God accepts those whom they reject. Apparently the unbelieving Jews mistreated and rejected the true saints yet they will be brought to realize that they are the rejected ones.

D. “Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (3:10).
1. Recall that those who committed adultery with Jezebel were doomed to tribulation that they may repent of their wickedness (see Rev. 2:21-22). Again, those of Smyrna were considered faithful yet they too faced “tribulation” (Rev. 2:9-10).
2. The lesson of the word of God is that whether one is righteous or wicked all face tribulation in this life (see Eccl. 2:14). These trials and tribulations are designed to draw man closer to God (I Pet. 1:6-8). God’s promise to the faithful of Philadelphia is that they will not suffer the same tribulation that the world will soon face (such is God’s sovereign choice).

E. “I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown. He that overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches” (3:11-13).
1. Note that the churches are encouraged to “hear” what is being written to them. Recall that those who are “blessed” are those who “read, hear, and keep” God’s revealed laws (Rev. 1:3). The day of Christ second coming will be quicker than one may think (time is quick!).
2. The child of God ought to be:
   a. “Holding fast” their faith until the Lord comes again.
   b. Never letting a false teacher, adulterous person, or any worldliness “take thy crown.”
   c. One who “overcomes” that they may attain a “pillar in the temple of my God.” Such a pillar represents a permanent place in the heavens.
   d. Furthermore, those who hold fast and overcome in this life shall be given the “name of my God, the name of the city of my God, and mine own new name.” This likely is the new name mentioned at Revelation 2:17. All things of this defiled world will be left behind (even our names... the faithful shall be known as the people of God for all eternity).

III. John addresses the church in Laodicea (3:14-22):
A. “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth” (3:14-16).
1. Laodicea was located about 45 miles southeast of Philadelphia and about 90 miles to the east of Ephesus. Laodicea, like many other cities of Asia, was devoted to imperial worship. The origin of this church is unknown, yet we do know that Paul wrote a letter to them (Col. 4:16).
2. Jesus addresses Laodicea with the attributes of being “the Amen” (the final and certain word / see II Cor. 1:20), “the faithful and true witness” (he that will fulfill his promises), and he who was at the “beginning of creation” (i.e., one who shares creative power with Jehovah God [see Jn. 1:1ff]).
3. The Lord knew the “works” of the brethren of Laodicea and what He noted was not pleasant. The Laodiceans were “lukewarm” in their service to God. The word “lukewarm” (chliaros) = “warm, tepid (moderately warm); lukewarm” (Moulton 436). This term clearly identifies their faith in Jesus yet their unwillingness to stand convicted and reject the false doctrines of their day. They were a church who simply went in the paths of least resistance to avoid persecution (much like the false teachers who infected the Galatians – see Gal. 6:12). It would have been better for the Laodiceans to be cold (i.e., totally opposed to Christ) or hot (i.e., totally convicted in the ways of Christ and to stand against the false teachers of their day). If they were completely cold at least they would be easier to motivate to see their wickedness that they may repent. If they were completely hot then they would be in good standing with God. Due to their lukewarm position they saw no need for changes. Such a state of tolerance and apathy causes God to spew them out of his mouth as vomit. Their tepid service sickened the Lord.
B. “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (3:17).

1. Note that the members of the church at Smyrna were monetarily poor yet rich in spirituality (see Rev. 2:9). The Laodiceans; however, were rich monetarily yet poor spiritually. The Apostle Paul told Timothy that they “that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition” (I Tim. 6:9). We now see what these “hurtful lusts that drown men in destruction and perdition” is all about. Such individuals fail to see their need for Christ and his forgiveness because they have all that they want and need on this earth (see study # 12; The Dangers of Riches).

2. The Laodiceans, though they considered themselves to need nothing, were actually “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” No one had greater needs than the Laodiceans. They too; however, were deluded and unable to identify their true condition in the eyes of God. They were spiritually dead and in need of resuscitation.

C. “I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (3:18-19).

1. God is indeed “love” (I Jn. 4:7ff) (i.e., He cares for mankind and does not wish any to perish – II Pet. 3:9). God did not want the lukewarm Christians of Laodicea to die in their sins.

2. God’s advice for the Laodiceans was that they make a spiritual investment in true treasure (i.e., knowledge and wisdom – see Matt. 13:44-46; Col. 2:3). Those rich in wisdom are those who Solomon depicts as bothered by sin (Eccl. 7:4, 19-20), rebuke the erring (Eccl. 7:5), patient in adversity (Eccl. 7:8, 14), not soon angry (Eccl. 7:9), understands and interprets truth (Eccl. 8:1), and walks in paths of righteousness (Eccl. 10:2-3).

3. Those who walk in wisdom will:
   a. Clothed themselves rather than walking around shamefully naked.
   b. They will apply spiritual “eyesalve” (truth) to their sinful eyes that they may see the true state of poverty and shame they are in and repent before its everlasting too late.

4. The Lord calls upon the Laodiceans to repent and be zealous (boiling over with heat) rather than being lukewarm and passive.

D. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. He that overcomes, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear with what the Spirit saith to the churches” (3:20-22).

1. Jesus knocks at the heart of all men calling upon them to repent that they may eternally enjoy the splendor of heaven. Man has the choice as to whether he spend eternity with the Lord in heaven or eternity with the devil and his angels.

2. Those who “overcome” shall:
   a. Those who open the doors of their mind to Jesus (i.e., read, hear, and keep his laws) shall “sup” with Jesus (i.e., partake of meals with Jesus in full fellowship).
   b. Such will sit with the Lord in his throne.

3. One last time Jesus pleads with his audience to “read, hear, and keep God’s laws” (see also Rev. 1:3). Jesus the loving shepherd desires all men to be saved!

Concluding Thoughts

The all sovereign and potentate Lord lays out his demands even in the midst of intense persecutions. The Christian must overcome or else suffer the eternal consequences. The tribulations of this life will soon pass and eternity’s doors await us all. Where will you be in eternity?
Chapter 4

Synopsis:

Revelation chapter one discloses the fact that Christ will come again as promised (Rev. 1:7). Jesus is depicted as being in unity and dwelling among his church (Rev. 1:13). The Lord is seen as the eternal potentate of all creation (Rev. 1:13ff). Seeing that the Lord will come again the church ought to be busy repairing the things that are wanting in each person’s life. Seven churches within Asia are examined in chapters two and three. Five of these churches were called upon to repent for their involvement of unlawful activities. The overall message to this point of our study is that the Christian, though persecuted, must not live in sin!

The people of God lived in trying times. Domitian was the Roman Emperor during the years 81 to 96 AD. He adopted the title “dominus et dues” i.e., “master and god” and enforced his deity upon all (Microsoft Encarta 2002). The Lord continued; however, to demand the Christian’s perfection even though they were heavily persecuted and suffered from poverty. Chapter 4 is designed to give the Christians confidence. God is on His throne and He is all powerful, knowing, eternal, and omnipresent. He has not forgotten His people!

I. The Throne of God (4:1-5):

A. “After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter” (4:1).

1. The “after these things...” indicates the vision of Christ standing in the midst of his church and receiving the revelation that was to be written to the seven churches of Asia (chapters 1-3). The message to the churches may be summarized by the statement “overcome.” Christians were not to drop their heads in defeat but rather keep pressing through life. God is, eternity is real, and so is heaven and hell. Never is there a time, while among the living, that the Christian should give up.

2. John has seen Jesus in his glorious state. He has received revelation to write and deliver to the seven churches of Asia. John now sees a door opened in heaven. John is invited to come to the door and gaze into the throne room of Jehovah God.

B. “Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon” (4:2-3).

1. John was “in the Spirit” at Revelation 1:10 when given the vision of Christ in the midst of his church. The phrase indicates that God was delivering divine revelation by means of His Holy Spirit (see Ezek. 2:1-2; 3:12-14; 8:3; 11:24; 37:1; 1 Pet. 1:21). God revealed to man His will through “visions” and “dreams” that they may speak a divine message to the people (cf. Dan. 7:1; Obed. 1:1; Joel 2:28ff; Amos 1:1; Zechariah 1:7ff). John is apparently receiving these divine visions and of things to come.

2. John, by means of a divine vision, is brought to the door in heaven and permitted to gaze within. John sees a “throne” (thronos) = “a seat, chair; a throne... the chair of a teacher...” (LS 370). “The chair occupied by an exalted personage such as a sovereign or bishop on state or ceremonial occasions” (AHD 1266). This was the sovereign chair of Jehovah God (i.e., “the one sitting upon the throne”).

3. When John looked upon the one upon the throne he said that it looked like “a jasper stone and a sardius.” Arndt and Gingrich explain the “jasper stone” saying that “in antiquity the name was not limited to the variety of quartz now called jasper, but could designate any opaque precious stone. Rv. 21:18ff; 4:3. A stone of crystal-clear jasper Rev. 21:11 (cf. Isa. 54:12); perh. The opal is meant here; acc. To some, the diamond” (AG 368). It seems apparent that from John’s description of the holy Jerusalem in Revelation 21:11 that the diamond is intended here to depict Jehovah God. The “sardius” is “a reddish precious stone Rv. 4:3” (AG 742). John saw the Lord as depicted in diamonds and reddish precious stones. Interestingly, the Psalmist wrote, “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne: loving kindness and truth go before thy face” (Psalms
There seems to be a connection between the jasper and sardius and the traits of righteousness and justice (i.e., the foundation of the throne of God) along with the traits of loving-kindness and truth with the rainbow.

C. “And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold” (4:4).

1. These “twenty four elders” are mentioned five times in the book of Revelation (see 4:4, 10; 5:8; 11:16; 19:4) and nowhere else in the word of God. Note that these twenty four elders are also sitting on thrones (with God) and they are arrayed in white garments with crowns of gold upon their heads. Recall:
   a. The Lord Jesus promised white garments for all who overcame (Rev. 3:4).
   b. The same Lord promised crowns for those who overcame (Rev. 2:10; 3:11).
   c. Another important note is that the Bible reveals the saints of God to be those who “reign” with the Lord (Rom. 5:17; Eph. 2:6; Rev. 5:10). These twenty four elders are sitting upon thrones with God and reigning with him.

2. These twenty four elders sitting on thrones with white apparel and golden crowns are obviously a representation of the redeemed throughout the ages and on into eternity.

D. “And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God” (4:5).

1. The one who sat upon the throne spoke words that fell upon John’s ears as “lightnings and voices of thunders” (see Rev. 4:1). When God spoke to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, His presence and voice was as thunder, lightning and a loud trumpet (Ex. 19:16ff). So fearful were the people that they begged Moses to not let God speak to them anymore in this fashion but that Moses would speak to God for the people (Deut. 5:34ff). The scene was intended to illustrate to Israel God’s great authoritative power. Herein is one of the most important points to grasp from Revelation chapter 4. Why would God appear before John in such a manner? The reason can be no different than that of the event that transpired in Exodus 19-20. Note that Moses stated to the people who witnessed the same things about God that John does here saying, “Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that you sin not” (Ex. 20:20). People during John’s day, as people of all ages, needed to be reminded of God’s great might and purpose for man. WE MUST NOT SIN!

2. “Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne” depicted the “seven Spirits of God.” We discussed the “seven Spirits” in Rev. 1:4 stating that the number seven represents perfection or completion and that this is none other than the Holy Spirit. These seven lamps represent perfection and may very well be the word of God that the Holy Spirit distributed. The Psalmist said, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105).

II. The glass sea and the four living creatures (4:6-11):

A. “And before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like unto crystal...” (4:6a).

1. John sees a “sea of glass” “before the throne” of God. The word “before” (enopion) = “face to face” (LS 267). God’s throne stood face to face with a sea of glass that obviously separated the twenty-four elders (the redeemed of all times) from Jehovah God. Notice, however, that at the time when this present order has passed away, so shall the sea of glass (Cf. Rev. 21:1).

2. At this future time, there will be no separation between God and man because the redeemed shall be like Him (I Jn. 3:2).

B. “And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind” (4:6b).

1. The four living creatures were full of eyes that they may see in every direction. They were completely aware of every incident occurring in Jehovah’s creation.

2. The remainder of the chapter will answer the question, “Who are these four living creatures full of eyes?”

C. “And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf; and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle” (4:7).

1. Chapter four bears out the fact that all four aspects of these four creatures are a representation of Jehovah God’s omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and eternal existence.
2. Consider these four beasts:
   a. The lion was the king of all beasts. He represented dominion and authority of a government (Cf. Amos 3:8; Joel 3:16).
   b. The calf (or bullock) symbolized resolve, endurance and strength (Cf. Pr. 14:4).
   c. The creature having a face of man would likely represent intelligence.
   d. The flying eagle represented quickness, power and elevation of flight.

D. “And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings” (4:8a):
   1. Four similar creatures are described at Ezek. 1:4-10 and Isaiah 6:1-5. Each of these three chapters in God’s word depicts a vision of a throne in heaven.
   2. The faces of the creatures seem to represent God’s nature. Collectively we find the omnipotence of Jehovah God (cf. Jer. 32:17; 51:15-19).

E. “are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come” (4:8).
   1. These verses illustrate the omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, and eternal nature of Jehovah God.
   2. Consider a more in depth examination of these four creatures:
      a. The living creatures “are full of eyes round about and within” representing the fact that nothing evaded the authority, strength, wisdom and quickness of God’s government. God is omnipresent; i.e., all places at all times and sees all things (Jer. 23:23-25).
      b. Note that God is termed, “the Almighty” to illustrate his omnipotence. At Genesis 17:1 God is referred to as “God Almighty” (El Shaddai) (to be strong) to illustrate the fact that He is powerful enough to cause Abraham at 100 and Sarah at 90 to have a child. Certainly there is nothing too hard for God to do (Gen. 18:14 / compare with Jer. 32:17, 27).
      c. The face of a man; i.e., intelligence illustrates God’s omniscience. God sees all that man does (Jer. 16:17; 23:24; Heb. 4:12-13).
      d. The eternal nature of God is depicted in the statement, “who was and who is and who is to come.” This exact statement is found at Revelation 1:4 in relation to Jehovah on his throne. Recall that Abraham had referred to Jehovah as the “everlasting God” (Gen. 22:33).
   3. These four creatures that represent the nature of Jehovah God “have no rest night and day” (4:8c). This indicated the constancy of their work. God knows at all times what takes place in His creation and is at all times in control (see Acts 17:22-28).
   4. They said continuously, “holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come” (4:8d). The “Almighty” was God the Father, as distinguished from Jesus Christ (Cf. Rev. 21:22). Isaiah 6:3 stated that these four creatures cried unto another saying, “holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” The use of the word holy three times gives emphasis to the expression and simply meant that God was supremely holy. Throughout scriptures such triplets of emphasis are found (Cf. Jer. 7:4; 22:29; Ezek. 21:27 etc.). The “whole earth being full of his glory” seems to summarize God’s omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and eternal nature. Seeing that God is all in all it stands to reason that “in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

F. “And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sits on the throne, to him that lives for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sits on the throne, and shall worship him that lives for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created” (4:9-11).
   1. The four living creatures gave God glory and honor and thanks, which seemed to be a signal for the twenty-four elders to fall down before the Lord and worship him saying, “Worthy are thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were and were created.”
   2. Again, the twenty-four elders represent the redeemed of all times. These individuals cast their crowns before the Father knowing that their very life and victory was only because of his love for mankind (Jn. 3:16).
3. The cause for the praise was that God is the creator of all things (see Acts 17:24ff). This reminds us of
the truths spoken by the prophet Isaiah regarding man’s future salvation which is always followed by the seal of truth, i.e., God is the creator of all things (Cf. Isa. 45:18).

Concluding Thoughts

The Christian is called upon to see hope in the unseen. The world sees with spiritual short sighted vision and often concludes that there is no God or believes that God does not care. Rome appeared to be unstoppable to these short sighted people. The Emperor’s demands unavoidable. All hope of living a normal life and experiencing eternity seemed dead. God; however, illustrates through His apostle John that all is not lost. Jehovah continues to be among His church. He is the omnipotent creator, all knowing, all seeing, and eternal God. God would soon put an end to earthly kingdoms yet at present Christians needed to hang in there.

Chapter 5

Prelude

Revelation chapter one discloses the fact that Christ will come again as promised (Rev. 1:7). Jesus is depicted as being in unity and dwelling among his church (Rev. 1:13). The Lord is seen as the eternal potentate of all creation (Rev. 1:13ff). Seeing that the Lord will come the church ought to be busy repairing the things that are wanting in each person’s life. Seven churches within Asia are examined in chapters two and three. Five of these churches were called upon to repent for their involvement of unlawful activities. Chapter four reveals the throne of God, His characteristics, and the redeemed of all times represented in the twenty four elders. The book has, to this point, illustrated the importance of God’s people maintaining a state of perfection which is possible through the blood of Jesus Christ. Though times are hard man must know that God has never forgotten their woes.

I. The Book with Seven Seals (5:1-5):

A. “And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals” (5:1).

1. John, continuing “in the spirit” (see Rev. 4:2), noted that the potentate Lord God Almighty held a book within his right hand that had writings within and on the back (front and back of paper) yet it was sealed with seven seals.

2. Ancient letters and books were often sealed with wax. The wax sealing ensured the contents of the letter remained private. Seven seals seem to represent sealed sections of the book. The pages of the book were written “within and on the back” (5:1). Ezekiel saw a book in his vision that was written in the same fashion (Ezek. 2:10). The apparent meaning is that the scroll had writing on both sides of the paper. This would have been an unusual sight since writing on vellum generally occurred only on one side unless there was a scarcity of writing material.

B. “And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” (5:2).

1. The identity of the “strong angel” is unknown. Other strong angels are mentioned at Revelation 10:1 and 18:21 with specific work to do.

2. This strong angel proclaims, “Who is worthy…” (axios) = “worthy or fit” (AG 78)… worthy, goodly” (LS 85)… “A person esteemed for his worth, dignity, or importance” (AHD 1392). The strong angel’s question then is, “Who is fit or important enough to open this book (i.e., loose the seals of the book and reveal its contents) that the Almighty Jehovah holds within His right hand.”

C. “And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon: and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof” (5:3-5).

1. John had been brought, in the spirit, to see God’s throne, His glorious attributes, and the glorified saints of the future. He now sees a book that, no doubt, is a key in having a greater understanding.
of the events unfolding before his eyes. There is no one; however, worthy (important or fit) to
open the book and reveal its contents. The whole idea of no one being worthy to look into a book
that Jehovah holds is upsetting and so the Apostle weeps.

2. While John weeps one of the twenty four elders (the future redeemed) informs John of one who is
worthy; i.e., “the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the
book...”

a. Overcoming seems to be a prerequisite of being worthy to open the book with the seven seals.
The one who has overcome is the “Lion that is of the tribe of Judah.” Who is the “Lion of the
tribes of Judah?” Genesis 49:9-10 helps us. Jacob said of Judah that he is the “Lion’s whelp” and
goes on to say, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from
between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.”
Preeminence, power, and authority belonged to Judah. Jacob states that the “scepter” of
sovereignty and authority will not depart from Judah “until Shiloh come.” The name “Shiloh” = “A title of the Messiah (Gen. 49:10).”4 The author of Hebrews states, “For it is evident that
our Lord hath sprung out of Judah...” (Heb. 7:14). The genealogies of Matthew 1:1ff illustrate the lineage of Christ through Judah (cf. Matt. 1:1-3). The importance of Jacob’s
announcement was that he made a prophetic proclamation of what tribe the promised Messiah
would come. Jacob prophetically tells us of the preeminence, power, and authority of the
coming Messiah that would be from Judah. Jesus was preeminent (cf. Col. 1:18), powerful
(i.e., able to forgive mankind of their sins; Mk. 2:10; Jn. 17:2 and control all physical elements
of the world [see ], and one of authority (Matt. 28:18ff).

b. Secondly, the worthy one was said to be of “the root of David.” This phrase pointed to Jesus
as well (Cf. II Sam. 7:11ff; Ps. 89:3ff; Isa. 11:1-10; Rom. 15:12).

c. Thirdly, the worthy one had “overcome” “to conquer; overcome, to carry off the victory, come
off victorious: of Christ, victorious over all his foes” (Thayer 426). “Be victor, prevail,
conquer – a. in a battle or contest, of Christ Rev. 3:21b; 5:5; indicates what the victory enables
the victor to do” (AG 539). “To conquer or prevail, vanquish” (LS 533). What did Jesus
overcome? What was Jesus victor or conqueror over? What did he vanquish or prevail
against? When Jesus went to the cross, He became victorious over sin and death. Man could
now experience the forgiveness of sins and spiritual life (I Cor. 15:20ff). Jesus dealt the
crushing blow to Satan’s head (see Gen. 3:15). This victory over sin qualified him to take the
book out of the Almighty’s hand.

II. John saw the Lamb of God at the Throne with God (5:6-14):

A. “And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a
Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven
Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth” (5:6).

1. The identity of the four living creatures was revealed at Revelation 4:6-8 (i.e., the characteristics of
omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and eternality of Jehovah God). John saw there that these
four creatures have no rest night or day due to their work of saying, “holy, holy, holy, is the
Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come” (Rev. 4:8).

2. The “elders” in which the “Lamb” is seen standing in the midst of, are the twenty four elders of
Revelation 4:4 and a representation of the redeemed of all time. Recall that we had learned that at
a future date the “sea of glass” would be removed (Rev. 21:1), the four creatures would glorify the
Almighty, and then the twenty four elders would worship the Almighty.

3. At this throne scene was a “Lamb standing, as though it had been slain:”

a. The sacrificial Lamb of Isaiah 53:7 began the analogy between Jesus and a lamb.

b. John the Baptist referred to Jesus as, “the Lamb of God” (Jn. 1:29, 36).

c. Philip explained Isaiah’s passage about the Lamb to the Ethiopian Eunuch as the Christ
(Acts 8:32).

d. Peter spoke of Jesus as a lamb whose perfect blood was shed for a sin sacrifice (I Pet. 1:19).

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4 Unger, M. F. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, pp. 1182
e. The clear metaphorical use of Jesus and the lamb is the sacrificial nature of his life (Cf. I Cor. 5:7).
f. “The vision gives emphasis to victory through sacrifice.”

2. This lamb (Jesus) had “seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.”

a. The word “horn” is used metaphorically throughout the Bible indicating power (Cf. Deut. 33:17; I Kings 22:11; Jer. 48:25; Zec. 1:18; Dan. 7:24). “The propriety of this symbol is laid in the fact that the strength of an animal is in the horn, and that it is by this that he obtains a victory over other animals.” Here then was the completeness or perfection of Jesus’ power.
b. The “seven eyes” were clearly representative of Jesus’ perfect all-seeing and all-knowing knowledge! Zechariah had said that the “servant the Branch” was the “stone that I have set before Joshua; upon one stone are seven eyes” (3:8-9). Zechariah then said in 4:10b; “these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth.”
c. The vision revealed that these seven eyes were the seven Spirits which we earlier determined to be the Holy Spirit (Cf. 1:4). Herein is an interesting fact about the godhead. Note that the “seven eyes” are a part of the Lamb and secondly we shall note that the four living creatures bow down to worship the Lamb at Revelation 5:8. These two statements draw a close connection between God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and the Lamb of God. The three are in perfect unity (see Jesus’ prayer at John 17).
d. Jesus is therefore all knowing and all powerful just as the Almighty mentioned in Revelation 4. He was inseparably connected to the Holy Spirit who went throughout the world revealing truth (see Jn. 16:13) (“sent forth into all the earth”).

B. “And he came, and he taketh it out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth” (5:7-10).

1. As John watched the worthy Lamb, Jesus, he took the seven sealed book out of right hand of God. The moment Jesus took the book out of the Almighty’s hand the four living creatures and twenty four elders fell down before God and worshiped (this now connects the redeemed of God with the godhead in unity). We recall that at Revelation 4:9-11 that at the time that the four living creatures give God glory and honor the twenty four elders would fall before the Almighty to worship him as they cast their crowns before the throne in a gesture that illustrates their understanding of his being “worthy to receive glory and the honor and power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

2. Note that the twenty four elders had a “harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.” It is important to remember that John is seeing a vision of heaven (the events about the throne of God). Within heaven will be the twenty four elders praising God with harps and bowls (not literal but figurative; i.e., the “prayers of the saints”).

3. The “new song” sang by the redeemed of all time speaks of the worthiness of Christ because he had been “slain, and purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, tongue, and people…” The sacrificed body and blood of Christ was the price of man’s redemption and those who receive Christ now belong to Christ (see Acts 20:28; Gal. 3:27-28). These blood purchased men and women who have been baptized for the remission of their sins are now recognized as a “kingdom of priests that reign upon the earth” (see I Peter 2:9). Though the saints of God appear week in their meekness they truly “reign upon the earth.” God’s people are special in relationship to the masses of humanity. We are the one’s whose hope is heaven. We are the one’s who with open

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5 Hailey, H. Revelation, An Introduction and Commentary. Pg. 178
6 Barnes, A. Barns’ Notes; Revelation pg. 124
eyes see the unseen of heaven and hell. We are truly a kingdom of priest belonging to God on this earth.

4. I have clipped a portion of an e-mail debate that occurred between Larry Ray Hafley and an elder in the “Christian Church” dated 21 August 2001 to illustrate the point that this verse does not authorize the use of mechanical instruments in worship.

In Revelation 5:8, the harps and golden bowls were expressly said to be, not literal, material bowls, but "the prayers of saints." We shall no more have literal harps in heaven than we shall have material, golden bowls there. Further, if the harps and bowls were literal, how could the harps ever be played? It would be pretty difficult to play a harp with a golden bowl in one hand. One armed harpists are about as rare as one-legged punters.

2) Let us parallel the argument above. "If the burning of incense is so wrong, why is it in heaven" (Rev. 5:8; 8:3)? From those texts, we can see that the prayers and odors from the burning of incense are "in heaven." (One cannot argue that the instruments are literal but that the incense is figurative. Both are of the same nature.) Now, will that "elder from the Christian Church" see to it that the sweet smell of burning incense wafts its way among the worshippers next Sunday? If not, would he object if the preacher and the deacons justified its use based upon Revelation 5:8 and 8:3? Let him tell us, since he justifies his mechanical instruments in the very same manner!

3) If one could prove that material, mechanical instruments were in heaven, he still would not have proved that they belong in the church. Our disagreement with the Christian Church is not over what shall be in heaven, but over what is authorized in the worship of the church. Grant that they have proved that such instruments are in heaven. Now, let them prove that they are authorized in the worship of the church today. I can prove that infants, babies, will be in heaven (2 Sam. 12:23). Now, since they shall be in heaven, does that "elder from the Christian Church" believe in infant membership in the church, as per Catholicism, and the Lutherans? If not, how shall he keep a baby off "the church roll," if a young mother says, "If infant membership is so wrong, why are they in heaven?"

If what is in heaven must also be allowable in the church, then is the reverse true; namely, that whatever is in the church must also be allowed in heaven? If not, why not? I can find a contribution of material means authorized in the church (1 Cor. 16:2). If a contribution is in the church, why would it be "so wrong" to argue for the same in heaven? We eat and drink the Lord's supper in the kingdom of God on earth, the church (Lk. 22:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-29). The eating and drinking of that memorial feast will cease when Christ comes again, for we are to eat and drink "till he come," not after he comes (1 Cor. 11:29). Thus, what is in the church will not be in heaven. To prove that a thing is in the church does not prove that it will be in heaven. Likewise, to prove that a thing is in heaven does not prove that item is in the church today. Surely, that "elder in the Christian Church" will not contend for a contribution and the Lord's supper in heaven because they are in the church today. But, he cannot have it both ways. If he agrees that whatever is in the church will not necessarily be in heaven, then he cannot contend that whatever is in heaven must be in the church. We do not grant that such literal instruments are in heaven, but even if they are, the "elder in the Christian Church" needs to find them in the worship of the New Testament church. This he can never do! If he could do so, he would not be arguing for their being in heaven. When one turns to infants in heaven to prove infant membership in the church, you can be assured that he cannot find babies in the New Testament church. Likewise, when one turns to what he thinks are instruments in heaven to attempt to prove that instruments are in the church, you know that he cannot find them in the New Testament church...."

C. “And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice. Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying. Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped” (5:11-14).

1. What an incredible scene. While in heaven the redeemed shall fall before the Almighty and sing a new song (how many we know not). The angels too will join in with this new song. The number of angels is noted to be “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (that is a whole lot of angels). At this future date even all things created shall confess the glorious state of the Almighty (see Phil. 2:9-11).

2. The eternal glorious abode of the saints has now been depicted. There comes a day when the saints of God shall reign with Christ in heaven. The redeemed shall sing the new song and live for ever apart from the horrid ordeals of this world.

3. That which makes all eternity and glory possible for man is the book which the Almighty holds in his right hand and the book that only Christ is worthy to reveal.
Concluding thoughts regarding the contents of the book:

The facts about the book: Jehovah God had it in his hand which indicates that it came from him. The contents were sealed, a fact that indicates that the contents are unknown to all but the Lord himself. The Lamb of God alone was qualified to take the book and reveal its contents due to his having “overcome.” The fact that John saw the Lamb with seven eyes which are the seven spirits (i.e., the Holy Spirit) identifies that fact that there is perfect unity between the Lamb and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would take the contents of this book and disseminate it “into all the earth” (Rev. 5:6). The remainder of the book of Revelation seems to strengthen the argument that this book contains the eternal purpose of God as revealed in Ephesians 3:3-11 which is to justify man from sin. This scheme of redemption was concealed from man until the fullness of times should make it known (Gal. 4:4ff; Eph. 1:9-11). When Jesus accomplished the purpose of God, a blood sacrifice for the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit was then free to go forth unto the apostles and reveal this message to the whole world. God’s help was not going to be in the form of an assassination of the Roman Emperor or a wheelbase full of money and neither is such the case today. What John’s readers were to note was that even though they were living in trying days of persecution and in some cases poverty they had the potentate Jehovah God who cared for them, they had each other to lean upon in the unity of the saints (Rev. 1:5-9), and they had the gospel message of hope (Jesus will come again to take home his beloved and faithful saints because he has overcome sin and death – Rev. 1:7). What God’s people needed to be doing now was keeping themselves from sin (Rev. 2-3; 4:5 compared to Ex. 20:20).

The hope all mankind, not only in Bible days but also now, is found in the Lamb that was slain and resurrected. Jesus purchased the church with his own blood. Christ is worthy to receive the book; i.e., gospel message and disseminate it throughout the world by the Holy Spirit. The potentate God, the gospel message, and the Lamb of God illustrate the reality of man’s hope!

Chapter 6

Synopsis

The book that the Almighty held within his right hand is identified as revelation exposing the redemption of mankind from their sin that they too may be victorious over sin and death. Chapter six reveals John’s vision of the worthy Lamb, Jesus, opening each of the seven seals and revealing the book’s contents. It is somewhat perplexing, at this point of our study, that the first four seals of the book are accompanied by one of the living creature voices and a colored horse. The remaining three do not have an accompanying creature or horse. Once again, which is under consideration is comfort and hope for the persecuted and suffering people of God.

I. The Lamb opened the first seal of the book (6:1-2):
A. “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, come” (6:1).
   1. John, in the spirit, witnessed the Lamb of God opening the first seal and with anxious anticipation awaited to see what was therein.
   2. Which one of the four living creatures spoke is not revealed. The figurative use of the four living creatures is continued from 4:6. We have identified these creatures as the attributes of God; i.e., God’s omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, and eternal existence. The living creatures in order are the lion, calf, face of man, and flying eagle. If we follow the order of Revelation 4:6 then this first creature would be the lion.
   3. The voice of the first living creature thundered as in 4:5. Apparently the voice of God is the source of the thunder and ought to produce fear and reverence upon hearing. The thunderous voice said, “come” (6:1b).
B. “And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer” (6:2).
1. White has already been identified as the color that represents purity, holiness, and cleanliness (cf. 2:17; 3:5). White is completely antithetical to the subject of being defiled in sin (see Isa. 1:18; Rev. 3:4).

2. Horses represented war, battle (Job. 39:19-25; Zech. 10:3), and speed (Jer. 4:13).

3. The bow was an early weapon used by soldiers in battle (Gen. 48:22; I Chron. 5:18). The bow was also used metaphorically to represent times of battle and judgment (cf. Ps. 7:12; Hab. 3:8-13).
   a. Interestingly, the Psalmist referred to Jesus as having sharp arrows used to defeat his enemies (Ps. 45:5).
   b. Isaiah referred to the “servant” (Jesus) as a sword and arrow in its quiver (Isa. 49:2).
   c. It seems apparent that the rider of the white horse of battle is Jesus. He was ready to deliver his heart-piercing gospel message that would defeat the power of sin (Heb. 4:12).
   d. Jesus was carrying out the purpose of the sealed book. He rides his horse in battle to conquer sin in the lives of men.

II. The Lamb opened the second seal of the book (6:3-4):
   A. “And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, come” (6:3).
      1. If we continue in the order of living creatures given at Revelation 4:7 then this second creature would be the calf.
      2. If the order remained the same as that of 4:7, then the first beast speaking was the lion, the second the calf, the third the face of a man and the last the flying eagle.
   B. “And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword” (6:4).
      1. The “red horse” seems to represent war and blood. After the gospel message went forth, the effects would be war against the saints. Jesus said, “think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt. 10:34). The “great sword” of Revelation 6:4 was the sword of persecution. This persecution would be the lot of every child of God who stood for truth and opposed error. Persecution was to be the lot of the saints (see Phil. 1:29; I Thess. 3:3) (see study #13; Persecution of the Saints). Revelation often focuses on exposing what will happen before it happens so that the saint of God will not be discouraged or dismayed but rather know that it is God’s will that these things take place (John 13:19; 14:29).
      2. This war occurred in ever circle of man’s life (i.e., in the world, in his home, and even in the church):
         a. The world: John 15:19ff
         b. The home: Jesus said, “and brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 10:21-22).
         c. The church: I Jn. 2:18-19
   3. The saint was commanded to share in the suffering of Jesus (Phil. 3:10; I Pet. 4:13).

III. The Lamb opened the third seal of the book (6:5-6):
   A. “And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand” (6:5).
      1. The third living creature, the face of man, also said, “come.” John is invited to peer into the third seal of the book that was in the Almighty’s right hand and now being opened by the Lamb.
      2. The third horse is black and its rider had a balance in his hand. The color black depicted suffering, sorrow, grief, depression, gloominess, and mourning in the Bible (Isa. 50:3; Jer. 4:28; 14:2).
      3. Notice that the gospel was sent out into the world by Jesus on the white horse (Rev. 6:1-2). This message caused war between fellow man and even family (Rev. 6:3-4). Now the picture is vivid consequences of such conflicts with people!
         a. The “balance” in the hand of the rider of the black horse represented the scarcity of food as in Ezek. 4:16.
b. The word “measure” (choinix) is defined as, “a dry measure, containing four cotylae or two sextarii [i.e. less than our ‘quart’; cf. L. and S. s.v.] (or as much as would support a man of moderate appetite for a day)” (Thayer 669).

B. “And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, a measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not” (6:6).

1. The “shilling” was a day’s wages for a laborer (Matt. 20:2). Barley was cheaper than wheat and therefore one could keep a family of three alive on barley with his labor.

2. Oil, wine and bread were recognized throughout the OT as representing the blessings of Jehovah God. It was the primary food source for the ancients. The oil and wine “hurt thou not” (me adikeses) is defined as, “to hurt, damage, harm” (Thayer 12). “Damage, spoil” (AG 17; LS 13). Though the saint would be deprived of daily sustenance due to his faith he was not to be deprived of God’s blessings.

3. These were hard times for the Christian because of the stand in the gospel truth. If they were not going to work in the pagan temple industry, then they would be reduced to low paying wage jobs which caused them to suffer physically.

IV. The Lamb opened the fourth seal of the book (6:7-8):

A. “And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the forth living creature saying, come” (6:7).

1. Once again as we follow the progression of living creatures from Revelation 4:7 this last one would be the flying eagle.

2. The last living creature calls upon John to “come” that he may see the contents of the book.

B. “And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the forth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth” (6:8).

1. The fourth horse was “pale” in color and the rider was given the name “Death.” The word “pale” (chloros) is defined as “a pale green” (NM 974 see also Moulton and Liddell and Scot). Plants get their green appearance from chlorophyll. When a plant is paling it is said to be “chlorotic.” The picture is one of poor health and nigh unto death.

2. The Lord gave Death authority over ¼ of the earth, which indicated that God sets the limits of Death’s power.

3. The Pale rider killed in four ways (Cf. Ezek. 5:16-17 for a comparison):

a. Sword: Representing physical warfare.

b. Famine: Starvation associated with war.


d. Wild beast

4. As the un-repenting and lost of the world suffer in the above areas, the Christian will also suffer since we are all part of the societies we live. What affects a society affects every individual in the society so that all suffer (even the innocent) (see Eccl. 2:14; 3:19).

V. The Lamb opened the fifth seal of the book (6:9-11):

A. “And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;” (6:9).

1. No more living creatures saying come and no more horses. What the creatures had called John to see were four horses that represented the Christian’s physical demise while upon the earth.

2. John now sees an altar and under the altar the souls of people who had been killed for their stand in truth (the word of God). Jesus had foretold of these things taking place (see Jn. 15:17ff and the first rider of the first horse).

3. In descriptive language John was shown by pictures what these individuals have done. These are martyrs, living sacrifices to Jehovah at his altar. Under the Mosaic system of expiation sacrifices were made (i.e., Burnt offering or sin offering, peace offering, meal offering etc. (Cf. Leviticus 3-8)). The blood of the burnt offering was poured out at the base of the altar (Lev. 4:7) because the life of the animal was in the blood (Lev. 17:11).

4. The word “for” (dia) means “because of” or “by reason of.” It was because of the word of God that these people gave up their lives! Their true faith that God is was dearer to them than their own
lives! As the red horseman rode with the great sword these men and women were not dissuaded from following Jesus and neither should anyone else.

B. These martyrs “cried with a great voice, saying, how long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled their course” (6:10-11).

1. No immediate answer was given. We hear the same longing questions by David in the OT (Ps. 6:3; 13:1; 35:17; 74:9ff; 79:5…etc.). The point being that though these men and women lost their lives through persecution their lives are not ended. The message of the gospel is that man continues on into eternity and those who live faithful will be rewarded for all eternity (see Rev. 2:10). Remember that those who overcame through death for the word of God were given a “white robe” (6:11; Cf. 3:5).

2. The cry of the martyrs was not for revenge but for justice. They were asking God to fulfill his promise made to Moses regarding the just reward of those who would do harm to the people of God (Deut. 32:43). The question then was, ‘how long until you fulfill this promise Lord?’

C. Secondly, they were told to “rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled their course” (6:11b). There were others yet to suffer the same ill fate for the word of God’s sake. Again, the Lord is forewarning the saints of their tribulation before it transpires that they would gain confidence and understanding when it comes.

VI. The Lamb opened the sixth seal (6:12-17):

A. “And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree cast her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind” (6:12-13).

1. The opening of the sixth seal brought judgment into view. There are two views of this section. First is the view that final judgment is under consideration and secondly is the argument that immediate judgment against the persecuting Romans is under consideration.

   a. Final Judgment (Jn. 12:44): Christ would bring his saving message of redemption, those who accepted this message would be so different than the masses of the world that they would be persecuted and suffer physical anguish of hunger for their love of the truth. Some would even perish due to their faith. Death would reign in this present world. Death; however, would not reign supreme. There will come a day in the future when the Lord would come again and judge the world according to its deeds in relation to God’s divine revelation. Such thoughts would permit the persecuted Christians to have confidence and hope in their current trials knowing that all things are going as God has planned and that the ungodly will one day be taken down and put in their proper place (see II Thess. 1:6-9)

   b. Not the final judgment but rather an immediate judgment place upon the persecuting Romans. The persecutors were the Romans (Cf. Rev. 13)! They were guilty of spilling out the sacrificial blood of the saints of God. The judgment spoken of here was that for which the living souls under the altar were waiting (Cf. 6:9). Consider the following immediate prophecies regarding the quick judgment of God and notice the similarity in the language used in Revelation 6:12ff:

      1a. Isaiah’s judgment against Babylon (Isa. 13:10-13; 29:6).
      2a. Isaiah’s judgment against the heathen nations (Isa. 34:1-4).
      3a. Joel’s judgment against Jerusalem (2:31ff).
      4a. Jesus’ words concerning judgment against Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans (Matt. 24:29ff.).

2. While there is compelling evidence for the immediate judgment of Rome it seems more apparent that the sixth seal is revealing the final judgment of man and the eternal hope of all enduring and overcoming Christians. Such is indeed the function of Revelation.

B. “And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the
rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?” (6:14-17).

1. When the final judgment of man or the judgment against Rome comes it will be directed against every social class (i.e., kings, princes, rich, strong, bondman and freeman), and they would seek hiding places from the wrath of God.

2. Similar circumstances existed during other Bible times:
   a. The judgment against Samaria as Assyria came up against them at the behest of God. The inhabitants of Samaria tried to hide, yet the judgment had come, and once it came, no one could avert it (Cf. Hos. 10:8).
   b. Isaiah reveals the judgment against Jerusalem by Babylon (by the hand of God) (Isa. 2:19). There was no avoiding the judgment!
   c. Lastly, Jesus used the same language to describe the immediate judgment against Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans. People would try to hide from the wrath of the Romans (Lk. 23:30).

3. “For the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?” (6:17). The implied answer was ‘no one will be able to stand against Jehovah’s judgments.’ Nahum asked this same question as Jehovah’s approaching judgment threatened Nineveh (Nah. 1:6).

Concluding Thoughts

The book that the Almighty held within his right hand reveals man’s salvation and the consequential hardships associated with such a life. Lest the Christian get too disheartened over his trials he was to know that not only do Christians suffer but all men in general suffer. Those; however, who place their hope in Jesus Christ will never be disappointed.

Chapter 7

An interlude to the opening of the seventh seal:

Consider, once again, a review of our study to this point. The Christians addressed in the book of Revelation were living in the trying days of Domitian. They were being persecuted (Rev. 2:3, 10, 13; 3:8; 6:9) and some were suffering from poverty (Rev. 2:9) due to their faith. John has been given three things to tell the saints that ought to comfort them in these difficult days. First, the Christians ought to take comfort in knowing that Jehovah God is the potentate Lord over all (Rev. 1:8). He is in control of all things and He will fulfill His promises to His saints through His beloved Son who has overcome sin and death (see Rev. 1:12-20). The Lord has not turned His head from His beloved saints but rather has His Son dwelling in the midst of them all (see Rev. 1:13). Secondly, the persecuted and downtrodden Christian was to look to each other for comfort and support. As the saints exercised unity in truth they would be an oasis to each other in these difficult times (Rev. 1:5-9). Thirdly, the persecuted and suffering child of God was to look to the gospel message for hope. This gospel is represented in the book that the Almighty had within his right hand and that the worthy Lamb took and revealed (Revelation 5-6). This book revealed, before the Christian would suffer, all that God’s people were to expect to happen in relationship to their sins being forgiven and the persecution that would follow so that they would not loose heart (remember Jn. 13:19; 14:29). The book was sealed by seven seals. When the Lamb opened the first seal John saw the Christ conquering sin in men’s lives. The second seal revealed the consequences of accepting God’s gift of justification; i.e., persecution. The third sealed revealed the Christian’s suffering due to accepting the gospel message. The fourth seal illustrated death in the lives of all men because of sin. The fifth seal showed those who had died for their faith’s sake crying out to God for His vengeance. The sixth seal revealed a time of judgment against the wicked. Before the seventh seal is opened, by the Lamb of God, John is showed some additional things (i.e., chapter 7’s content). Before the seventh seal was to be opened there are 144,000 servants of God “sealed” upon their foreheads with an identifying mark of sanctification.
I. The Lord commanded the 144,000 to be Sealed (7:1-8):

A. “After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree” (7:1).

1. After the sixth seal is opened and judgment revealed against the ungodly John seems to see an appendix to this sixth seal. The Apostle sees four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth holding back the wind from blowing upon the earth.

2. The “four corners of the earth” are mentioned by Isaiah (11:12). Isaiah foretold of a day when the kingdom of God would be established and its inhabitants would experience great peace due to their sins being forgiven. Isaiah foretells of justified people coming from the “four corners of the earth.” Knowing the promise of God delivered to Abraham in Genesis 12:1ff we know that it is “all nations” under consideration when the Bible speaks of “the four corners of the earth.”

B. “And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads” (7:2-3).

1. The fifth angel was of the same kind as the four mentioned in verse one. He came from the “sunrising” (east). Interestingly, when God left Jerusalem as He gave it up to Babylonian destruction and captivity, he departed to the east (Ezek. 11:23). When God’s long awaited glory returned at the end of the seventy years of captivity it came from the east (Ezek. 43:2). This fifth angel thereby represents hope and the fulfillment of God’s promises to save His people.

2. This fifth angel had “the seal of the living God.” The seal has been discussed in 5:1. Books and letters were sealed with wax by the ancients, and in many cases an imprint would be placed upon the seal to indicate one’s authority to carry out the letters instructions (Cf. Gen. 41:42; Esth. 3:10; 8:2; Dan. 6:17 etc.).

3. This fifth angel cried out to the four angels holding the destructive winds, telling them to wait until the servants of God had been sealed, that is, till the imprint of God’s authority had been crimped upon their “foreheads.” As cattle are branded to indicate ownership even so those who receive justification of sins through the blood of Christ are owned by the Lord and thereby have the seal of justification (see Acts 20:28).

4. Consider the destroying winds mentioned in the Bible:

   a. Many OT scriptures depict God’s wrath in destroying winds. Jeremiah spoke of the destruction of Elam by the four destroying winds (Jer. 49:36).
   b. Babylon would be destroyed by a “destroying wind” (Jer. 51:1).
   c. Four destroying winds were described by Daniel as well (Dan. 7:2ff).

5. Ezekiel had a similar vision to John’s in Ezek. 9:1-8 before destruction was to be loosed upon the city of Jerusalem. The difference in visions was that Ezekiel saw a “mark” and John saw a “seal” placed upon the forehead of the faithful. The point was clear; “the Lord knows them that are His...” and they will not be hurt by this destroying wind (II Tim. 2:19).

6. The apostle Paul said, “Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance...” (Eph. 1:13-14). To “seal” is to “make a mark of identification” (AG 796). “To mark as with a seal...stamp with approval” (LS 786). Those who obey the gospel are distinguished from those who have not. We often use the term “sanctified” to describe the separate and distinct condition of the saints of God from the world (see I Cor. 1:1ff).

C. “And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel: of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand; of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand” (7:4-8).

1. Interestingly, the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are not listed in Revelation 7:5-8. Their land lay east and northeast of Benjamin. Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. These two sons received land in Canaan, whereas Levi did not. Land is obviously not the thrust of Revelation 7
because both Levi and Joseph’s names were listed as part of the twelve, whereas Dan and Ephraim’s were left out. It is difficult to say why this is. Some have concluded that since Ephraim led Israel into idolatry through Jeroboam I (1 Kg. 11:26; 12:25-33) and Dan left the inheritance given them by God to go to Laish and practice idolatry that God left their names out of this list.

2. The 144,000 is not a literal number anymore than the seven spirits (Rev. 1:4) or the twenty four elders before the throne of God was a literal number (Rev. 4:4). The number 144,000 is taken from the 12 tribes of Israel. 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes would be sealed (i.e., receive justification through the blood of Christ and remain faithful). Once again we see a number wherein we are challenged to determine its meaning. Is John seeing a divine vision wherein God is telling us that only 144,000 people will ever be saved (i.e., wear God’s seal of approval)? The number 12 appears to represent a “religious” number important to God. The Bible reveals twelve sons of Jacob who represented the twelve tribes of Israel. There were twelve precious stones in the breastplate of the high priest. There were twelve apostles of the NT and James addressed his epistle to the twelve tribes of the dispersion (Cf. Homer Hailey’s introduction pg. 46). The evidence overwhelmingly convinces us that the 144,000 is simply a figurative number representing the redeemed of God on the earth at any given time as opposed to the “great multitude” (redeemed of all time) found at Revelation 7:9. The context of chapter 7 as a whole as compared to chapter 21 proves that the saved are under view. Consider the fact that spiritual Israel is often under consideration when speaking of the saved or justified in the New Testament (Rom. 2:28-30; 9:6; Gal. 6:15 etc.). The saved of the earth were recognized as “Israel” in the OT as well (Cf. Isa. 49:7 and a multitude of others).

3. Jehovah’s witnesses believe that the 144,000 (those having a "heavenly hope") will reign with Christ in heaven, while all other people accepted by God will live forever on a paradise earth (an "earthly hope"). The Faithful and Discreet Slave is the term used by the Jehovah’s Witnesses to describe those who would be a part of the 144,000 in heaven. You can actually go to their website and find that they claim that as far as the year 2008 there are exactly 9,986 of the 144,000 currently sealed (see www.watchtower.org/e/statistics/worldwide_report.htm).

4. Some Muslims believe the number 144,000 is the number of Muhammad’s companions.

5. Some New Age religious movements believe that there will be 144,000 who survive a worldwide catastrophe to repopulate the world.

6. Preterists think these are Jewish Christians, sealed for deliverance from the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

II. John saw the “great multitude” before the throne of God (7:9-17):

A. “After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and people and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands;” (7:9).

2. John has seen the Almighty with a book in his hand. The Apostle of Jesus Christ has seen the worthy Lamb taking the book and exposing the sealed contents. Six of the seven seals have been opened. The sixth seal revealed judgment against the ungodly. Before the seventh seal is opened John sees four angels at the four corners of the earth waiting to unleash a destructive wind upon the inhabitants of the earth. A fifth angel has appeared from the east commanding the four angels not to hurt anything of the earth “until we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads” (see Rev. 7:3). After the servants of God were sealed they would be permitted to unleash the destructive wind upon all nations. The angel proclaims a figurative number of those who would be sealed and set it at 144,000. These 144,000 appear to be the equivalent of the twenty four elders mentioned previously and the “great multitude” mentioned here (see Rev. 7:15).

3. Furthermore, the demography of the servants in heaven was from every nation and tongue. These were arrayed in white robes (heavenly clothing only given to those who overcome temptation and trials of life {Cf. Rev. 3:5}).

4. These redeemed had “palms in their hands.” Why were there palms in their hands?
   a. During the Feast of Tabernacles the children of Israel were instructed to carry palm leaves in their hands for seven days and “rejoice” (Lev. 23:40).
b. When Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the people took up palm branches saying, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel” (Jn. 12:13).

c. The palms were an apparent way of showing joy and gladness of heart. The great multitude had palms in hand as they gave praises unto Jehovah God (see 7:10ff).

B. “And they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (7:10-12).

1. The “great multitude” (redeemed of God) are now identified in the glorious throne room of Jehovah with the angels, twenty four elders, and four living creatures. The “great multitude” is not another class of people but rather identified, as stated above, with the twenty four elders.

2. All the heavenly hosts fall before the throne of God upon their faces and worship God. The heavenly host shouts out seven statements of praise much like the seven statements made at Revelation 5:12 (the only difference is in the word “riches” instead of “thanksgiving” in 5:12).

C. “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:13-14).

1. One of the twenty-four elders asked the apostle John who the “great multitude” was that sang songs of praises to God. John seemed surprised by the question and responds, “My lord, thou knowest. And he said unto me, these are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14).

2. Over and over we have seen that it is the man or woman who overcomes in this life (i.e., remains faithful till their dying day) that is identified as wearing white in the midst of the throne of God. Furthermore, when we identify what the “great tribulation” is we will better understand who the “great multitude” is.

a. The verb tense helps us understand what John was seeing. The words “coming out” (elemkanan ek tes) are parsed in the present tense (Friberb 755). The present tense indicated that these individuals continued to come out of the great tribulation as the elder and John spoke.

b. The great tribulation was “oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits (Jn. 16:33; Matt. 24:9; Acts 14:22 etc.). A “great tribulation” surely identifies the current hardships the saints of God were experiencing.

c. Our Premillennialist friends believe the great tribulation is a time of seven and one half years that the wicked shall be punished. Before this 7 ½ years, the righteous will be raised (the rapture) and spend time with the Lord until the beginning of the 1000 years reign of Christ on earth starts. The theory is false and cannot be supported by the scriptures.

d. One of two plausible possibilities exists regarding the identity of the “great tribulation” and “great multitude.”

1. The tribulation is that which every Christian suffers while on earth, and those faithful to the end shall inherit eternal life (i.e., “great multitude”) (see Jn. 16:33; Acts 14:22).

2. Secondly, the great tribulation would have occurred only during the days of the Roman Empire so that the great multitude would be those who suffered under the reign of Nero to Domitian and possibly to Constantine (AD 313). Many believe this idea fits best with the context. It seems difficult for me to accept this position because 7:15-17 appears to depict the saints in the glorified state in the presence of God when compared to Revelation 21-22. During the days of the apostle John, many saints had already died, yet John said, “no man hath beheld God at any time:” (1 Jn. 4:12). Once again, it seems obvious that the “great multitude” is the future redeemed that are sealed of God (i.e., the 144,000 or twenty four elders). At a set time in the future Jehovah will put an
end to this world as we know it and his saints who have overcome the world of sin shall reign with him in heaven.

D. “Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes” (7:15-17).

1. The message seems to be that there will be no immediate relief to the hardships of persecution and poverty; however, when the redeemed are in heaven there will be eternal relief. Now is not the time to give up but rather press forward into heaven (see Phil. 3:14).
2. Those who endured to the end will be with the heavenly Father, serve him day and night, and they shall no longer suffer from hunger, thirst, or heat exhaustion.
3. The tears of their sorrows will be wiped away and they will be in their heavenly place of eternal rest with their white robes. Heaven will be well worth the agony faced in the hear and now!

Concluding Thoughts

Those who endure to the end shall receive rich and eternal blessings from Jehovah. We must endure and we must not sin!

Chapter 8

Synopsis

The theme of the book of Revelation is that the Christian has been granted victory over sin and death if only they would endure to the end (Rev. 2:10; 17:14; Rev. 12:11; 21:7 and many other passages). A connecting factor to this theme is that God is merciful, longsuffering, and patient with not only the saints but of the world. These trumpets will sound and man is being given the opportunity to repent of wickedness (see Rev. 9:20). It is not God’s will that any perish (II Pet. 3:9).

Let us recall that Revelation 6 exposed the contents of the book held by the Lord which he held in his right hand that was sealed by seven seals (see Rev. 5:1ff). Each seal revealed the eternal purpose of God and the consequences of His purpose being achieved on humanity. When the seventh seal is opened, John sees seven angels holding seven trumpets. Chapter 8 reveals the seven angels sounding their seven trumpets and the associated specific events that occur. Conversely, chapter 16 will reveal seven bowls of wrath that were to be poured out by the seven angels one by one. All three of these events indicated the effects of the gospel message upon humanity. Deliverance from the bondage of sin was offered, yet for those who rejected the message of hope there was nothing but doom. God’s wrath would be poured out upon the Roman Empire and all others who would persecute Christians for all times.

I. The Lamb opened the seventh seal (8:1-5):

   A. “And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” (8:1).

   1. The book that Jehovah held within his right hand had seven seals. Six of these seals have been opened illustrating the effects of the gospel message upon man in this world. The time for opening the last seal has arrived.
   2. There is an obvious difference in this final seal and the six previous ones. An eerie silence comes over the heavenly host for thirty minutes. The apostle John had experienced much noise in his heavenly vision to this point. He had experienced the sounds of thundering voices (4:5), chanting of the four living creatures (4:8ff), singing (5:9), a great voice from the great multitude chanting (7:10) and angels worshipping (7:12). Now there is silence. All beings hold their peace to await the opening of the final seal.
B. “And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets” (8:2).

1. As the silence persists John sees “seven angels” standing before God. We have already been introduced to seven angels at Revelation 1:20 and identified as the “stars” of the seven churches of Asia. Are the seven angels or stars of the churches the same seven angels that stand before the throne of God? It seems likely that they are (see Rev. 1:4 and 3:1). These seven angels will appear again in Revelation chapters 15-17 and 21 where they are given the last plagues to pour out upon the earth. If this be the case then these seven angels are a representation of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit then would be to distribute revelation to each of the seven churches through John (see Rev. 1:1).

2. These seven angels are given seven trumpets.

C. “And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (8:3).

1. An eighth angel comes on the scene and acts as an Old Testament priest.

2. The altar of Revelation 8:3 is obviously different than the altar of 6:9. The altar of 6:9 represented sacrifice and, therefore, the image was a representation of the altar of burnt offering in the OT. The altar of 8:3 depicts the burning of incense which would indicate its relationship to the altar of incense (Ex. 30:6-10).

   a. The altar of incense was located in front of the curtain which divided the holy place from the most holy place within the tabernacle or temple to Jehovah God. Hebrews 9:4 seems to indicate that the altar was within the holy of holies, whereas, Exodus 40:26 seemed to indicate that it was located just outside the holy of holies.

   b. The altar of incense was an altar used to burn incense to the Lord every day along with the daily oblations and sacrifices by the priest.

3. In figurative language, John saw the angel standing over the altar of incense which was before the Lord and he had a “golden censer with much incense.”

   a. The “golden censer” was a “firepan… a small ladle or shovel probably made of bronze (Ex. 27:3), used for carrying live coals on which incense was burned (Numb. 16:6f.). The accounts in Lev. 10 and Nu. 16 may reflect practices that go back to the desert period of Israel’s history when portable censers were used…The mahta (Heb. for censer; jcr) continued to be used as a portable censer, especially by the high priest, who on the Day of Atonement carried the coals, mixed with incense, from the altar of perfumes into the holy of holies (Lev. 16:12-14)” (ISBE v. 1, pp. 628).

   b. The incense was to be “added unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (8:3b).

      1. The angel acted in the place of the OT priest in burning the incense before Jehovah.

      2. To the burning coals from the altar of incense was added incense and the prayers of all the saints.

      3. John is seeing that God knows all His people’s troubles and He hears their prayers.

4. “And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand” (8:4).

   a. As the prayers of saints today are heard by the Lord, that which determines His acceptance as a sweet smell is the heart of the one praying (Ps. 51:1-2 and Heb. 13:15-16).

   b. As smoke rises from the flames of fire, so the prayers mingled with incense came up to God. Christianity was under fire from the Roman Empire, the saints were fervently praying to God and by the next act we know that God answered the prayers and cries for justice to prevail!

5. “And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth; and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake” (8:5).

   a. The prayers of the saints had gone up before Jehovah and the response was given; i.e., coals from the altar of incense were thrown upon the earth.

   b. The consequence of this act was an “earthquake.” Earthquakes often depict times of judgment against the ungodly sinners of the world (Cf. Isa. 29:6). Judgment had come upon the ungodly.
c. The contents of the book (Rev. 5:1) were now revealed. The gospel message came forth accomplishing its purpose of saving people of every tongue and race. Those who accepted this salvation also accepted the horrid consequences at the hands of a hard-hearted world who hated and persecuted Christians (II Tim. 3:12). Those responsible for such persecutions would not escape the wrath of God (II Thess. 1:6-10).

II. Seven angels sounded seven trumpets (8:6-13):

A. “And the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound” (8:6).
   1. The prayers of the saints had come up to Jehovah God. It was now time for the trumpets to be sounded.
   2. Trumpets were used in the OT to sound a warning alarm (Ezek. 33:3ff; Amos 3:6; Hos. 5:8), to call assemblies (Joel 2:15) and to warn of impending judgment (Joel 2:1). These seven trumpets represent warning of a coming judgment as is apparent by the information revealed at the blowing of each.

B. The first angel sounded the trumpet “and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up” (8:7).
   1. The earth had quaked when the angel threw the coals from the altar before the throne of God upon the world. The time of immediate judgment had come.
   2. The blowing of the first trumpet represented this judgment from the standpoint of God’s just behavior in doing so. God was justified in his bringing judgment against the ungodly because this was revealed in his law (Ps. 79:10). The law stated that blood is repaid with blood, i.e., the penalty for murder is the murderer’s blood (Num. 35:33). The Romans, and all who persecute the saints with murder would be dealt with according to God’s righteous judgments to a third of the world!
   3. The four angels that held back the winds from the four corners of the earth to keep it from destroying trees and seas now release the wind (Rev. 7:2). Solomon said, “As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation” (Prov. 10:25). Hosea said, “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind:” (Hos. 8:7).

C. The second angel sounded the trumpet and John saw “a great mountain burning with fire and being cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed” (8:8-9).
   1. Sometimes the prophets spoke of Gentile nations as powerful mountains (Cf. Isa. 41:15; 64:1; Jer. 51:25; Amos 4:1).
   2. The oceans were often depicted as modes of judgments against the ungodly nations (Cf. Isa. 28:2; Jer. 51:25). The scene was one of descriptive judgment upon the ungodly.

D. The third angel sounded the trumpet “and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; and the name of the star is called wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter” (8:10-11).
   1. The great star called “wormwood" fell from heaven in this phase of judgment.
   2. Wormwood is “used figuratively of bitter things, the term denotes the result of illicit sexual relations (Prov. 5:4), God’s punishment due to sin (Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19), and perverted justice (Amos 5:7; 6:12). In Deut. 29:18 (MT 17) the AV translates Heb. lana as 'wormwood’ (RSV ‘bitter’) in a description of the bitter results of practicing idolatry” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 1117).
   3. Because of the bitter nature of the wormwood it seems apparent that this indicated the bitter nature of God’s judgment against all unrighteousness of men. God’s bitter wrath would be unparalleled in intensity.
   4. A third of the sea of mankind is destroyed because of their unauthorized practices.

E. The fourth angel sounded the respective trumpet and “the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner” (8:12).
1. Again, the loss of light from the heavenly lights indicated judgment in the OT (Cf. Isa. 13:10; Joel 3:15; Amos 8:9).
2. This judgment depicted the darkened understanding of mankind which was thereby due God’s wrath (Cf. Ps. 119:130). Men were willfully ignorant of God and his laws and stood without excuse (see Romans 1-2).

F. Before the fifth angel sounded the trumpet, John saw and heard “an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound” (8:13).
1. If the ungodly of earth thought the first four trumpets represented their doom in terrifying language, wait till you hear the final three trumpets!
2. It seems to me that it is here that we may understand another part about the trumpets. Warnings are another reason for the uses of trumpets in the OT (Ezek. 33:3ff). It seems that by this eagle’s proclamation of woe that there is first a warning then the event to allow any to repent (Cf. II Pet. 3:9 and 9:20).

Concluding Thoughts

Jesus has taken the book out of the right hand of the heavenly Father. He has loosed six of the seven seals of this book and revealed its contents. Before the last seal is to be loosed there was to be 144,000 saints sealed or marked upon their foreheads as the faithful and true (Rev. 7:3-4). God’s destroying wind was to be unleashed upon the ungodly after the faithful are marked (Rev. 7:1). All that occurs through the sounding of seven trumpets lands squarely upon the ungodly. The true and faithful child of God (those sealed on their foreheads) will overcome these judgments as one being refined in the fires of adversity (see I Pet. 1:6-7; Rev. 17:14). Jehovah is revealing to John what must come to pass so that when it occurs the saints would be strong and endure to the end for the great prize of heaven (see Rev. 1:1).

Let us recall that the theme of Revelation is endurance and victory over sin and spiritual death (Rev. 17:14). Those who endure to the end shall receive rich and eternal blessings from Jehovah. We must endure and we must not sin (Rev. 2-3). Within each generation God unfolds his plan and the faithful are sealed unto eternity!

Chapter 9

Prelude

Chapter 9:20 reveals God’s purpose behind the sounding of the seven trumpets by the seven angels (Rev. 8:2). The hail and fire (1st trumpet), great mountain being cast into the sea (2nd trumpet), the bitter wormwood (3rd trumpet), the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (4th trumpet), the nightmarish locusts (5th trumpet), and the 200 million strong army of horsemen (6th trumpet) were all calamities that befell the lost sinners of the world. Not all perished. The remaining, after each woe, should examine the carnage and conclude that they ought to repent of their sinful deeds. God’s merciful design is thereby depicted in these trumpets (II Pet. 3:9).

I. The fifth angel now sounded the trumpet (9:1-12):

A. “And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss” (9:1).

1. John had previously saw a star falling from the heavens as it burned like a torch all the way down (see Rev. 8:10). This is another star that John beholds falling.
2. The star appears to be Satan. Jesus had said, “I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18).
3. Satan is “given the key of the pit of the abyss.”

   a. The word key was used metaphorically, as in Rev. 1:18, to represent power. The devil’s power is “given” him by God and is limited in its work (see Job 1:12; 2:6).
b. The “abyss” is “a pit” (Moulton 429; Thayer 657); a “pit, shaft, leading down into the depths of hell” (AG 865)... “A well” (LS 871). Luke 8:31 spoke of a place that was the “abode of demons” (Thayer 2) called the abyss. The abyss and Hell appear to be two different places (Cf. Rev. 20:10-15).

B. “And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit” (9:2).
1. If indeed the abyss was the abode of the devil and his demons, what came up out of the pit was a representation of what these evil forces are. The smoke possibly represented darkness of the “spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).
2. Everything that light represents (holiness, purity and cleanliness) was polluted by the smoke arising out of the depth of the abyss. Certainly man would be affected by this defiled smoke of the abyss.

C. “And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads” (9:3-4).
1. If the smoke and all things out of the abyss is the abode of demons and defiled darkness then anything, such as the locust, that comes out of it represents the filth of sin, misery, and anguish.
2. The fallen star from heaven that was given the keys to the abyss has opened its fury upon humanity. This fury is in the form of locust whose sting is likened unto the scorpion. These locusts are unleashed upon all of humanity that does not have “the seal of God on their foreheads.” Let us recall that the four angels of Revelation 7 had been ordered to restrain the destructive winds of judgment until 144,000 were sealed with the mark of Jehovah God upon their foreheads. These 144,000 are they who endure faithfully all the days of their lives and are granted a heavenly home. All who do not have this approach to life are made miserable by the locust (see Phil. 3:13-14).

D. “And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it strikes a man” (9:5).
1. Apparently these locusts are used by God to torment the evil men of the earth. Their sting was not unto death but painful as would be a sting from a scorpion.
2. Those who averted such torment were those who had the seal of God upon their foreheads (9:4-5). As the people of God escaped the torments of the plagues over in Egypt, even so the faithful of God escape (Ex. 8:22 etc.).
3. The book of Proverbs brings out the fact sin in a man’s life often has the consequences of physical and emotional pain (see Prov. 13:15; 22:5; Hos. 2:6 too).

E. “And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them” (9:6).
1. As this torment continues in the lives of sinful man, many will desire death over the torments suffered but will not find it (see Jer. 8:3).
2. Why five months of torment is uncertain. It may indicate a limited time frame for repentance.

F. “And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto hold, and their faces were as men’s faces. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months” (9:7-10).
1. The appearance of the locust is described as something out of a horrendous nightmare.
2. They were “like unto horses prepared for war” (9:7).
3. Upon their heads were “crowns like unto gold” (9:7).
4. Their “faces were as men’s faces” (9:7).
5. Their “hair as the hair of woman” (9:8).
6. Their teeth as “the teeth of lions” (9:8).
7. The locusts were armed with iron breastplates (9:9).
8. Their wings made the sound of many chariots with horses rushing to war (9:9).
9. Their tails were as the tail of scorpions whose sting produced pain to last for five months (9:10).
10. One of the most horrifying sights known even to man today is the vision of war. The sight of multitudes of men lining up against each other armed to the teeth is a frightful thought. The locusts had come out for battle. They were armed and terrifying to look upon. The sound of their war was even frightful. The sights and sounds of this foe against the ungodly should have struck terror in their minds, but they refused to give heed and repent to Jehovah God (Cf. 9:20). It is here that we see that the purpose of this army of locust is solely to save man’s souls through chastisement!

G. “They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek tongue he hath the name Apollyon” (9:11).
1. The locust army was directed by Satan. These locust armies were controlled and had regulated power given by God (Cf. Job 1:12).
2. The Greek word “Apollyon” means “A name found only in Revelation 9:11, as a translation of the Hebrew name ‘Abaddon,’ designating an angel or prince of the lower world. In the OT Abaddon and the accompanying terms Death and Sheol are personified (as in Job 28:22) and represented as living beings who speak and act (cf. Rev. 6:8)” (ISBE v. 1, pp. 189). The Hebrew and Greek names mean “destruction” and “destroyer.” Two descriptive words of Satan and his work (see Jn. 8:44).

H. “The first woe is past: behold there come yet two woes hereafter” (9:12).

II. The sixth angel sounded the trumpet (9:13-21):
A. “And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men” (9:14-15).
1. Exodus chapter 30 describes the altar of incense in detail with its horns at the top. A voice is heard coming from the area of the horns of the altar of incense after the sixth angel sounded his trumpet (the altar of incense has been under consideration since Revelation 8:3).
2. The four angels that are loosed are different than the four angels who restrained the destructive winds at Revelation 7:1 (there the angels restrained the wind and here the angels themselves are restrained). These four angels are connected with the Euphrates River to symbolically illustrate their flooding destruction over the lives of 1/3 of mankind (see the use of the Euphrates river symbolically as a flood of Assyrians who would destroy Israel at Isa. 8:5-8).
3. The destructive angels were loosed upon the command of the unknown voice coming from the altar. Note the specific time of judgment. This indicates God’s complete sovereignty and power (Isa. 46:9-10).

B. “And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone” (9:16-17).
1. 10,000 times 10,000 equals 100 million. Twice 100 million would be 200 million. The four angels that would flood the world as the Euphrates River came with 200 million horsemen.
2. As the scene of horrific locust had been painted in our minds as they went about destroying those who did not have the seal of God upon their forehead for five months so now we are once again horrified at the sight of such a massive army flooding the world. These 200 million horsemen were armed with breastplates as of fire and their horses had heads that resembled lions. The horses were exhaling fire, smoke, and brimstone (representing their fierce disposition and purpose to destroy all in their path).

C. “By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt” (9:18-19).
1. A “plague” (plegon) = “to strike, a blow, a plague, affliction, calamity” (Moulton 330). The Greek word plegon is not found in the KJVB yet it is in the NKJVB, ASV, Nestle Marshals, and Revised Standard Version Bible. The calamitous blow from the horses came in the form of fire, smoke, and brimstone.
2. The fierce lion like head and serpent tails of the horses did the destruction of fire, smoke, and brimstone. Whatever plague this was it killed a third of humanity. Men should have looked to these plagues and determined both the frailty of earthly existence and the longevity of eternity. They should have been driven to search out Jehovah God in fear of loosing their immediate lives and facing eternity. As Paul told the Romans... there have never been any that are without excuse when it comes to faith in Jehovah God (Rom. 2:1-13).

D. “And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” (9:20-21).

1. The “rest of mankind” are those who had not received the mark of Jehovah upon their forehead yet they had escaped the 200 million horsemen and the terrifying locust.

2. Though they remained alive and well they did not seek out the Lord doing works worthy of repentance. They did not turn from using their hands to do wicked things such as worshipping demons and idols (see also Hab. 2:18-19). Their objective remained antithetical to God’s eternal will for all humanity. They continued to see only what was in front of their eyes as they lusted after the things of this world (see Rom. 1:18-25; I Tim. 6:7-10). There was no fear of God before their eyes because they were willfully ignorant of his ways. They put God far from their minds (you cannot fear that which you do not see or have knowledge of). These plagues upon humanity ought to have caused their hardened hearts to soften. God, in effect, was saying, “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiffnecked” (Deut. 10:16; Rom. 2:25-29).

Concluding Thoughts

Though we would think that anyone in their right mind would turn from wickedness after such calamities they did not (Rev. 9:20-21). The prophet Isaiah was sent to a sin sick people whose hearts were hardened and unwilling to change as well (cf. Isa. 6:9ff). The prophets of old warned the erring; however, they were met with mocking, rejection, and even killed. As God used the fierce Assyrian forces against Israel and Judah (Isa. 10:5ff) and the Babylonians against Judah (Habakkuk 1:5ff), so God now uses forces in his own time to cause man to repent. God’s mercy is seen repeatedly in the pages of the Bible (II Pet. 3:9).

Chapter 10

Synopsis

Just as there was an interlude between the opening of the sixth and seventh seal (chapter 7), even so there is an interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets (10:1-11:13). The revealing of God’s eternal purpose had been exposed by the opening of the first seal (6:1-2). The consequence of suffering was revealed in the opening of the second through the fourth seal (6:3-8). The fifth seal revealed the prayers of those saints who had suffered death for the cause of Christ. Their prayer was for justice to prevail and the evil doers of earth responsible for their death get their just reward. The sixth seal revealed the unfolding of an answer to the prayers of the saints for justice against the evil doers, yet it was postponed until all saints were marked (6:12-7:17). The seventh seal was opened and the beginning of retribution was revealed through the blowing of seven trumpets by seven angels (8:1-2).

The seven angels blew their trumpets one at a time, unleashing punishment to the unregenerate of the earth. All through this section the saints were not under consideration. As the Hebrews were not affected by the plagues over Egypt, so the 144,000 saints were not affected by the doom pronounced. The first angel blew and God’s wrath was justified by the prophet’s words of judgment (8:7). The second angel sounded, indicating the judgment against the powerful Gentile nations (8:8-9). The third angel sounded, revealing the bitter consequences of the judgments of God (8:10-11). The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, revealing the dark nature of judgment upon the disillusioned mass of the unregenerate (8:12).
Chapter 9 began with the fifth angel sounding the trumpet. A star fell from heavens and it was given the keys to the abyss (the abode of demons). He opened the pit and out came a smoke of pollution that went forth as locusts to punish the lost of humanity with pain and torment (9:1-12). The sixth angel sounded the trumpet, and a massive military movement of 200,000,000 soldiers was released to punish the ungodly with death (9:1-21). **Through these trumpets two facts are seen.** First, the trumpets indicate that God had not only heard the saints under the altar (6:10), but that He was answering their prayer for justice. Secondly, through these judgments is seen the mercy of God. The pains of torments, through God’s judgments, were designed to cause the unregenerate to repent (Cf. 8:13; 9:20). As God had used the Assyrians and Babylonians of old so He now uses forces to cause people to repent. Before the sounding of the final trumpet there was the following interlude (intervening episode, feature, or period of time).

I. The strong angel with a little book (10:1-11):

A. “And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire;” (10:1).

1. Who is the “strong angel” of verse one? The strong angel’s appearance is similar to the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:15-16, yet we must see the word “another” in 10:1 in relation to the strong angel of 5:2 and again in 18:21. The word “another” (allos) means another of the same kind. It seems apparent therefore that the strong angel is not Jesus but one like the strong angels mentioned before and after this passage.

2. The fact that he came down from heaven “arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow upon his head” indicates the nature of his work: judgment! The word “cloud” is used in the NT to represent the appearance of deity and judgment. The strong angel’s work is likely an act of divine judgment.

3. Interestingly the word “rainbow” is only found two times in our Bibles (i.e., here and again at Revelation 4:3). The word “bow” is used in the Old Testament to depict God’s covenant with the earth to never destroy it by rain and water again (Gen. 9). Ezekiel uses the word “bow” to depict the glory of Jehovah at Ezekiel 1:28. It may be that John is seeing an angel that is strong, coming to pronounce judgment, and equipped with the “rainbow” (identity) of deity.

B. “and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; And he cried with a great voice, as a lion roars: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices” (10:2-3).

1. The strong angel had a “little book in his hand.” He stood with his right foot in the ocean and his left foot upon earth. This indicated the far-reaching consequence (the whole world) of the content of the little book (not to be confused with the book only Jesus could open in 5:1).

2. As in the ancient times when God warned the wicked with a mighty roar (Jer. 25:30), even so he now warned with the strong angel (cf. Joel 3:16). The greatness of the roar indicates the far-reaching sound of the warning (the whole world). Both lost and saved would hear and be instructed to act.

C. “When the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not” (10:4).

1. Thunder accompanied the voice of God at Mount Sinai as God revealed the law to His people (Exod. 19:16; 20:18). The voices caused the people to tremble, and they were terrified saying to Moses, “speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Ex. 20:18). These thundering voices thereby served two purposes that are closely associated and discussed earlier at Revelation 4:5:

   a. The thundering voices gained the attention of their audience.

   b. Secondly, the thundering voices struck terror into the hearts of their hearers and such terror had purpose. Moses wrote to the terrified people in Exodus, regarding the thundering and lightning saying, “Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that you sin not” (Ex. 20:20). People during John’s day, as people of all ages, needed to be reminded of God’s great might and purpose for man. WE MUST NOT SIN!

2. The voice of God uttered words that were not intended to be written. John was told to “seal up the things the seven thunders uttered and write them not.” Apparently there were some things that God did not intend to reveal to man for his own good. The words were “sealed” and, therefore, closed
to the mind of man. We cannot know what revelation has not revealed (Cf. Deut. 29:29; Dan. 12:4-9). The function of John telling us of this event may seem to have no value seeing that we cannot know what the seven thunders uttered; however, let us understand that it is God that holds all secrets, knowledge, and understanding. He knows things that we are not capable of knowing. Such thoughts ought to be humbling to all mankind.

D. “And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer:” (10:5-6).

1. John sees the strong angel lifting his right hand up into the heavens and making an oath to God that there would no longer be a delay of judgment against the world (10:5-6).
   a. Abraham made a similar style of oath as he lifted his hands to God (Gen. 14:22).
   b. This is reminiscent of the fashion the angel in Daniel 2:7 made an oath to God regarding the coming of the kingdom of God and the forgiveness of man’s sins.

2. This oath is apparently not the final judgment of the world when time shall be no more, but the judgment that had been communicated from chapter 6 against the unregenerate who persecuted the saints. This follows the context as will be discovered in the coming verses.

E. “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets” (10:7).

1. The seventh angel was about to sound the trumpet (had not done so yet).

2. At this time, the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the mystery of God was “finished” (etelesthe): the aorist passive of teleo {as used in I Cor. 13:9-10)! “To complete, fulfill, accomplish, and generally, to execute, perform…to fulfill one’s word” (LS 798).
   a. What was the “mystery of God” that would be finished “according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets”?
   b. Following the above timetable (not the end of the world), it is apparent that this mystery had been spoken of by the prophets and was now coming to its conclusion (Cf. I Pet. 1:10-12).
   c. That good news that was somewhat veiled in obscurity to the OT prophets was the gospel message concerning the redemption of man through Jesus Christ (Cf. Isa. 53; 55:1 / 12:3 and Jn. 4:14; 61:1; Dan. 2:44; Gal. 3:8 etc.).
   d. This mystery (gospel message) is God’s eternal purpose (Isa. 62:1, 7; Eph. 1:9-11; 3:8-11).
   e. The gospel was revealed by the Holy Spirit bit by bit until complete or perfect (I Cor. 13:9-10; Jude 3). The message was preached to both Jew and Gentile (Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:26). Man had no knowledge of this mystery until God revealed it in His own time (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 16:25-26).
   f. Therefore, the meaning was that God’s revelation was at its completion; its delay of being fully made known was ending! This gospel message was a destroying force among the dark powers of the world (Eph. 6:10ff). The gospel would go throughout the whole earth (land and sea).

F. “And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard it again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that stands upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he said unto me, take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey” (10:8-9).

1. Three times now John mentioned the fact that the strong angel stood with one foot on land and one foot in the sea (Cf. 10:2, 5 and 8). This seems to indicate an emphasis on the far reaching effects of the message of the angel.

2. John was now told to eat the book. This helps us understand the contents of the little book.
   a. The prophet Ezekiel had a similar vision (Ezek. 2:8-3:3). The prophet was told to eat the words of God and speak them to the rebellious house of Israel.
   b. Again, Jeremiah the prophet said, “thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Jehovah, God of hosts” (Jer. 15:16). “These words are used to denote the greediness with which knowledge is acquired… He was to possess himself of the contents of the book; to receive it into his mind; to apply it, as we do food, for spiritual nourishment – truth having, in this respect, the same relation to the mind which food has to the body. If the little book was a symbol of the
Bible, it would refer to the fact that the truths of that book became the nourisher and supporter of the public mind.”7

3. Such thoughts help us to see that we can understand the contents of God’s word (Jn. 8:32; Eph. 3:4). Apparently the gospel message was the little book! John was commanded to devour and understand it (I Pet. 2:1ff).

G. “And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter” (10:10).

1. John had been told that when he ate the book it would be sweet, but bitter to his belly. Now he ate the book “and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter.”

2. The book represented the word of God (gospel message). Eating the book represented understanding its contents. When one studies God’s word today, indeed it is sweet to our taste. The Psalmist said that the word of God is, “more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb” (Psalms 19:10). Again, the Psalmist said, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalms 119:103).

3. The word of God is sweet, good and pleasant because it reveals the manifold wisdom of God, a message that gives one the comforting knowledge of salvation! Yet it is also a message of doom upon those who will not submit to the authority of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). The “bitterness” of the message is, therefore, the experience all Christians face when spreading the gospel message of blessings for the obedient and curses for the disobedient. Those who hold to truth will be persecuted (see John 7:7; 15:17ff).

   a. Jeremiah and Ezekiel experienced the painful consequences of preaching the curses of disobedience (Jer. 15:15-18; Ezek. 3:8-9).

   b. Paul said, “Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12).

   c. “The reception and comprehension of God’s word is sweet, but fraught with bitterness of spirit in the condemnation of sinners and the proclamation of scripture’s judgments against men and nations, declaring the consequences of disobedience, the wickedness of sin, and the terror and finality of judgment.”8

H. “And they say unto me, thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings” (10:11).

1. Who the “they” represent is uncertain. It may represent both the strong angel and the voice from heaven (10:4) speaking together.

2. The voices command John to prophecy (make known) divine truths to “many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”

3. The Acts of Apostles revealed the gospel message going throughout the world to “many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.” Paul was depicted as suffering many bitter consequences to his preaching (II Cor. 11:22ff). As John, and others did the same thing, they too would experience heartaches of persecution; however, many souls would be saved as a consequence of their work.

Concluding thoughts

The contents of the little book held by the strong angel who had one foot in the sea and one on the earth is to be determined by context of this chapter, the previous chapters, and the coming chapters of Revelation. At this point of my personal studies I believe the little book to be a representation of the gospel message. But if the little book represents the gospel message, how does this fit into the interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets? Recall that the final three trumpets represented woe upon those who had not obeyed the gospel (see Rev. 8:13). The abyss was opened and the horrid locust came out destroying the unregenerate. The 200 million strong army of horsemen marched against the ungodly. Before we hear the final woe upon the ungodly a little book is

7 Barnes, A. Barns’ Notes; Revelation pg. 263
8 Hailey, H. Revelation, An Introduction and Commentary. Pg. 247
revealed to John that had a message that was sweet but bitter to the stomach. The message of salvation shall be preached until the end of time and battles over evil forces shall be won by the faithful. God will provide the victory for all who seek it (II Pet. 3:9). Before the sounding of the seventh and final trumpet John was told to preach to the lost and warn them of their current condition. This work will be sweet but fraught with great persecution by the hearts of hard men.

Chapter 11

Synopsis

The interlude continues in chapter eleven between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets (10:1 – 11:13). Chapter ten revealed the preaching of the gospel message to the world. Chapter 11 depicts a threefold time frame in which the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached. First, the gospel was preached by the apostles and teachers as truth was unfolded and revealed to them (Cf. I Cor. 13:9f). Secondly, after the gospel message was complete (Jude 3), the beast from the abyss went forth and killed many gospel preachers. Thirdly, a time of victory for the faithful was depicted in their resurrection and ascension into heaven. To understand chapter 11 one must study Daniel 7 (Rev. 11:17-18). Daniel’s vision of chapter 7 paralleled Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of Daniel 2. Both visions depicted the four world empires. The fourth kingdom represented the Roman Empire in the visions. Apparently, the vision John saw in chapter 11 related to Daniel’s vision regarding the Roman empire, persecution, and victory of the gospel through the Son of Man.

I. The apostle John was commanded to measure the temple and altar. After measuring these places he is commanded to worship therein (11:1-2):

A. "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (11:1).

1. Up to this point, John had listened and learned. He was now commanded to do something; i.e., measure the temple, altar and them that worship. Apparently the tabernacle of the Pentateuch was before him. This sanctuary had a court yard, holy place and most holy place within the tabernacle. The entire picture was one of acceptable worship to God and must, therefore, represent the redeemed who serve God faithfully in this age (the church) (I Cor. 3:16-17; II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21).

2. Ezekiel saw a vision where an angel measured the temple, courts and walls (Ezek. 42). The measurements indicated the precise nature and orderliness of God’s word and that His people were to be separate from the unclean (II Cor. 6:14-7:1).

B. "And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (11:2).

1. Verse 2 indicated the realm of the lost and was, therefore, not to be measured by John. It seems apparent that the temple or sanctuary represented the redeemed of earth while the court area was representative of the lost or even the unfaithful in the church.

2. The “holy city” represents the church. The author of Hebrews proved this for us saying, “but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just men made perfect…” (Heb. 12:22-23).

3. The unjust “tread underfoot forty and two months.” A time of persecution and trials faced the Christian church for a definite period (42 months). This is the same time period revealed in Revelation 11:3 (i.e., 1260 days), the time, times and half a time of Revelation 12:14 and the forty-two months of Revelation 13:5 (more said at those passages as far as the identity of this time as it relates to Daniel's prophecies).

II. God’s faithful witnesses preached the gospel unhindered for 1260 Days (11:3-6):
A. "And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (11:3).

1. Two witnesses were commanded to go forth and preach (prophecy) 1260 days while clothed in sackcloth. These faithful witnesses were clothed in sackcloth. This would represent the sorrow of their work as they observed the treading down of the “holy city” or church. Remember, John was told that as he ate the contents of the book it would not only be sweet but bitter (see Rev. 10).

2. Who were the two witnesses?
   a. A “witness” is “one who avers, or can aver, what he himself has seen or heard or knows by any other means…the faithful interpreters of God’s counsels are called God’s witnesses: Rev. 11:3” (Thayer 392)... “To call to witness, attest, invoke… I call you to witness that I am being beaten, Ar. 2. to call one to witness a thing” (LS 488).
   b. If we take the number "two" in verse 3 literally, it would seem apparent that the Holy Spirit and Jesus are intended (Cf. Jn. 15:26ff). As we go through the chapter it will be clear that Jesus and those who revealed the Holy Spirit's divinely inspired message are under consideration (i.e., apostles, prophets, preachers, teachers, pastors).

B. "These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth" (11:4).

1. The two witnesses are now further identified as, “The two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth.”

2. The book of Zechariah chapters 1-6 revealed 8 visions of the prophet Zechariah over a period of one night (Zech. 1:7-8). The fifth vision is found in chapter 4:1-14 and is very similar to John’s description here of the two witnesses. Zechariah saw a candlestick with a bowl and seven lamps in which seven pipes protruded from each lamp. Additionally, Zechariah saw two olive trees, one on each side of the bowl with the candle and lamps. Zechariah asked the angel of Jehovah “what are these, my Lord?” (Zech. 4:4). The angel of Jehovah was somewhat surprised that Zechariah did not know what these emblems meant (Zech. 4:5). The angel then explains to Zechariah that the vision is a message to Zerubbabel that the temple would not be built by might or power of men but rather by the Spirit of Jehovah. It seems that Zerubbabel had become discouraged and the Lord is giving him words of encouragement through the prophet.
   a. Zechariah then asked the angel of Jehovah concerning the olive trees and two olive branches. What do they mean at Zechariah 4:11-14? The angel answered saying, “the two anointed ones, (are they) that stand by the Lord of the whole earth” (that is, they carry out God’s purpose).
   b. The angel tells Zechariah that the two olive trees that are supplying the perpetual golden oil for the lamps are “two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governing authority among the Jews in Judea were no doubt under consideration in this context. The high priest and king (ruler of the people) stand by the Lord of the whole earth. These two, i.e., Zerubbabel and Joshua, are thereby types of the Christ and his messengers to come. They carry out God’s immediate purpose of building the temple and Christ, as the priestly king, would carry out Jehovah’s eternal purpose.
   c. So Christ and divinely inspired men preached the word of God that his eternal purpose may be achieved (Eph. 3:8-12).

C. “And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed” (11:5).

1. These faithful witnesses were assured that their work would be completed.

2. “Just as the fire of judgment and condemnation proceeded out of Jeremiah’s mouth devouring God’s enemies, Jer. 5:14, even so when the church of today, through its offices, condemns the wicked, on the basis of God’s word, this condemnation will actually result in their destruction (Matt. 18:18).”

D. “These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire” (11:6).

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9 Hendriksen, W. More Than Conquerors; An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation. Pg. 156
1. As God’s eternal purpose is being worked out, men of old called down fire from heaven (II Kings 1:10-14), shut the heavens so that it did not rain for three and one half years (I Kings 17:1; Lk. 4:25; James 5:17), turned water into blood (Exod. 7:20ff) and brought various other plagues upon the hardhearted earth dwellers.

2. The point is that no power was great enough to stop God’s completed revelation from being heralded!

III. The beast emerged from the Abyss after the Witnesses had Concluded their Work (11:7-13):

A. “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them” (11:7).
   1. No man or power had the ability to stop these two messengers from completing their work of disseminating divine revelation. However, at the completion of their work, there would be a horrid beast that history knows as the Roman Empire that would crucify the Christ and kill the apostles and prophets of God (see comments and identity of beast at Revelation 13:1ff).
   2. Though the beast could not stop the eternal purpose of God from being made known, he did have the power to “make war with them and overcome them and even kill them” (11:7). Christ was crucified, John the baptist beheaded, and many other apostles and prophets would be killed. Yet the work of Satan is too late. The blood of Christ that justifies man now gives all humanity the power to defeat any foe.

B. “And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb” (11:8-9).
   1. This verse indicated the contempt the world had for the gospel message. The gospel was offensive, and those who preached its message were killed and left to rot in the streets of the “great city.”
   2. The "great city" is a term that indicates the unregenerate of the earth. Edom was depicted as the universal symbol for pride and wickedness throughout the OT (Cf. Isa. 34:1-4; Ezek. 35 all; Jer. 49:7-22; Obad. 15; Mal. 1:1-5). Babylon was depicted in the same light (Isa. 47:1-8). Revelation spoke of Babylon as the prophets spoke of Edom (See Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2-21).
   3. The great city was wicked as was Sodom and a city that held its citizens captives of sin as did Egypt. Jerusalem was placed alongside these wicked places because it was the location of the crucifixion of Jesus.
   4. For three days the bodies of the faithful preachers lay in the street without burial because they had convicted men of sins and the world was tormented by such preaching (Cf. Jer. 5:14)!
   5. At the moment it would seem that Satan was victorious over God's eternal purpose (see Gen. 3:15).

C. “And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth” (11:10).
   1. As Jesus said that the world would rejoice over His death, even so did men rejoice at the death of anyone who would condemn them of their lifestyles and call for a change (Jn. 16:20).
   2. The ungodly were literally tormented with the message these two prophets preached. So it is that the same gospel that softens a heart to repentance (II Cor. 7:7ff) also hardens the heart of some (Isa. 6:9ff; 63:17; 64:8; Matt. 13:14f).

D. “And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them” (11:11).
   1. One could only imagine the horror and fear that would fall upon the one guilty of throwing a party over the death of an individual only to have that individual come back to life after being dead three and a half days.
   2. The wicked people's fierce anger and wrath that led to the death of the two prophets (teachers of the gospel) and consequential joy was short lived.

E. “And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them” (11:12).
   1. The enemies of the cross were further struck with terror when they heard the voice from heaven calling the faithful preachers to the glories of heaven.
2. Secondly, the reality of the message that was so annoying to them hit them as they beheld their supposed enemies ascend into heaven in the cloud. Would this change their views regarding the message preached? This reminds us of our Lord’s word in Luke 16 after the rich man had gone to torment and wanted to go back to earth to warn his family members. Abraham told him, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead” (Lk. 16:30).

F. “And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven” (11:13).

1. As we have already noted (cf. Rev. 8:5) earthquakes represent events of God’s judicial judgments against the ungodly (Cf. Isa. 24:18f).
2. Apparently this was a move by Jehovah to recompense the wicked for their treatment of the two witnesses. The “city” affected by this earthquake is the “great city” of 11:8.
3. A partial judgment against the ungodly is performed by God (one tenth or seven thousand killed).
4. The remaining nine tenths or sixty thousand “gave glory to the God of heaven.” To say that they repented and became Christians does not seem likely. The fear of the event; however, did cause those remaining to give God glory.

IV. The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet (11:14-19):

A. The flying eagle had pronounced three woes upon the earth that were depicted in the blowing of the final three trumpets (Rev. 8:13). It was noted there that God was giving sinful man the opportunity to repent (Rev. 9:20; II Pet. 3:9). These woes or judgments gave assurance to the saints that God would be just in rewarding the wicked doers of the world for their works (see Jer. 9:23-24). Truth will prevail and evil will be defeated no matter how bleak things may appear.

B. “And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever” (11:15).

1. The “great voices in heaven” are not identified.
2. This verse sounds like a verse of victory. But victory over what? Verses 1-13 indicated a victory of the gospel message over its detractors. Though the wicked thought that they had defeated the gospel message by killing the messengers the tables were turned as the messengers were resurrected and ascended into heaven. The kingdom was fully established with the power of the gospel pressing forward (Rom. 1:16).
3. The "kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ" is none other than the church of Jesus Christ. Once Christ was crucified, buried, and resurrected the church was established fifty days later (i.e., the Day of Pentecost - Acts 2:1ff). This kingdom is eternal and no might of man or forces of evil will ever prevail over it.

C. “And the four and twenty elders (Cf. 4:4 {the redeemed of both old and new covenants), who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign” (11:16).

1. This powerful victory at the cost of the Lord’s life and the life of faithful apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelist and teachers moved the 24 elders around the throne of God to shout a statement of praise:
2. The following thoughts were enumerated in the song of praise. Thanksgiving was given for God’s great power and reign (11:17).

D. “And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth” (11:18).

1. The 1901 American Standard version places these words in connection with Psalms 2 and Daniel 7. Psalms 2 depicted the evil plans of the sinful as they try to put a wedge between Jehovah God and his Son saying, “Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Ps. 2:3). Jehovah answers saying, “yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2:6). This King would "break them (the ungodly) with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's
vessel..." these things being so the wicked are advised to "Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way" (Ps. 2:12).

2. Again, this language was used in Daniel seven. All these passages illustrate a time when man will be judged by Jehovah God for their works while on earth. The Daniel 7 passage takes into consideration Nebuchadnezzar's dream of four world Empires and their connection to God's eternal purpose of establishing an eternal kingdom and man's ability to enter into this kingdom by the blood of the "Son of man." As we continue through a study of Revelation we will continue to examine Daniel's prophecies as they relate to Revelation. Again, the saints John is addressing were living in the times of fulfilled prophecy regarding God's kingdom and the suffering that the saints would experience. Such information ought to have caused the suffering saints to realize that no matter how difficult their situation God is truly in control and will reward those who remain faithful through these trying times.

3. Consider the following Synopsis of Daniel chapter 7:

Synopsis of Daniel chapter 7:

It is obvious that the dream Daniel had is completely parallel to that which Nebuchadnezzar had in chapter 2. The dream Daniel had, however, was much more detailed than that of Nebuchadnezzar’s. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a colossal image that was divided into four parts representing four world kingdoms. The value of the metals representing each kingdom diminished in worth from gold to clay. It may be that this indicated the gradual moral decay of each successive kingdom.

Daniel’s dream was much more detailed. Each of the four beasts represented the same four world kingdoms, i.e., the Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman Empires. The Chaldean kingdom was represented by the lion with eagle’s wings which eventually had its wings removed and stood on its feet with the heart of a man. This, no doubt was a reference to the king Nebuchadnezzar, who as king represented the Chaldean Empire, having suffered insanity and enlightenment from God regarding the one true deity (Dan. 4). The Medo-Persian Empire was represented by a bear, which was raised on its one side indicating division. The two sides represented the Medes and the Persians. It, too, had three ribs in its mouth. “The three ribs in its mouth are the three kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which were conquered by the Medo-Persians.” The third beast was a leopard, which represented the Grecian Empire, which would not be as glorious as the previous two kingdoms; however, it would extend its rule throughout the then-known world. The final beast was the unnamed beast. “Represented by a nameless beast, because in Daniel’s time Rome had not come into contact with Israel, and as yet lay beyond the circle of vision of Old Testament prophecy.” It had teeth of iron and it is portrayed as very powerful. This was the Roman Empire, which would have a ruler that would blaspheme the name of God, wage war on the saints of God, be victorious and even take the place of God.

Jehovah God would set up the final indestructible kingdom. It would ultimately destroy all the four kingdoms (Dan. 2:43ff). We find the king of this kingdom named in Dan. 7:13 as the “son of man.” Jesus identified himself as the Messiah when he referred to himself as the “son of man” in Matthew 8:20. Again, as Jesus was being questioned by the Sanhedrin Council regarding whether or not he was the Christ, Jesus answered them saying, “Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64). This identified Jesus with the “son of man” in Daniel 7:13 who was to come with the clouds in heaven. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. He came during the fourth world power of the Roman Empire (cf. Luke 3:1-2). Jesus was of the seed of David in whom it was said through the prophet Samuel that a Kingdom would come that would have no end (II Sam. 7:12-17). This was fulfilled on Pentecost of Acts 2. Peter, by inspiration reveals this information to us (cf. Acts 2:29-31). The days of the Roman Empire were indeed the later days of Daniel 2:28 (cf. Acts 3:24). This was the kingdom which Jesus referred to as the church (Matt. 16:18-19), the kingdom which shall prevail for eternity!

10 Ibid. Pg. 640
11 Ibid. Pg. 667
The prophecy that John is now being exposed to is revealing the fact that all things regarding the kingdom of God were now being fulfilled. The ungodly Roman empire was now doing all that Daniel had foretold. God's kingdom; however, would be established and it would never end even though it would seem that wicked men had the upper hand.

E. “And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail” (11:19).
   1. It seems apparent that this chapter of victory over Rome was the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel chapter 7.
   2. Rome was defeated, the Kingdom of God was established, Christ reigned in His kingdom, and the saints were victorious with Him.

Concluding Thoughts

Mankind is equipped with the power to be victorious over sin and spiritual death. Christ has been crucified, His Kingdom (the church) has been established, and forgiveness is offered to all. The devil, along with those who have hardened their hearts against truth, will not go down without swinging. The saint of God must know this beforehand. Indeed we are appointed to persecution by the wicked (I Thess. 3:3) yet our suffering at this present season cannot be compared to the glories that await us in heaven (II Cor. 4:16ff).

Chapter 12

Prelude

Revelation 11 gives somewhat of a panoramic view of man's existence. God's eternal purpose is to justify man of their sins through the blood of His beloved Son, Jesus. This eternal purpose would be made manifest through divinely inspired apostles and prophets. As these men preached the message of salvation they convicted the world of sin. Many would be tormented by such a message and thereby kill the messengers. Though the wicked persecuted the righteous to the point of death God remained in control. The righteous shall rise from the dead and ascend into heaven to be with the Lord for all eternity. God's kingdom has been established and there is nothing the wicked can do to stop its progress. Though the righteous may loose their lives for the kingdom of God sake, they will be eternally rewarded. Now is not the time to give up... now is the time to recognize that all that goes on in the wicked world is exactly what God said would happen. Let the saint of God thereby press on in faith!

I. John sees the Birth of the Christ and the Great Red Dragon (12:1-6):
   A. “And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (12:1).
      1. Isaiah spoke of a sign under which all would know the glory of God (Isa. 7:14; 66:18-19). These two passages in Isaiah reveal the coming of Jesus into the world.
      2. Revelation 12 depicts a woman who was giving birth to a child (Jesus).
      3. The woman of Isaiah was spiritual Zion, the remnant who would remain faithful and wait upon the Lord as a wife (Isa. 50:1ff).
   B. “And she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered” (12:2).
      1. The wife / mother / Zion would give birth to a son (66:7; Micah 5:2f).
      2. The man-child of Isaiah 66:7 was apparently equivalent to the man-child of Revelation 12:5, 13. The context of Isaiah is Jesus and so it is in Revelation.
   C. "And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his head seven diadems" (12:3).
      1. John then sees another sign in heaven. The apostle John lays his eyes upon "a great red dragon..." This red dragon is identified as the devil or Satan at Revelation 12:9.
      2. Consider these characteristics of the devil:
a. He is depicted as a dragon due to his ferocious and unmerciful character.
b. He is red in color which may indicate the blood of his murderous ways (see John 8:44).
c. Satan is depicted as having seven heads representing the fullness of intelligence. Paul said, “but I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity of the purity that is toward Christ” (II Cor. 11:3).
d. Satan is depicted as having ten horns: The word “horn” is used metaphorically throughout the Bible indicating power (Cf. Deut. 33:17; I Kings 22:11; Jer. 48:25; Zec. 1:18; Dan. 7:24). The power of any beast is in its horns. Here, then, is the completeness of the devil’s power, whereas in 5:6 Jesus’ perfect power was examined in light of his seven horns.
e. The seven diadems would represent a symbol of royalty in the realm of evil.

D. "And his tail draws the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stands before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child" (12:4).
   1. Satan's great and influential power is depicted in that he "draws the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to earth" (a possible picture of Satan's leading many angels astray in rebellion against Jehovah - see II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).
   2. The devil attempted with all his might to destroy the man-child who was delivered from spiritual Zion. Daniel saw a similar vision to this of John’s (Dan. 8:10). This was Daniel’s second vision in the third year of Belshazzar (King of Babylon). The vision indicated the great power of Satan. In Daniel’s vision, the work of this powerful foe was seen as defeating even the Lord’s mighty ones and holy peoples (Dan. 8:24).
   3. The message is clear: Beware! Satan is ferocious, unmerciful, murderous, intelligent, powerful, and considered in his own circles as royalty. He truly is a thug, head of all criminals, the kingpin of drug lords, and he has all worldliness at his disposal. Though he is so wicked he has the ability of coming across as an angel of light (this is what makes him so dangerous) (II Cor. 11:13-15) (see study # 14; Satan).

E. "And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne" (12:5).
   1. The man-child (Christ) would “rule all the nations with a rod of iron.” Jesus’ rule would be one of woe against the ungodly. He is depicted as mashing his enemies under his foot, covered in the blood of his enemies and conquering his foes with the iron rod (Ps. 2:6-9; Isa. 34:1-3; 63:1-6; 66:24).
   2. Jesus would be “caught up unto God, and unto his throne.” When Jesus ascended into the heavens, he sat down at the right hand of God with all authority and power (Acts 1:9f).

F. "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (12:6).
   1. When Zion (the Lord's church or spiritual Israel) delivered the Lord, He lived and taught and was crucified, buried, resurrected and ascended to heaven. Afterwards, the woman “fled into the wilderness...” and would remain there 1,260 days to be "nourished."
   2. The 1,260 days was equivalent to the time the holy city (church) was to be trodden under foot through persecution (cf. Rev. 11:2-3) and the two faithful witness preached the gospel message (Rev. 11:3f). A period of persecution and gospel preaching!
   3. Once again, we recall that Daniel had prophesied of this time frame (i.e., 1260 days) at Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. These two passages illustrated a precise time in which the Roman Empire would rule and persecute. This also marked the time that God's eternal kingdom would be established. Again, let us recall that God is illustrating to the persecuted people that he has always been in control of the events of history.

II. A Spiritual Battle is Waged (12:7-12):
   A. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan,
the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him" (12:7-9).

1. Michael is mentioned three times in the book of Daniel. His name means "who is like God?" We also find Michael in a battle with Satan at Jude 9 as they contend over the body of Moses. An unseen battle rages in heaven between Godly forces represented by Michael the archangel and Satan with his demonic angels who disrespected the authority of Jehovah God.

2. Satan and his angels are defeated and removed from the heavens as they are cast to the earth.

B. "And I heard a great voice in heaven saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night" (12:10).

1. Recognizing the panoramic view before us we see the great battle in heaven that brings Satan into the world of men.

2. We find Satan accusing men of sinfulness to God day and night (see Job 1:9ff). We see Christ's crucifixion giving man victory over sin and spiritual death. We see the establishment of the church and we see the victory of the true saints of God.

C. "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death" (12:11).

1. The faithful of God "overcome" Satan "because of the blood of the Lamb." Let us recall that the book of Revelation is a book of victory.

2. The true saints of God will be victorious over this persecuting beast of Rome and Satan their adversary "because of the blood of the Lamb." Though the wicked may kill the body they cannot take away our eternal soul (see Matt. 10:28). When man recognizes with spiritual eyes that there is more to our existence than the immediate pain and woes then we too will "love not our lives even unto death."

D. "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (12:12).

1. Rejoicing belongs to those who are and will be victorious over Satan because of the blood of the Lamb. We are made more powerful that Satan when equipped with the blood of Jesus Christ through the act of baptism. Christ's victory over Satan (i.e., crushing his head) caused Satan to be filled with wrath (he is the sorest of all losers). He is angry because he was not successful in destroying the Christ at birth. He is angry because he cannot destroy the church. He is angry all the time!

2. Many upon the earth will not take advantage of the victorious blood of Jesus Christ. Satan has a "short time" to take these souls with him to the everlasting fires of hell (Rev. 20:10).

III. Persecution of the Church (12:13-17):

A. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child. And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (12:13-14).

1. The man child could not be touched by Satan. Satan is cast to the earth and turns his attention to the one who birthed the man child; i.e., the woman (God's redeemed people). Satan's objective is to destroy the woman. The woman; however, is protected and nurtured by Jehovah God. The Lord is depicted as a great eagle soaring through the sky with his people protected from Satan in the wings of His might. The Lord carries them to a place of safety (those truly pressing in this life are those who shall obtain the glorious reward... these are the redeemed and they have purposed in their mind to serve Jehovah come what may). This reminds us of the thematic statement of Exodus found at Exodus 19:4 where Moses spoke for God saying, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself..." The Lord continues to look after His beloved saints. Truly all of the saints lives are hid with Christ and will not give in to Satan's seductive powers (see Col. 3:3).

2. During the 1260 days of persecution the true saint of God shall be protected under the wings of Jehovah God. The idea is that the true saint will not give in to persecution. Such a one will not renounce the faith even if it means death. Such a one has purposed to serve the Lord with all their
heart (see Phil. 3:13-14). This does not mean that Satan cannot touch the elect of God (they too will suffer persecution - see I Thess. 3:3). What this says is that the true faithful will not let Satan win the battle of life.

B. "And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (12:15-16).

1. The old serpent Satan will throw every lie, false teaching, lustful events, and worldliness in general at the saints of God; however, the true saint (the one sanctified in the wilderness of God and nurtured in truth) will not give in.

2. The true church of Christ (the woman that birthed the man-child) will in no way be persuaded from the authoritative life of Christ. Though the saint walk through fire and be overwhelmed by the persecuting waters of life he will stand firm in his faith (see Isa. 43:1-5). The elect of God are what they are not because God hand picked them personally before the foundation of the world but because they individually purposed to attain God's promises through faith. This marks the grave difference between those who would profess Christ's name yet live by other standards and those who do profess Christ's name and make their faith manifest by their obedient acts (see Jn. 14:15).

C. "And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:" (12:17).

1. Satan is filled with anger because he was defeated by Jehovah in heaven and he failed to devour the man child (Christ) (see Rev. 12:4, 12). Satan is again depicted as being filled with wrath and anger because he could not win over the beloved saints of God (the woman).

2. After failing to destroy the Christ and his church Satan goes after the individual saints of God "to make war" with them. The faithful of God are seen as those who "keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus."

Concluding Thoughts on Revelation to this Point:

The book of Revelation is depicting the true elect of God. Those who have purposed in their hearts to serve Jehovah God come what may. Though the elect of God are depicted as predestined to eternal glory this does not mean that they shall never be touched with the persecuting rod of discomfort in this world (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:5; I Thess. 3:3). The Apostle Paul tells us that persecution will be a way of life for the elect of God (see Phil. 1:29-30; I Thess. 3:3). Those who set their mind on Christ and the eternal glories of heaven shall never be disappointed (see Phil. 3:13-14; Col. 3:1-3; I Pet. 5:4-6). Those who cannot be defeated by Satan are those who have an unwavering faithful purpose to serve the Lord come what may in this life (II Cor. 4:16ff).

Chapter 13

Synopsis

The beast of Revelation 11:7 is identified clearly as the Roman Empire or its emperors in Revelation 13. This world power was depicted in Daniel 7 as the fourth beast of both Nebuchadnezzar’s and Daniel’s visions. The beast had power and authority given him by the devil (Rev. 13:2) yet regulated by the Lord (Rev. 13:5-7). The beast persecuted Christians for a specified time (i.e., 1260 days / 42 months / 3 1/2 years) (Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5-7). The dragon was filled with wrath because he had failed to kill the “man-child” (Jesus) (Rev. 12:5f) and he had failed to destroy the church of Jesus Christ (Rev. 12:13f). The devil was now pursuing the faithful children of God that he may destroy them with persecution (Rev. 12:17). The tools of the dragon's persecution are revealed to be the beast from the sea (i.e., Rome - Rev. 13:1) and the beast out of the earth (false religion) (Rev. 13:11). The river out of Satan's mouth that had the purpose of carrying away the church in apostasy was rushing like a rain swelled raging river (Rev. 12:15). The conclusion of the thirteenth chapter is that the devil failed in his pursuit of the true child of God. The raging river of persecution and false teaching carries away only those who are not
grounded or spiritually interested. The elect of God will mount up with eagle's wings and sore through these tumultuous days throughout all generations.

A three fold failure of the devil is represented by the number 666 (Rev. 13:18). The lessons that Christians were to learn was that God is in control though things are seemingly going very wrong for them. The Lord, through the visions of Daniel (Daniel 7), has foretold of all these things coming to pass. All things are going according to God's plan and the true child of God will realize this and thereby press on in faith. A reoccurring theme in the book of Revelation is the fact that the true child of God will overcome (see Rev. 12:14; 13:8).

I. A Beast came out of the Sea Clothed with the Power and Authority of Satan (13:1-10):

A. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems and upon his heads names of blasphemy" (13:1).

1. Let us recall that we were introduced to a beast that had come out of the abyss after God's two witnesses (Christ and Holy Spirit {apostles, prophets, and teachers working by divine inspiration}) had delivered the gospel message and purposed to make war with the saints (Rev. 11:7). His objective, as seen in Revelation 12:15, is their apostasy. Revelation chapter 13 will identify this beast as the Roman Empire.

2. Once again the book of Daniel helps us understand John’s vision (cf. comments on chapter 11). John saw a beast coming out of the sea (Rev. 13:1). Daniel saw “the four winds of heaven brake forth upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another…” (Dan. 7:2-3).

a. The sea apparently represents the world of mankind, societies, and nations (people) (see Isa. 17:2 and Rev. 17:15).

b. The four beasts represented four world empires, as discussed in the synopsis of Daniel page 47 of this outline (i.e., Babylon, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman).

3. The beast of Revelation 13:1 is the same beast of Rev. 11:7. This beast had been released by the devil and given the keys to the abyss (Rev. 9:1). This beast was a persecutor of Christians.

4. The beast John saw in 13:1 had “ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy.”

a. The description of the beast is strikingly similar to the devil (dragon) of Rev. 12:3. The difference between the two descriptions is that the beast has diadems of royalty upon his horns, whereas the devil has the diadems upon his seven heads. This indicates that the beast is not the devil but of the devil.

b. Names of blasphemy were upon the beast’s heads (the center of intellect). Apparently the meaning is that the mind of the beast was set against Jehovah God and His purpose.

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

1. The four beasts of Daniel’s vision parallel the one beast of Revelation 13:2 (Cf. Dan. 7:4-7). Daniel saw the four beasts resembling a leopard, bear, lion and the fourth was unidentifiable.

2. Daniel’s vision the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. The four sections of the statue seen by Nebuchadnezzar represented the same thing that Daniel’s four beast did, i.e., four world empires the last of which was the Roman Empire (cf. Dan. 2:36ff; 7:15ff).

3. It seems apparent that the beast John saw is so closely associated with the beast of Daniel’s vision that the only explanation as to why there is one beast in Revelation 13 represented by the four beast of Daniel 7 is due to Daniel 7:12. Daniel 7:12 states, “and as for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.” Apparently the beast of Revelation 13 is the personification of the three previous kingdoms (Babylonian, Medes and Grecians) wrapped up in one cruel, persecuting and blasphemous kingdom known as Rome. We know that Rome is certainly under consideration due to Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan 2) and Daniel's parallel visions (Dan. 7-12).

4. To Rome, the devil (dragon) gave his authority and power to accomplish his evil ends. The devil failed in destroying Jesus (Rev. 12:4f), he failed in destroying the church from being established (Rev. 12:13ff) and now he pursued each saint with the Roman Empire {his evil beast} (Rev. 12:7).
C. “And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast…” (13:3).

1. The beast had seven heads (Rev. 13:1) representing complete wisdom, yet one of the heads was beaten to death and then revived. Revelation 17:7-11 discusses the matter further.

2. Many believe the head beaten to death represented Nero, A. D. 64 – 68 while the healed head represents Domitian (A. D. 91 – 96). Domitian persecuted the church approximately 20 years after Nero.

3. Domitian not only accepted imperial worship, he demanded it. The world of humanity looked upon the success of Rome, its riches, and its unstoppable military and truly believed the emperor to be deity as they marveled after him.

D. “And they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast? And who is able to make war with him?” (13:4)

1. The antecedent to “they” would be the unregenerate of the world who are infatuated with Rome. These ungodly people were void of understanding and caught up in the lust of the world. People, during the days of the Roman Empire, saw Rome and its Emperors as deity due to their great might, occupied lands, and riches. Therefore, their ruler was the prince of this world: the devil!

2. They worshipped him through acceptance of the beast. No doubt any and all caught up in the fascination of Rome would deny having worshipped the devil, yet this they did!

E. Four things are given to Rome (the beast) by the Lord (Rev. 13:5-7) (Cf. Rom. 13:1, 4; Jn. 19:11). Such gifts illustrate God's ultimate control over all nations:

1. “And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;... and he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven” (13:5-6).
   a. Daniel had prophesied that the beast would “speak great things” and so Rome or its emperors are here depicted (Cf. Dan. 7:8, 20).
   b. When one takes upon himself deity, he blasphemes the name of Jehovah God (cf. Isa. 44:6-8).
   c. The beast blasphemed God and those who “tabernacle” with God (i.e., sit with the Lord in heavenly places (cf. Eph. 2:6)).

2. “There was given to him authority to continue forty and two months” (13:5).
   a. Here we have the same period mentioned at Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14 (forty two months or 1260 days). Each of these time periods are the same in meaning.
   b. Previously, the time represented days of persecution by Rome, and so it does here. A set time has been allotted for the devil’s persecuting work against the saints of God. The true and faithful saints; however, will continue to serve the Lord.

3. “It was given unto him make war with the saints, and to overcome them;” (13:7).
   a. At Revelation 11:7 the beast is depicted as waging war against the apostles, teachers and preachers of the word of God. He was victorious over them for but a moment as he was given the power to kill them.
   b. Once again, as Daniel 7 parallels not only Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2, it also parallels Revelation 13, so that any interpretation must take it into consideration.
   c. Daniel, speaking of the fourth kingdom (Rome), described it as having the ten horns, yet one more “little horn” (Dan. 7:8). This little horn appears to represent the persecuting and warring nature of Rome against the saints of God (Cf. Dan. 7:20-22).

4. “There was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation” (13:7b).
   a. Rome was considered a world power. The civilized world was under its authority and control. Rome worshiped the god of war and it was war and conquering that it concerned itself with most (see Dan. 11:37-39).
   b. Note; however, that this power and authority was "given to him." God had raised up Rome to accomplish His will as He had previously did with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon.

F. “And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain” (13:8).
1. The “book of life of the Lamb” was discussed at Revelation 3:5. A book made up of names of the righteous (Ps. 69:28).

2. A contrast was made between those lost of the world and those who have conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. From the “foundation of the world” (beginning of time) God knew these righteous individuals (see Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:3f). It seems to me that this is indeed the great theme of Revelation. The book is written to enlighten man of God being in total control and those who press through these difficult days will be eternally rewarded. Romans 8:29 indicates that God has always had his purpose of glorification of the saints before him: “For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (see study # 15; Predestination and # 16; The Pressing Christian of Purpose).

   a. The firstborn among many brethren is a reference to Jesus being resurrected from the dead to die no more. The elect of God (those who overcome) shall all share in this glorification of Christ one day; however, he was the first to experience this (cf. I Cor. 15:20).

   b. Following the context, “those who love God (keep God’s commands)” are those who are “called” (obey gospel) “according to his purpose” (end result being the glorification of the saints). The glorification of Christ is directly related to the glorification of saints that God had eternally purposed for those who love him (keep his commandments) (see I Pet. 5:6). These people God “foreknew” (proegno) “to have knowledge of beforehand” (Thayer 538). These people God also “foreordained” (proorisen) “to determine beforehand, to predetermine, pre-ordain” (LS 682). God had prior knowledge, and he appointed the called beforehand to be conformed to the image of his Son. Herein is God’s purpose for the saints a reality (that we share in Christ glorification). Romans 8:30 gives us the progression in an orderly manner:

      i. Those people who God “foreordained” (appointed beforehand for glorification) are identified as those: “Whom he called” The calling is by the gospel (II Thess. 2:13-14).

      ii. The same will be justified (acquitted of past sins). These will God also glorify! What marvelous eternal blessings await the one who would not only obey the gospel call but remain faithful all the days of their lives (see Rev. 2:10).

G. “If any man hath an ear, let him hear” (13:9).

   1. As one is commanded to hear, he is commanded to understand (Jn. 6:44f; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 4:20f etc.).

   2. That which is to be understood is that the devil is going to pull out all tricks to cause the saint to apostatize so that he may loose out on eternal glorification with God. Those who overcome his flood of wickedness shall be eternally rewarded.

H. “If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goes: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints” (13:10):

   1. The saints of God are in view here. The "patience" (or steadfastness ASV footnote # 10) is a part of the Christian, who with hope, waits upon the promises of God (see Isaiah 40:31).

   2. John had revealed the beast to have the ability to overcome the death stroke and revive Rome’s persecuting nature (Rev. 13:3), his power to make war with the saints and defeat them in physical death (Rev. 11:7; 13:7) and that the world would follow after him worshiping him. Should the saints now resist what God had planned? Nay, they that fight against the inevitable that God ordained will certainly fail. Rome was doing what God gave them the power to do. Recall that God had also give Babylon the same type of power during the days of Jeremiah. Those who resisted Babylon would only die (see Jer. 21:5, 9ff; 38:2, 17-18). Christians were thereby not to fight with swords nor resist the governments of their day (Cf. Rom. 13:2, I Pet. 2:13). Their weapons were not swords but the word of God (Eph. 6:10-18). If, therefore, captivity is a result of one's choices then into captivity he shall go and shall not complain for God is in control and all things are going according to His will. The Apostles were often tossed into captivity due to their faith yet they pressed onward (see II Cor. 11:23) (see study # 17; The Christian’s Relationship to Civil Government).

II. Another Beast comes out of the Earth (13:11-18):
A. “And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (13:11).

1. Just when the saint of God thinks that Satan's controlled powers were much we are hit with the second wave of his power in the form of false teaching.

2. The outward appearance of this beast was deceiving. He appeared like a minister of righteousness (II Cor. 11:15).

3. That which revealed the beast’s real nature, however, was his voice. Jesus said, “beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them…” (Matt. 7:15-16). Again the Lord told the Pharisees that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34).

4. This beast spoke “as a dragon” (devil). Again, Jesus told us what the language of the devil was in John 8:44, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.”

B. “And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he makes the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed” (13:12).

1. The first beast was the Roman Empire (cf. comments in chapters 12-13 as compared to Daniel 7).

2. The second beast coming from the earth apparently operated under the authority of the Roman Empire (first beast), and his work was to cause the world to worship Rome and more specifically Domitian (the one who was Nero’s counterpart in persecution).

3. It is generally agreed that the second beast out of the earth represents the Roman system of government that set edicts for the world to worship its emperor. It may be summarized as the forces of false and deceptive worship.

4. This beast was referred to as the “false prophet” (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

C. “And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men” (13:13).

1. The word “sign” is defined as “a sign, prodigy, portent, i.e., an unusual event, transcending the common course of nature” (Thayer ).

2. It is interesting to note that the devil had his deceptive false answers and counterparts to all God’s work. He used the art of deception to perform false signs which fool some.

a. Jesus warned of this very issue saying, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect” (Matt. 24:24).

b. The apostle Paul told the Thessalonian brethren of this same issue saying, “whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (II Thess. 2:9f).

c. To Timothy, Paul said of these false teachers and prophets that do the deceptive work of the devil that they are “evil men and impostors (that) shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (II Tim. 3:13).

3. What was the purpose of these signs?

a. On the part of the devil it was for deception. These signs were pseudo (false) and designed or fabricated for the purpose of gaining a following.

b. On the part of God, the signs or wonders were performed so that men may believe the truth. They confirmed truth (cf. Mk. 16:20; II Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3f).

c. The methodology used by each individual to determine a message’s truth is the standard of God’s word (I Jn. 4:1). This was the attitude of the noble Bereans of Acts 17:10ff and the attitude of those in Samaria who recognized Philip’s signs to be genuine as opposed to the deceptive works of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9ff).

4. The counter of the devil for God’s work:

a. God’s messengers calling fire from heaven (cf. 11:5) was answered by the devil in that his messengers were given the deceptive work of calling down fire from heaven (Rev. 13:13).
b. In Revelation 13:16 we see that the devil, too, puts his mark upon those who are his, thus mimicking God’s mark upon his faithful (cf. Rev. 7:3; 9:4; 14:1).

c. This reminds us of Pharaoh of Egypt’s magicians who mimicked God’s miracles through Moses (cf. Ex. 7:1ff staff to snake etc.).

D. “And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that well on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived” (13:14).

1. Notice that these signs were “given him to do.” God allowed the devil to operate in these deceptive manners as he allowed him to persecute the saints of God for a set time (cf. Rev. 13:5). God continued to be in ultimate control!

2. The beast of the earth, false religion, commanded the earth dwellers to make an image of Domitian (the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived). Three times now in chapter 13 Domitian is mentioned (a representation of the importance of the matter).

E. “And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (13:15).

1. False worship (the second beast) brought to life the supposed reality of Rome’s deity (emperor worship) in the minds of those of the world. The multitudes were infatuated with the power, prestige and wealth of Rome (cf. Rev. 13:8). Therefore, this life breathed into the image was not physical but figurative. Emperor worship became a reality to some when they should have recognized the folly of any worship other than Jehovah God (cf. Isa. 44:6-9).

2. Those who refused to worship the beast (Domitian and false religion) would be killed. Remember, physical death was given to the beast out of the abyss to use against the saints (see Rev. 11:7).

F. “And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead” (13:16).

1. As was stated in the comments on Revelation 13:13 above, the devil countered all that God did. As the Lord “marked” his faithful, so the devil did.

2. Notice the wide range of humanity that wore the mark of the beast. They were the small, great, rich, poor, free and bond representing all walks of life. As the mark of those who worship God was figurative, so was the mark of the beast. The apostle Paul told Timothy “the Lord knows them that are His” (II Tim. 2:19). So the devil knows who belongs to him.

G. “And that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (13:17).

1. The mark was evident to all. There was a mindset and disposition that differentiated the saints of God from those who bore the mark of the beast.

2. Those who were saints were punished and banished from attaining the physical necessities of life.

3. When the Lamb opened the third seal of chapter Revelation 6, the black horse represented discrimination against the Christians. The notes of chapter 6:5-6 are reproduced here:

**The Lamb opened the third seal of the book (6:5-6):**

**A.** “And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand” (6:5).

1. The color black depicted suffering, sorrow, grief, depression and mourning in the Bible (Isa. 50:3; Jer. 4:28; 14:2).

2. Notice that the gospel was sent out into the world by Jesus on the white horse (6:1-2). This message caused war between fellow man and even family (6:3-4). Now the picture is vivid consequences of such conflicts with people!

   a. The “balance” in the hand of the rider of the black horse represented the scarcity of food as in Ezek. 4:16.

   b. The word “measure” (choinix) found in 6:6 is defined as, “a dry measure, containing four cotylae or two sextarii [i.e. less than our ‘quart’; cf. L. and S. s.v.] (or as much as would support a man of moderate appetite for a day)” (Thayer 669).

**B.** “And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, a measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not” (6:6).

1. The “shilling” was a day’s wages for a laborer (Matt. 20:2).

2. The barley was cheaper than wheat and therefore one could keep a family of three alive on barley with his labor.

3. Oil, wine and bread were recognized throughout the OT as representing the blessings of Jehovah God. It was the primary food source for the ancients. The oil and wine “hurt thou not” (me adikeses) is defined as, “to hurt, damage, harm” (Thayer 12). “Damage, spoil” (AG 17; LS 13).

4. These were hard times for the Christian because of the stand in the gospel truth. If they were not going to work in the pagan temple industry, then they would be reduced to low paying wage jobs which caused them to suffer physically.
H. “Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six” (13:18).

1. Clearly the Lord intends for his saints to understand His word. Those who have understanding are to exercise wisdom in interpretation.

2. The number of the beast was equivalent to the number of a man which is 666.
   a. Gematria is “the use of the letters of a word so as by means of their combined numerical value to express a name, or a witty association of ideas” (ISBE, Vol. IV. Pg. 2162).
   b. Translating the number 666 through Hebrew gematria produces a name strikingly similar to Nero Caesar (Neron Kaisar). Greek gematria produces a name (Pieters) which does not fit anything at all.
   c. It seems unlikely that the Holy Spirit would have given John a name using the Hebrew numbering system.
   d. Secondly, since Revelation 13:18 states that the number is the number of “a man” and not a specific man it seems apparent that the number 666 does not represent any one individual.
   e. Some believe that the number 666 represents failure personified. The number seven represents complete perfection whereas the number six is one short of perfection. Since man is imperfect and in need of the blood of Jesus to make him perfect, it seems to be a number that represents him. While this idea may be true, another plausible explanation may be that the 666 represents the devil himself (all that the beast represents) as an ultimate failure. The devil failed at destroying Jesus (12:4-8), he failed in destroying the church (12:13-16) and finally he fails at destroying the lives of the true saint of God (Rev. 12:17). We can, as true Christians who love the word of God, overcome the evil one!

Concluding Thoughts

The book of Revelation reads like a description of a picture that a very talented artist drew as it is hid from human sight. We do not see the complete picture in our minds until we have read the full description. The description of God's beautiful picture, to this point, leaves us with a vision of triumph on the part of the true saint of God (that man or woman who will serve the Lord no matter what happens or comes their way in this life). Said person bears the mark of God rather than the beast. Some may ask, Why would God give Rome and the false prophet to Satan to use as tools against the saints? Why would God permit some saints to fall in death and even apostasy? The answer is found in I Peter 1:3-9. God is putting His saints to the test. Will we love Him through thick and thin or will we abandon Him through disbelief? Those who overcome will not be disappointed. If only all of us would keep these thoughts in our minds as we suffer here in this world. God is in control. God truly cares. All those who give Him their anxieties will receive help (I Pet. 5:7). The true saint will overcome and God will reward that saint with a crown of glory in due time (I Pet. 5:6). My prayer is that we shall all overcome the raging river of Satan's wrath.

Chapter 14

Synopsis

Chapter fourteen has the appearance of an OT prophecy. The blessings of obedience are weighed against the curses of disobedience (much like Deuteronomy and Isaiah). The devil is now pursuing the faithful children of God that he may destroy them (Rev. 12:17). The methods he used were the beast from the sea (Rome) (Rev. 13:1) and the beast out of the earth (false religion/teaching) (Rev. 13:11). The conclusion of the thirteenth chapter is that the devil failed in his pursuit of the true child of God. A three-fold failure of the devil is represented by the number 666 (Rev. 13:18). The victorious saints of the future are depicted as standing with the Lord in glory. This, once again, is a chapter of victory for the faithful child of God. As Isaiah depicted woes upon the disobedient and followed these woes with words of hope in the Messiah, even so, John illustrated the awful end of the sinner ruled

12 Haily, H. Revelation; An Introduction and Commentary; pg. 297
by the devil versus the victory achieved in Christ. Chapter 13 illustrates God’s control of the devil and his work, and chapter 14 illustrates the saints of God ruling in heaven with their sovereign God. Truly those who wait on Jehovah shall not be disappointed (cf. Isa. 40:39).

I. The Lamb on Mount Zion (14:1-5):

A. “And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads” (14:1):

1. Chapter 13 illustrates the might and fearful power of Satan in the form of a beast that comes out of the sea and another one that comes out of the earth. Revelation 13 illustrates the success of Satan through his devices of deceit, power, and false teaching. The world seems to be giving in to him. This most formidable foe is represented by a three fold number of imperfection; i.e., the number 666 (Rev. 13:18). Though Satan seems to have momentum in this world he nonetheless fails in relation to ruining the elect of God's eternal existence.

2. While Satan is on his rampage and appearing to be victorious there remains those who will not give in to his devices. These faithful men and women are depicted in the number 144,000 and they have in their midst the Lamb of God (who has already been identified as Jesus at Revelation 5:6).

3. Jesus stood in the midst or on mount Zion:
   a. Zion was mentioned in Isaiah 2:3, “for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.” This Zion was equated with the church in Hebrews 12:22ff.
   b. Zion was equated with Jerusalem (the city of David) (II Sam. 5:7).
   c. Zion was also used in a figurative sense in the scriptures:
      1. Zion represented Jehovah’s dwelling place (Ps. 9:11; 135:21; Isa. 8:18; Joel 3:17).
      2. Since Zion was God’s dwelling place, it also represented safety and security among the people of God (cf. Ps. 125:1).
      3. Zion was used to depict the place of Jesus’ dwelling (Ps. 2:6), the place of Jesus’ reign (Mic. 4:7), the place where Jesus, the cornerstone, dwelled (Isa. 28:16; I Pet. 2:6); and the place where Jesus would proceed to offer redemption (Isa. 59:20; Rom. 11:26).
   d. The comments by the author of Hebrews seem to sum up the object of Zion in 12:22-23 saying, “but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect…”
   e. Those who have obeyed the gospel are experiencing the comfort, safety, security and dwelling place of God and Jesus in the church (Zion). Zion is apparently a figurative term that represents all the redeemed in the church.

4. It is here among the redeemed of the church that the Lamb (Jesus) stood (144,000 is a number that represents the redeemed of all times; see Revelation 7:1-8).

5. Furthermore, the 144,000 sealed of Revelation 7:3 are identified here as having the name of Jesus and the Father (God) written upon the foreheads (see Rev. 7:3).

6. John, in the spirit, sees Jesus with those who overcome (i.e., were victorious over the raging river of Satan's wrath in this life).

B. “And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps” (14:2).

1. The voice from heaven was mighty as the waters, powerful as thunder, and soothing as harps playing.

2. These heavenly voices “sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth” (14:3).
   a. Revelation 5:9ff discussed the new song that the four living creatures and elders sang.
   b. The "throne" of Revelation 5 was in heaven with the Father seated upon it (cf. Rev. 4:2). The four living creatures represented the powerful characteristic of God’s authority or government (Rev. 4:6). The elders here were clearly the twenty-four elders of Revelation 4:4 who represented the redeemed of all times (apparently equivalent to the 144,000 from the standpoint
of being on earth versus receiving their heavenly abode as the twenty-four elders have achieved).

c. Out of all those dwelling on earth, only those who had the seal of God upon their foreheads could learn this new song. The new song thereby stood as a distinguishing characteristic that only those with God's seal upon their foreheads could learn and sing. This song belonged to the redeemed alone.

C. Five classifications that identify the redeemed (144,000) (14:3-5):

1. **First**, they have been “purchased out of the earth” (Revelation 14:3). When the twenty-four elders and four beasts sang the new song of chapter five, they proclaimed praise for Jesus “purchase(ing) unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9; and also Acts 20:28 and Revelation 1:5). When one is purchased they belong to the purchaser (i.e., Christ).

2. **Secondly**, the 144,000 were identified as those who have “not been defiled with women; for they are virgins” (14:4). To be defiled is to be unclean (out of fellowship and unacceptable to God). The adultery or fornication spoken of here is not physical but spiritual (Isa. 57:1-8). The apostle Paul said, “For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ” (II Cor. 11:2). Pure in the sense of not walking in sin and following one teaching (sound doctrine) rather than going after others. To walk in sin, follow false teaching and false teachers today would be to commit spiritual adultery against the Lord.

3. Thirdly, “These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” (14:4b).
   a. To follow Jesus is to follow his example of life and teachings (cf. I Pet. 2:21).
   b. Cf. II Jn. 9-11; the spiritual fornicator followed another rather than Jesus.
   c. Herein is another verse that illustrates the disposition of the elect of God. They will follow Jesus any where he leads them. If the Lord's commands say do this person does.

4. Fourthly, the 144,000 were “purchased from among men, to be the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb” (14:4b).
   a. The phrase “first fruits” was used by Paul to designate the first converts of Asia and Achaia (Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:15).
   b. Again, the phrase was used to indicate Jesus who was the first of many who will be resurrected to die no more (I Cor. 15:20).
   c. It seems apparent that the phrase “first fruits unto God and Jesus” is simply a term that designates the saints of God among those of the earth.

5. Lastly, the 144,000 were designated as those in whom “was found no lie (in their mouth): they are without blemish” (14:5).
   a. Once again, to be without blemish is to be undefiled and clean.
   b. Liars represent false religion and false teaching because they are opposed to the truth (gospel of Jesus Christ) (I Jn. 2:21-22). The devil was the instigator of such teachings and he was the father of such who sympathize and tolerate such (Jn. 8:44).

**Summary:** Jesus is depicted as standing in the midst of all the redeemed who have overcome the wiles of the devil in that they are undefiled and stand in spiritual purity. These 144,000 are singing the "new song" unto the Lord of hosts.

II. **The Heavenly proclamations (14:6-13):**

A. “And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people” (14:6).
   1. The “mid heaven” (mesonranemati) = “to be in mid-heaven, when it has reached the meridian, mid-heaven, the highest point in the heavens, which the sun occupies at noon, where what is done can be seen and heard by all” (Thayer 402).
   2. In the sight and hearing of them that dwell on earth (unregenerate), this angel proclaimed the gospel message. Apparently, this angel was representative of those men and women who went forth spreading the gospel message to the ungodly.
3. The message, “fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters” (14:7).

   a. The gospel message preached was: “fear God.” The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7). This fear is reverence and respect for the word of God. The Lord desires such to be his people. Isaiah said, “For all these things hath my hand made, and so all these things came to be, saith Jehovah: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word” (Isa. 66:2). To “fear” God is to keep His commandments (cf. Deut. 5:29; 6:1-3; Titus 3:8; I Pet. 1:17). My obedience is thereby evidence of my fear of God much like obedience is evidence in my faith (cf. Jn. 3:36; Heb. 11:1ff) and love (Jn. 14:15, 23) of God (see study # 18; Fear God). So the Lord desires of every one who would serve Him (cf. Acts 10:35). God is certainly to be feared as we shall see at the end of this chapter. Those who illustrate no fear of God while among the living will learn this fear as they experience God's anger and wrath in the end of times (see study # 18).

   b. The gospel message preached was, “Give God glory.” Jesus said, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples” (Jn. 15:7-8). The Christian bears fruit when abiding in the sound doctrine of Jesus Christ.

   c. The gospel message preached was: “for the hour of his judgment is come.” While is may very well be possible that immediate judgment against Rome has now come it may also be that eternal judgment is under consideration. We ought to all fear for this reason.

   d. The gospel message preached was: "worship him:" All are encouraged to worship God because he is the true creator of the heavens, earth and great waters. There is no other God (Isa. 46:9-10). To worship the sovereign creator is to do so by His instructions (Jn. 4:23-24).

B. “And another, a second angel, followed, saying, fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of her fornication” (14:8).

   1. Here is common language with that of Isaiah (prophetic perfect). Language that indicates the end before the beginning (Isa. 46:10).

   2. Babylon was a representation of Rome and all the seduction and lust that went with it (cf. chapters 17-18). She is announced as having fallen (not yet but it is absolutely certain to be so).

   3. The unregenerate of the world had drunk the wine of her fornication. Jeremiah the prophet said, “Babylon hath been a golden cup in Jehovah’s hand, that made all the earth drunk: the nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are mad” (Jer. 51:7). “She (Babylon) has caused the nations to drink the wine of her passionate immorality” (AG 336).

   4. Being infatuated with the world power and wealth of Rome, many fell prey to its evil vices of emperor worship. While drinking Rome's koolaid they came to be intoxicated with her riches, lusts, error, and power.

C. “And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, if any man worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand. He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; 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 goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receives the mark of this name” (14:9-11).

   1. The Lord knew who were his, and they bore His sign or mark (Rev. 7:1-8; II Tim. 2:19); so those who operated through the authority of the devil were marked as his (cf. Rev. 13:17f).

   2. The warning was for those who rejected the saving message of the gospel and gave in to the fornication of persecution and false religion. They would drink the cup of God’s wrath. This cup was “unmixed” with mercy and longsuffering, for that time was now past!

   3. Those ungodly who drank the seductive wine of Rome would consequentially be force fed God's wine of wrath because of the hardness of their hearts (cf. Jer. 25:15, 27-29). Moses, similarly forced Israel to drink the grinded gold powder from the idolatrous calf they made that they may feel the sting of shame (Ex. 32:19-20).
4. These ungodly shall be tormented into eternity with no rest from the flame (cf. 14:11; Jude 7; Isa. 34:10). The fulfillment of this event is given at Revelation 19:3 after the angel of chapter 18 pronounces the fall of Rome (The great harlot).

D. “Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (14:12).
1. Once again we find a thematic statement of the book of Revelation. The patient saint will continue to keep God's commandments and have faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Remember that the dragon had failed in killing Jesus (Rev. 12:5-7), he failed in destroying the church (Rev. 12:13ff) and finally he pursued the true saints in failure (Rev. 12:17).
3. Remember, too, that the saint was to be in confident understanding that God was in control despite the Roman's ruthless persecution, and they were, therefore, to submit to all the ongoing in faith (Rev. 13:10).
4. Such understanding of God’s sovereignty would see them through the difficult times, knowing that their reward awaited them in eternity. The admonition was, therefore, keep on being faithful to the law of Jesus Christ for your faith is not in vain. Patience and endurance would result in the crown of life (see Rev. 13:10).

E. “And I heard a voice from heaven saying, write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them” (14:13).
1. Notice that the faithful can look forward to rest, whereas the ungodly who die in their sins have no rest (cf. Rev. 14:11).
2. Secondly, they (the faithful) are happy (blessed).
3. To die in the Lord is to pass from this life, having breathed your last abiding in the teachings of Christ. To be “in Christ” is a statement of the authority of Christ (cf. I Cor. 15:20ff; Col 3:17 etc.).
4. These words were meant to encourage the faithful child of God to continue to walk in the Lord’s commands and by his authority to worship the Father. Though the world around them was seduced by the world power of Rome, they were to stand out as a beacon in the night for lost souls. The true elect of God, those foreordained before the foundation of the world to be glorified will be viewed as blessed as they obtain their glorious reward. Now is not the time to give in to sin! Now is not the time to give in to persecution! Now is not the time to give up! Now is the time to continue in "works" of righteousness. Again, this reinforces the theme of the book. The faithful will not drink the intoxicated Koolaid of any world renown government. The faithful will not place hope in riches, worldly power, earthly satisfaction, or lust. This "patience" of the saints is the pressing forward or trudging through life uphill and against the wind with a no quit attitude.

Summary: All those who drink Rome's wine (or koolaid in today's terms) will be eternally punished with no rest. Those who press on in patient faith shall be eternally rewarded with rest and glory.

III. Reaping of the just and unjust (14:14-20):
A. “And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle” (14:14).
1. The color white, again, represents holiness and purity. The one on the cloud, “like unto a son of man” was none other than Jesus (cf. Dan. 7:13).
2. Upon the Lord’s head was the crown of victory and in his hand a sharp sickle for gathering a harvest. Chapter six depicted the Lord riding upon a white horse with a bow in his hand for the purpose of battle through the gospel message. Many would be saved through much tribulation; however, now the time of longsuffering and patience had ended. Those who would obey are as ripe as those who will not obey!

B. “And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped” (14:15-16).
1. Jesus is the Lord of harvest (Matt. 9:38; Lk. 10:2).
2. Jesus sent laborers into the field of harvest. The laborers’ harvest tool was and is the gospel message. This message hardened some and was a savor to others (II Cor. 2:16). Those who were hardened by the gospel message judged themselves unworthy of eternal life (Acts 13:46).

3. Apparently, then, the Lord reaped his harvest of good and contrite hearts through the gospel message, while at the same time His judgments were passed upon the unregenerate hardhearted because of their rejection of the message of the cross (cf. Isa. 6; Matt. 13).

C. “And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickly. And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs” (14:20).

1. Herein is the gory consequence of the work of the gospel message: a message that saves those who desire to be saved and a message that curses the hard hearted.

2. Such curses were realized in the revealed consequences of a life dissolute and destitute of God (cf. 14:10-11).

3. Figuratively, the ungodly were mashed in a wine vat of punishment until their blood flowed deep in the streets. The war horses were covered up to their bridles in blood from the unregenerate. Isaiah had pronounced similarly gory statements regarding the battle of Jehovah God with his enemies where the Lord left the battlefield with the blood of His enemies splattered upon His garments (cf. Isa. 63:1ff).

4. Is it not a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (see Heb. 10:31)? God's power and everlasting divinity has struck terror into the hearts of men in ages past (see Ex. 20:18-21). God's thundering voice has before destroyed His people's enemies (see 1 Sam. 7:10) and so He will once again do. May the Lord help us all to see what a horrid and eternally devistating day it will be when God's anger and wrath are unleashed upon the ungodly.

Summary: A great separation will occur between the redeemed and ungodly.

Concluding Thoughts

The theme of Revelation comes to be clearer and clearer. Those who will endure the trials and tribulations of this life will be given a crown of glory in heaven. Satan is behind these trials and tribulations. God permits the saints to undergo such tribulation that He may prove who truly belongs to Him. The elect and predestined few will serve Jehovah all the days of their lives. These men and women are people of purpose and will in no way permit Satan to take that which God promises away from them. This is the message of Revelation. A book that motivates you and I to be one of these people of purpose (see Rev. 2:10; 12:11; 13:8; 14:12-13; 17:14; 21:7).

Chapter 15

Synopsis

Chapter four revealed a glimpse of the throne of God in all His power and glory. Revelation 6 exposed the contents of the book held by the Lord (Rev. 5:1) which had seven seals. Each seal revealed the eternal purpose of God and the consequences of His purpose being achieved on humanity. Chapter 8 exposed seven trumpets sounding and specific events occurring as a consequence of the soundings. Chapter 16 revealed seven bowls of wrath that were to be poured out by the seven angels one by one. All three of these events indicated the effects of the gospel message upon humanity. The trumpets represented the pains of torments, through God’s judgments, that were designed to cause the unregenerate to repent (Cf. Rev. 8:13; 9:20). At the point of chapter 15, the mercy of God had apparently come to an end. Those who failed in their faith were to be punished and those who overcame would stand with the Lord in glory. Chapter 15 reveals the finality of the punishment of the ungodly. Apparently the seven seals loosed by Jesus revealed the eternal purpose of God (Rev. 6:1-8:2), the seven trumpets were sounded
with the intention to announce warning and the seven bowls of wrath indicated the finality of God executing all that had been warned of through the trumpets.

I. Introduction to the Seven Angels with Seven Plagues (15:1-8):

A. “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God” (15:1).

1. For the third time now, John saw a great “sign in heaven.” The first sign was found in 12:1, Zion the mother of Jesus, and 12:3, the great red dragon identified as the devil (12:9).
2. Seven angels are now given seven bowls “full of the wrath of God” (see Rev. 15:7). Other plagues were introduced in Revelation (cf. 9:20; 11:6); however, these plagues represent the "finished wrath of God."
3. All those who drank the wine (Koolaid) of Rome will now drink the wine of God's wrath that is unmixed with mercy and longsuffering (see Rev. 14:10).
4. Remember: Those who drink the wine of God's wrath will be trodden under horses hoofs until their blood rises to the bridles (Rev. 14:19-20). These seven plagues must, therefore, have something to do with the terrifying wrath of God mentioned just prior to these statements of chapter 15.

B. “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God” (15:2).

1. The sea of glass John looked upon was obviously the sea of glass introduced at Revelation 4:6. There we identified the sea of glass as that which separated the twenty-four elders (the redeemed of all times) from Jehovah God. Notice, however, that at the time when this present order has passed away, so has the sea of glass (Cf. Rev. 21:1). The sea of glass was now mingled with fire, which may indicate the fiery trials these faithful saints endured to take their place in heaven (cf. I Cor. 3:12-15). Paul said, “through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). It is indeed a fascinating thought brought out in this study. The true elect of God will patiently endure all of Satan's fiery darts, all the heart aches, and the overall test of time which may be identified as the "fiery sea of glass.” The only thing standing between the elect of God, as they live on this earth, and their glorious place that awaits them (another thematic verse), is this fiery sea of glass. All must pass through this fiery sea to get to God (see theme of Revelation) (see study # 20; The Trials of Life).

2. John sees in a vision the victorious saints of God who over came the "beast" (i.e., Rome and false religion), "his image" (the furious nature of Satan depicted in the "red dragon" (see Rev. 12:3, 9), and his Satanic looser number (i.e., 666 - see Rev. 13:18).

C. “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages” (15:3).

1. The antecedent of the plural pronoun “they” is “them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name” (15:2).
   a. The beast represented either the forces of the Roman Empire or false teaching (beast out of the sea and earth {Rev. 13:1, 11}).
   b. The number of the beast (666 {Rev. 13:8}) represented the threefold failure of the devil (Rev. 12). Those who gave in to the seductive lust and power of Rome and false religion figuratively wore this number as a distinguishing mark.
   c. These victorious saints were “standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God” (Rev. 15:2). The harps are figurative instruments of praise just as the harps and golden bowls full of incense represented the prayers of the saints in Rev. 5:8.

2. The song of praise was “the song of Moses the servant of God” (15:3).
   a. When Moses and Israel crossed the Red Sea in safety, they watched as God destroyed the Egyptian army by closing the Sea upon them.
   b. Exodus 15 recorded the song of praise the people sang unto God giving Him thanks for their deliverance.
c. Now the redeemed of all time sang a song of praise to the “Lamb” (Jesus) (Rev. 15:3). Jesus delivers not from Egypt but from the bondage of sin (Jn. 8:32; Heb. 3:5ff).

3. This song recognizes the marvelous works of God and the just nature of his government (cf. Jer. 9:24).

4. God is “King of the ages.” A footnote in the 1901 ASV Bible reads, “Many ancient authorities read nations.” The word nations may be a better fit in this text due to Jeremiah saying, “who should not fear thee, O King of the nations” (Jer. 10:7). The inference was that God is the true ruler through justice and righteousness no matter which nation one speaks of in time and history.

D. “Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest” (15:4).

1. Jeremiah said, “There is none like unto thee, O Jehovah; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who should not fear thee, O King of the nations?” (Jer. 10:6-7)

2. Isaiah recorded, “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure…” (46:9-10).

3. This then is a good question: who is foolish enough not to give God glory and reverence his mighty name? God has proved that He alone is God by telling of events in history before they even take place (cf. Isa. 45:1) (see study # 18).

4. These events have not been done in secret, but the whole world knows of God’s righteous acts (Ps. 98:2). Knowing this, “All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, Lord” (Ps. 86:9).

5. God's "righteous acts are made manifest" in that one may simply look to (see study # 19; Evidences of Faith):
   a. Creation (Gen. 1:1ff; Ps. 19:1; 33:6-9; Rom. 1:18ff; Heb. 11:3).
   b. Divine Revelation (Jn. 4:39ff; 20:30-31; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 3:1-6 etc.).
   c. Fulfilled prophecy ( Isa. 46:9-10).
   d. Witnesses of Christ resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-8).
   e. One's natural understanding of moral issues (Rom. 1:19-20, 26; 2:14, 27; I Cor. 11:14).

E. “And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened; and there came out from the temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with precious stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breast with golden girdles” (15:5-6).

1. After John sees the vision of Christ among his victorious saints that have overcome Satan singing the song of Moses he saw the other side of those who shall experience God's wrath.

2. Once again, John was given a vision of the holy of holies from which the law of God (testimony) went forth (cf. Rev. 11:19).

3. Out of this temple or sanctuary came forth seven angels that had the seven plagues.

4. The pure and bright attire indicates the holiness of their work (authorized by God).

5. The golden girdles remind us of the attire of Jesus (cf. Rev. 1:13). Some believe this indicates the angel’s high rank for the work entrusted to them.

F. “And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives fore ever and ever” (15:7).

1. The four living creatures were discussed in 4:8 (It seems clear from Ezekiel 1:5ff and Revelation 4 that these creatures are some sort of representation of the totality of Jehovah God’s character. The Lord’s rule is one of authority, strength, wisdom and quickness). Which one of the living creatures did this is unknown.

2. One gave each of the seven angels a bowl full of the wrath of God and now were awaiting instructions from God for their actions. God will force this wine down the throats of all those who gave up their faith or never had it to begin with (again, note Rev. 14:9-10).

G. “And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished” (15:8).

1. The smoke of Revelation 15:8 indicates the anger of Jehovah God against all those who wore the number of the beast.
Moses spoke of the man who would reject the authority of God and then stated, “Jehovah will not pardon him, but then the anger of Jehovah and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall lie upon him, and Jehovah will blot out his name from under heaven” (Deut. 29:20).

The Psalmist stated, “Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the mountains quaked and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it” (Ps. 18:7-8). Again, smoke was used to indicate the anger of God against the ungodly when the Psalmist said, “O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? Why does thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?” (Ps. 74:1).

2. No more warnings shall be given! The wrath of God will now be outpoured upon those who wear the mark of the beast (cf. Isa. 63:1ff; Rev. 14:20).

3. Note also that John writes, “None was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.” Who would be foolish enough to stand in the presence of God while His divine anger, that has been held throughout all time or at least throughout the hundreds of years that Rome's power was foretold of occurring, is unleashed upon the ungodly?

Consider the development of the Theme of Revelation:

The book of Revelation exposes the reality of Heaven and hell. The book precisely identifies those who belong to God and Satan by a figurative mark upon their foreheads. The Lord, by divine and omniscient ability, reveals the end of God's wrath before it happens against those who wear the mark of Satan. The true saints of God will always work through discouraging and trying days. John introduces us to the identification of God's elect and predestined saints at Revelation 1:3 by referring to them as "blessed" in that they "read, hear, and keep the commandments of God." John writes, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). There are many verses in Revelation that illustrate God's will for man to endure with patience the race that is set before them (see Rev. 1:3; 2:10; 12:11, 14; 13:8; 14:13; 15:2; 17:14; 21:7 etc.). The message of Revelation is that at no point in one's life is it time to be intoxicated with the wine of worldliness because God's wrath against the ungodly is certain.

Chapter 16

Prelude

Chapter 14’s end revealed the winepress of God’s wrath against the ungodly (cf. 14:17-20). Chapter 15 introduced us to seven angels “having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God” (Rev. 15:1). Apparently, the seven bowls of wrath represent God’s final judgments against the current unregenerate of Rome. The smoke of God’s wrath would be unleashed against those who refused to repent of their dead works (cf. Rev. 9:20; 15:8; 16:9, 11). This chapter puts the book of Revelation into perspective. The judgments were clearly against the Roman Empire (a tool in the hands of the devil) like the judgments of Isaiah were against Israel, Judah, Assyria and Babylon. The judgments looked to the here and now rather than a final judgment. The lesson to be learned is that God’s longsuffering terminates in every evil society that will not repent. The cycles shall continue until the Lord determines the grand finality of it all. At that time the wicked who drink the world's Kool-Aid of lust, pride, and vain glory will be cast into the fiery pit of hell for ever (Rev. 20:10ff).

I. The first of seven bowls of God’s wrath poured out upon the earth (16:1-2):
   A. “And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth” (16:1).
   1. The source of the “great voice out of the temple” is not revealed.
   2. The bowls were mentioned at Revelation 15:7 in connection with Revelation 14:17-20. One of the four living creatures that resided around the throne of God (cf. Ez. 1:5ff; Rev. 4:8) gave these
seven angels a bowl that had as its contents the wrath of God. All who had drank the intoxicating worldly wine of Rome and whose hearts were hardened against God were subject to these bowls.

B. “And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image” (16:2).

1. Pouring out the contents of the first bowl of God’s wrath had immediate and grave consequences upon those who had the mark of the beast (i.e., 666 - Rev. 13:18) and worshipped his image. As the Lord knew those who were His (II Tim. 2:19), so the devil knew (by this figurative distinctive mark) those who were his. Those who follow Satan's demonic ways are opposed to everything God represents.

2. These ungodly and unrepentant men shall receive a “noisome and grievous sore.”
   a. The word “noisome” (kakos) is defined as “ugly… disease… bad or evil” (LS 349).
   b. The word “grievous” (poneros) is defined as “a bad state or condition” (LS 661).
   c. The word “sore” (helkos) “a festering wound… of plague-ulcers” (LS 250).

3. Here is a graphic description of an ugly and painful festering wound or sore. The message is clear: there are always consequences to sin (see Prov. 13:15; 22:5).

II. The second and third of Seven Bowls of the Wrath of God poured out upon the Earth (16:3-7):

A. “And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died even the things that were in the sea” (16:3).

1. When the second trumpet sounded, 1/3 of the sea became blood and 1/3 of the living creatures of the sea died (cf. Rev. 8:8-9). At the pouring out of the contents of the second bowl of God’s wrath, every living soul died.

2. As we compare this verse with Revelation 8:8ff and 13:1, it seems apparent that the sea represents the whole of an evil society. God's mercy and patience has ended. The function of the trumpets was to get the wicked to repent yet many rejected God's mercy (Rev. 9:20). Jonah concluded, "They that regard lying vanities forsake their own mercy" (Jonah 2:8).

B. “And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood” (16:4).

1. The third trumpet sounded and resulted in a third of the river waters being turned to bitter wormwood and “many men died of the waters” (see Rev. 8:11). Such a grievous event would cause sickness, disease and death.

2. At the pouring out of the third bowl of God’s wrath, apparently all drinkable water was affected. Again, note the distinction between the trumpet sounds of warning issued at Revelation 8 and the finality of Judgment in Revelation 16. The time of God's patience had ended.

C. "And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy. And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments" (16:5-7).

1. With such horrendous events transpiring "the angel of the waters" spoke up in the Lord's defense lest any say He is unjust in doing such atrocities.

2. Jehovah was justified in his judgments against the worldly because they refused to repent even though he was patient and longsuffering with them (see Rev. 9:20).
   a. They (the wicked) had “poured out the blood of saints and prophets” (16:6).
   b. All who wear the mark of the beast upon their heads are fully deserving and worthy of such wrath.

II. The Fourth and Fifth Bowls of God’s Wrath are Poured Out (16:8-11):

A. “And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory” (16:8-9):

1. The Psalmist said, “A fire goes before him, and burns up his adversaries round about…” (Ps. 104:4). Isaiah foretold of a burning flame that would consume the ungodly guilty of idolatry (47:13ff).

2. This scorching judgment against the unregenerate only caused them to be more hardhearted, and they “repented not.” The thought of repentance meant hope, so these bowls do not represent the
final judgment against mankind (cf. Rev. 9:20-21). What we do see; however, is full blown apostasy. Here were men and women hardened in sin and they were not going to change.

3. Instead of repentance, those who earned the mark of the beast by their conduct blasphemed the name of God (spoke evil of God) and refused to give God glory (doxa). Many today blame God for all their hardships yet refuse to give Him glory. Their hardships drive them further from God because they want nothing to do with Him.

4. It seems evident that these final bowls of wrath are not intended for man's repentance as the earlier trumpets were (see Rev. 8-9). These wicked souls have no intention of repenting and giving God glory. The significance of such statements is to serve as a warning and astonishment to the godly. It is alarming to know that men get themselves to such a hardened state of mind that they ignore the obvious.

B. “And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory” (16:10-11).

1. The beast has been revealed at Revelation 11:7 and 13:1 and represents the Roman Empire (cf. comments on those sections as compared with Daniel 7). These judgments are not unlike the judgments that Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold regarding Israel and Judah. These judgments would be the immediate fate of all who refused to repent. They would go to the place of torments until the day Jesus judges the world.

2. Darkness represents doom and a lack of clarity in the scriptures (cf. Eph. 4:17ff). Apparently the unregenerate inhabitants of Rome would be confused as to the certainty of their beloved Rome with which they had been so infatuated (cf. Rev. 14:8). They were the ones now suffering instead of the Christians with sores, torments, and even death.

III. The sixth bowl of God's wrath poured out (16:12-16):

A. “And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising” (16:12).

1. Remembering the figurative nature of Revelation, we are led to understand that the physical Euphrates is not meant here but a removal of all impediments to the invading armies of the devil.

2. “And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty” (16:13-14).

a. Satan, Rome and false teaching together sent forth their diabolical forces summed up in three unclean spirits called frogs. These three unclean spirits or frogs represent:


2. Mouth of the dragon - i.e., immorality and worldly attraction (I Jn. 2:15-17).


b. “For with these three spirits of damnable demons Satan deceives the mass of man-kind (II Cor. 11:3, 13-15; I Tim. 6:9-10)” (Bob Dodson’s unpublished notes on Revelation pg. 10).

c. The great day of God is a day of judgment but not the final judgment.

B. “(Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame)” (16:15).

1. As John was viewing these events a voice broke in that is apparently the voice of Jesus.

2. Jesus had made these very same statements to his disciples in Luke 12:39ff. The point is that no man knows the day God sends forth his judgments.

3. Since no man knows when he comes blessed is he that:

a. Watches (present tense; keeps on watching to keep one self from being defiled or led astray).

b. Keeps his garments (white -innocence and purity) (cf. Rev. 3:4, 17).

c. Purposes to achieve God's glorious promises and will not be found naked in the shame of sin.

d. Again, this is the theme of Revelation (see also Rev. 1:3; 2:10; 12:11, 14; 13:8; 14:13; 15:2; 16:15 and the next chapter at 17:14). Man is in constant turmoil that is brought on
by Satan. Those who wade through the sea of glass mingled with fire unscathed by the power of the blood of Christ shall be "blessed" forever.

C. “And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew HarMagedon (Ar-Magedon)” (16:16).

1. The antecedent to the plural pronoun “they” would be the three frogs (unclean spirits) who gather the kings (Rev. 16:12) by the diabolical deception of the Devil. These kings were assembling for war against the purpose of God.

2. When one looks to Greek Lexicons for information regarding “Ar-Magedon”, he finds the interpolation “Mount of Megiddo” (cf. Thayer 73-74; AG 107; Moulton 51; ISBE Vol. 1; pg. 294-295).

3. The ISBE makes a solid interpretation for Megiddo being the figurative place where decisive battles between good and evil have occurred. The scriptures speak of Megiddo as being the battle place of:
   a. Deborah and Barak defeating Jabin and Sisera of the Canaanites (Judges 4-5).
   b. Gideon and three hundred faithful men defeated the massive Midianite army near Megiddo (Judges 7:1).
   c. Saul and Jonathan were killed near Megiddo (I Sam. 31:1-6).
   d. Josiah fought against Pharaoh Necho in the valley of Megiddo and was defeated (II Kings 23:29ff; II Chron. 35:22).

4. Megiddo was a place of war, and it is for this reason that it seems that John was given a vision of a spiritual war that shall take place (for further information regarding this great battle cf. notes on 19:11-21).

IV. The seventh bowl of God’s wrath poured out (16:17-21):

A. “And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, it is done” (16:17).

1. The air is probably a figurative thought involving the realm of the devil (cf. Eph. 2:2).

2. The sixth seal caused a gathering of Satan’s army for war and the seventh seal is a destroying plague poured out upon these demonic forces.

3. The Spirit then says, “it is done” (completed).

4. It seems that these words at the end of chapter 16 are a prologue to a further explanation of these events in chapters 17-19.

B. "and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty" (16:18).

1. The consequence of the seventh bowl of God’s wrath being poured out on Satan’s dominion was a “great earthquake” (16:18). At the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:13), a “great earthquake” killed 1/10 of the great city’s population (7,000 people). The rest of the population, we are told, feared God and gave him glory (11:13:b).

2. This earthquake was so mighty that it caused Rome to be divided.

C. “And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” (16:19).

1. We have already identified the “great city” as Babylon or Rome (11:8ff). God had already determined to destroy the great city (cf. Rev. 14:8). The city and its drunken inhabitants were to drink “the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his (God’s) wrath” (cf. Rev. 14:8, 19; Jer. 51:7).

2. God’s wrath poured out on the ungodly of Rome will divide the city into three parts:
   a. When Ezekiel foretold the utter destruction of Jerusalem, he said it would be divided into thirds. A third part of Jerusalem would be burned, a third devoured by the sword and a third scattered by the wind (cf. Ez. 5:2ff).
   b. It is very possible that John was seeing a picture of the utter destruction of Rome and “the cities of the nations” (those cities that drank from the cup of Babylon’s seductive vices (cf. Rev. 14:8)). A complete description of this event is given in chapters 17-18.

3. “And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found” (16:20). All that at one time seemed great was now destroyed, and there was nothing left of Rome and her followers.
D. “And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and
men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great”
(16:21).
1. These balls of hail weighed approximately 90 pounds a piece. The hail was crushing and fatal.
2. Instead of men repenting and giving God glory as 9/10 of the great city did in Revelation 11:13b,
these now “blaspheme God because of the plague of the hail.” This indicates to us that the said
vision was not one of final judgment against mankind but an exhibition of God’s fierce anger
being poured out upon a nation in the here and now for their hardhearted disposition. There were
still some left alive that blasphemed the name of God.

Concluding Thoughts

The wicked souls under consideration at Revelation 16 have no intention of repenting and giving God glory. The
significance of such statements is to serve as a warning and astonishment to the Godly. It is alarming to know that
men get themselves to such a hardened state of mind that they ignore the obvious. This chapter exposes the reality
of apostasy. When one gives himself over to the Kool-aid of worldliness (lust / pride / vainglory) the heart is
hardened to a point of no return. Those; however, who watch in fearful expectation for the Lord's coming and keep
their garments clean from sin are identified as the "blessed" (see Rev. 16:15). Again, we find the message of the
book. Press through the fiery sea of life and you will never be disappointed in God's eternal blessings.

Chapter 17

Synopsis

Chapter 17 reveals the true identity of Rome. She is referred to as a Harlot. All things hidden regarding her true
character are now revealed (Rev. 17:5). She stands for seduction, lust, and luxurious wealth (in other words; all
things that pertain to this world cf. I Jn. 2:15-17). As Edom of the OT (Isa. 63:1) so Rome stands as a monument of
wickedness for all times (Rev. 17:12). Those who follow her insidious ways are of her mind and opposed to God
(Rev. 17:13). These shall continuously wage war against the saints of God (Rev. 16:13-16); however, the true
faithful will always overcome (Rev. 17:14). That which the true elect of God overcome in this life is temptation to
be like the world with all its lust, power, temporary glory, riches, and luxury.

I. Babylon identified as a seductive Harlot (17:1-6):
A. “And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, come
hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sits upon the many waters; with whom the
kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the
wine of her fornication” (17:1-2).
1. When one thinks of a harlot ideas of shameful and immoral behavior come to mind. Here is a
contrast with the first woman mentioned in chapter 12. The remnant or church of Jesus Christ was
represented in the first woman. The second, a harlot, is a descriptive term indicating the moral
depravity of the inhabitants of Rome and those who have been infatuated with her power and
wealth. The OT revealed three cities designated as harlots. Those cities are Nineveh (Nah. 3:1, 4),
Tyre (Isa. 23:15-17) and Babylon (Isa. 47:5ff).
2. The waters that the harlot sat upon were people and nations (cf. Rev. 17:15). The world was
intoxicated with the power and wealth of Rome. They had drank Rome's Kool-aid and completely
turned their backs upon the Lord. They wore the number of the beast and were worthy of the
punishment they would receive.
3. The angel tells John that he will now show him the judgment that awaits this harlot of immorality.
B. “And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-
colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (17:3).
1. The beast that the harlot (Rome) sat upon is no doubt the beast of Revelation 13:1 that came out of the sea. The beast out of the sea in Revelation 13:1 was identified as Rome when studied alongside Dan. 7:4-7.

2. Here it seems that we have the character of Rome (harlot {seductive, sensual and devilish}) sitting upon the Roman Empire (all seduced by her power and wealth).

3. The beast full of blasphemy represents the mind opposed to God’s authority and the color scarlet is the color of sin (cf. Isa. 1:18).

C. “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication” (17:4).

1. The outward appearance of the harlot was luxury and riches (the color purple - see Acts 16:14 and the idea behind gold and precious stones and pearls).

2. The cup she held contained the seductive vice in which the nations drank and were deceived. Her wealth, power, and beauty all attracted those minds dulled by the desires of the world. The cup she offered the world to drink contained lust, luxury, riches, power, and covetousness all of which was summed up in the word "abomination." The word "abomination" (bdelugmaton) = "to be detestable, loathe, abhor" (Moulton 68). God's view of the harlot and what she represented was loathsome, abhorrent, disgusting, and detestable. There is no stronger word for God's disposition toward unauthorized practices (see Deut. 7:26) (see study # 21; God's View of Sin).

D. “And upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and the Abominations of the Earth” (17:5).

1. The word “mystery” is key in understanding the title written upon the harlot’s forehead. The NT refers to mysteries regarding the gospel before being revealed (cf. Eph. 3:3-5).

2. The true character of this seductive world power of lust was now made known to the world. She had seduced with the threefold powers of the devil being the “lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life” (I Jn. 2:15ff). The work of Satan is deception. He tries to get people to forget or not think about the consequences of sin through the lust of pleasure (cf. Gen. 3:1-5).

E. “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder” (17:6).

1. The word “wonder” means to be astonished or amazed. John looked upon the harlot as though he could see right through her soul. She was responsible for taking the spiritual lives of men and women and thereby had their spiritual blood upon her hands as a murderer (see Ezek. 3:16ff compared to Acts 18:6).

2. What if you or I could look upon a person or nation with all the seductive vices of sin and lust exposed to clearly see? What if you or I could see through the eyes of God a man for what he truly is? Many veil their true character behind sophistry, human wisdom, and lies yet what if we could see men for what they truly are? We may too marvel, be astonished, be amazed and probably be disappointed. Jesus said that we certainly can know what is in a man's heart by the very words he preaches (see Matthew 7:16ff).

3. Not only was the harlot drunk with the spiritual blood of the saints but she also was responsible for the physical death of many due to their faith. Here was Rome drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus who were the subjects of Rome’s entertainment and the subject of their hatred and wrath because they opposed such sinful living.

II. One of the seven angels explains the mystery of the harlot to John (17:7-14):

A. “And the angel said unto me, wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns” (17:7).

1. The angel was now ready to reveal the mystery of the harlot to John.

2. Notice that the harlot and the beast were basically one. The woman rode upon the beast steering his every move as a horse and rider. The moves were those of conquest, lust, seduction and pride.

B. “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the
book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come (be present)" (17:8).

1. It is here that we begin to see the thought of the book of Revelation come clearer. How would the beast (i.e., Rome) exists yet not exists and then exists again?

2. The beast mentioned here is the Roman system with its Emperors (Satan's vices). The head that had been beaten to death (Nero - Rev. 13:3) and then revived from its death stroke (Domitian).

3. The world of unregenerate seem to be impressed (amazed and astonished) with the resilience of such a spirit of opposition to God, yet not so with the saints of God.

4. All but those men and women of eternal victory shall give themselves over to this beast. These people of purpose have had their names written in the book of life "from the foundation of the world." These are the elect and predestined of God; i.e., those who shall serve the Lord in faithfulness come what may (see Eph. 1:7) (see theme of Revelation) (see study # 15).

C. “Here is the mind that has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and they are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while. And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition” (17:9-11):

1. The practical application of knowledge is wisdom (the ability to take information and not only understand it, but make it a part of your life). Here is a verse where symbolism comes into consideration in the book of Revelation. When looking into the seven churches of Asia, we noted that not only were these seven churches intended, but the number seven represented the church as a whole (past, present and future). When examining the seven trumpets and seven bowls of wrath, we understand these to be the whole of God’s wrath. Here it seems that the same idea is at hand.

2. Apparently, Rome was built near seven hills on the Tiber River. All who heard this would have recognized that Rome was the subject. The harlot currently set atop of Rome. Yet Rome is not the only kingdom under consideration.

3. The seven kings were not literal kings but all kings past, present and future that would oppose the authority of God. Each would continue a little while and then go into perdition. Wherever there be false teachings that gains popularity, wherever there be governments or individuals who represent the dragon and do his work, they will all ultimately fail yet the faithful elect of God will always prevail.

D. “And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast for one hour” (17:12).

1. The symbolism continues, ten representing complete power. These ten kings may be the kings gathered for war against God (cf. Rev. 16:16) or they may represent future kings (powers) that shall wage war against the saints of God.

2. Whatever the case their time shall always be short (one hour).

3. Just because Rome fell does not mean that Satan's power has been diminished in future generations such as ours. There are always societies given over to the red dragon.

E. “These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast” (17:13).

1. As the saints of God are of one mind in purpose and doctrine (Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27) so the mind of those who follow after the dragon are one. They are one in their love of luxury, riches, lust, pride, and vainglory. They all come to the troth of sinful Kool-aid together and partake liberally.

2. Once again, the devil mirrored all that God does in his evil realm. He marked those who were his as God knew those who belonged to Him. This verse illustrates vividly the idea of sanctification. Christians are sanctified from the world with its lust and love of luxury and riches.

F. “These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and Kings of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful” (17:14).

1. From the beginning of this study, we said that this verse is the thematic thought of Revelation.

2. The kings called to war (Rev. 16:14) will be defeated in every generation for Jesus (Lamb) shall “overcome them.”
3. Those past, present and future who have been "called" of God (Matt. 22:1-13; II Thess. 2:14) are the "chosen and faithful" of God and will with Christ gain the victory over this battle. Said elect men and women will not loose (see study # 15 and # 16).

III. The Fall of Babylon (17:16-18):

A. "And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished" (17:16-17).

1. The ten horns of verse 16 represent future kings or kingdoms that are opposed to God and friends to the beast (Their relationship toward Rome will be explained in chapter 18). They were fair weather friends according to these verses.

2. Verse 16-17 reveals the methodology of Rome’s destruction. Rome would be destroyed by its own allies by judgment of God. The Lord, throughout history, used other nations to accomplish his ends (i.e. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon etc.) and so He now executes judgment against Rome.

3. These kingdoms, upon noticing weakness in the beast, shall hate, make desolate, naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. They will turn upon that which they were infatuated with and destroy her.

B. “And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth” (17:18).

1. The reign Rome had over the kings of the earth was not only political but spiritual.

2. Though she reigns over the kings the kings will turn upon her by God's command.

Concluding thoughts to this point:

The message of Revelation grows ever so clearer the further we get into the book. The faithful of God will reject the wine or Kool-aid of this wicked world and they shall forever be victorious (Rev. 1:3; 2:7, 10, 17, 26; 3:5, 11, 21; 5:9-10; 6:11; 7:3-4, 15-17; 9:4; 11:18; 12:11, 14; 13:8; 14:13; 15:2; 16:15; 17:8, 14). Those who have the spirit to overcome the world's wine are the true elect and predestined of God.

Chapter 18

Synopsis

Chapter 17 reveals the true identity of Rome. She represents seduction, lust, luxurious wealth, arrogance, pride, and sin in general. Chapter 18 reveals the failure and destruction of any such wicked forces throughout time that sets itself against God. These chapters help Christians of every age to be able, like John, to have the blinds taken off their eyes that the true mystery of any devilish source may be seen for what it is, i.e., opposed to God and destine for failure and destruction.

I. The Fall of Babylon Announced and God's People are warned not to Fellowship Her Sins (18:1-8):

A. "After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird. For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committted fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness (luxury)" (18:1-3).

1. After the seven bowls of wrath have been poured out and the harlot's identity clearly marked as opposed to God another angel (not one of the previous seven) came out of heaven with an authoritative message. The consequence of his presence was “the earth was lightened.”

2. The angel announced the fall of Babylon (Rome or the harlot) saying that she has become “a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird." All who have been seduced by the seductive powers of Rome were held by her. Note that
Rome was a place of the unclean, whereas the holy city of Revelation 21:27 will be the place for the clean!

3. Three classes of people seduced by the “wine of the wrath of her fornication” (i.e., Rome's luxury, prestige, arrogance, and pride) (18:3):
   a. The nations (people)
   b. Kings
   c. Merchants

B. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (18:4-5).

   1. Again, remember that Babylon, Rome, the great city all represent worldliness of lust, pride, vain glory, and the love of money. The angel of God commands that the true saints of God have "no fellowship with her sins." The idea behind fellowship is to share something (see study # 22; Bible Fellowship). The saints of God are commanded not to share in her sins (see II Cor. 6:17-7:1; Eph. 5:11). The saints of God are called upon to open their eyes and see her for what she really is. Rome (worldliness) is opposed to God's will and thereby destined to failure and eternal demise.

   2. All the unclean acts committed by Rome were catalogued by Jehovah and He remembers what they have done against His holy will.

C. "Render unto her even as she rendered, and double unto her the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and morning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her" (18:6-8).

   1. That which the harlot city dished out in a measure of sin (her cup of wine that seduced the surrounding lustful nations and caused them destruction) will now be equally measured out to her in torment. She will not get away with her treatment of the saints. She will not get away with her fornication, seduction, lust, vain glory, and quest for riches. The Lord now adds arrogance to her sins. She sits as "a queen" in her own mind. The Lord has divinely revealed His mind on pride and arrogance:
      a. “Thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down” (II Sam. 22:28).
      b. “When pride comes, then comes shame” (Prov. 11:2).
      c. “Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18).
      d. “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (I Cor. 10:12).

   2. She is deluded in that she sees no days of mourning, plagues, famine, and death yet it comes to her due to her sin. Jehovah is the judge that shall pronounce and carry out the sentence of death to her.

   3. The saint of God is thereby admonished to have no fellowship with her sins because:
      a. Plagues await her and all who fellowship her sins (see Rev. 18:4).
      b. Due to God's judgment against her: Torment, death, sorrows, famine, and burned with fire.

III. The World Reacts to the Fall of Babylon (18:9-20):

A. "And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour is thy judgment come" (18:9-10).

   1. The kings of the earth that had been seduced and committed fornication with the harlot now stand aloof from their mistress and want no part of her torment. Their hearts are filled with sorrow over her fall and they exclaim, "Woe, woe, the great city..." She is being judged for her sins and her fair weather friends want no part of her suffering. They had reaped the benefits of their alliance with Rome that struck terror into the hearts of any opposed to her. Notice that their hearts are filled with sorrow over the loss of this relationship and what it did for them on the international scene.
Those who put their hope, trust, and desires into the things of this world can only be disappointed when it is taken away.

2. The swiftness of judgment comes upon her and with a mighty crushing blow from the hand of Jehovah He renders her helpless.

B. "And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buys their merchandise any more; merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood, and brass, and iron, and marble; and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour; and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and slaves; and souls of men. And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and men shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, who are made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! for in one hour so great riches is made desolate" (18:11-17a).

1. The merchants sorrowed as well, yet as the kings, they do not sorrow over the empire of Rome as much as the sorrow over the loss of their way of life. Rome was the center of commerce and enabler of world trade. With the destruction of Rome came the destruction of buying, selling and trading of goods. Their style of life was affected by the destruction of Rome.

2. The merchants mourned not for Rome, but for their loss of luxurious living. They were attached to what the world offered (thus Rome symbolized the seduction of the world that these merchants pursued with dull minds void of understanding). Again, 18:17a depicts the suddenness of this judgment against the harlot. No one knows the day of the Lord yet when he comes he will act swiftly against the ungodly.

3. Once again we note that if the merchants had faith and a longing to spend eternity with God then the loss of their profits would not had bothered them. Yet because their faith rest solely upon Rome they wailed over her fall as though they had lost a child (see study # 23; Who do you put your Trust In?).

C. "And every shipmaster and every one that saileth any where, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city? And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate" (18:17b-19).

1. The third class of people who placed their hope and immediate gain in Rome were "as many as gain their living by sea." Shipmasters and all who would use the sea for trade, commerce, and travel wailed in sorrow over the destruction of Babylon as well. Again, this wailing was not for sympathy of the Empire but for their selfish desires of material gain. When Babylon falls so does the shipping industry.

2. John is shown three times now the swiftness of God's judgment against the harlot.

D. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her" (18:20).

1. While those of the world wailed over Rome's fall the christians were told to rejoice over her unfolding judgments. At the height of Rome's glory, she persecuted and killed the saints, and this brought the nations pleasure (cf. Rev. 11:10).

2. Now it was the saints of God who had the last moment of joy as they watched the judgments of God unfold upon the seductive powers of the devil. His means and modes were destroyed!


A. “And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all” (18:21).

1. Jeremiah described the fall of ancient Babylon in similar terms (cf. Jer. 51:61-64).

2. The point is clear, so thoroughly will God destroy Rome that it will not be seen again just as a great stone throne into the sea would not be seen of man again.
B. "And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in thee; and the voice of a mill shall be heard no more at all; and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived" (18:22-23).

1. Five areas of normal activity were no longer present in the harlot city, nothing but silence and ruin remain (18:22-23a):
   a. The sounds of revelry, joy and gladness were no more, as depicted by the disappearance of music.
   b. There were no more workers, no more business, all was dead and quiet.
   c. No bread being made for there was no one to make it.
   d. No light in the streets, homes of the rich or the poor, all was dark!
   e. No wedding feast because there were no weddings!

2. Two reasons given for the destruction of the harlot (18:23b):
   a. No commerce equated to no merchants. They were all gone because they had selfish motives brought upon them by the seductive nature of Rome itself. Rome created its own demise!
   b. The seduction of Rome deceived the nations as does a sorcerer, and so she brought herself down (this was God’s judgments against her).

C. “And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth” (18:24):

1. Apparently this verse takes into consideration the whole picture of the devil’s work.
2. Satan deceived Eve in Genesis 3 with the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life (I Jn. 2:16). Satan’s deceptive vices continue until that great day when Jehovah will crush him under his feet (I Cor. 15:20ff).

Concluding Thoughts

After the announcement of the fall of Babylon (Rome - the rule of worldliness) the angel of the Lord calls upon all saints to "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). All who drank the wine of Rome and came to be intoxicated with her luxury, lust, seductive lifestyle, power, world recognition, arrogance, and worldliness in general had a wake up call as they watch her burn in judgment. Those seduced by her unclean ways stand aloof from her as she pays for her sins. While these mourn over their loss of riches the righteous rejoice as they witness her being repaid for the wickedness she dealt out to the world.

Chapter 19

Prelude

Chapter 18 revealed the destruction of the harlot city Rome and the world's reaction of sorrow due to a loss of luxurious living and social status. In contrast with the mourning of the kings, merchants, and those who made their living on the sea was the saints of God. The saints were told to rejoice at the tyrant’s fall (Rev. 18:20). Chapter 19 expounds upon this rejoicing and reveals the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. While those who drank Rome's wine and were intoxicated with her lust, wealth, and worldly status believed she was indestructible the Lord proved her week and feeble. Her ways that seemed so appealing and entertaining have now been proved poisonous and deadly. The saints who abstained from fellowshipping her sins have cause for rejoicing because they were right to reject her pernicious ways (see Rev. 18:4).

I. Rejoicing over the destruction of the harlot (19:1-10):
   A. “After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he
hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand” (19:1-2).

1. The events of "After these things" was the proclamation of Rome's fall and the resultant sorrow and disappointment of kings, merchants, and those who made a living on the seas. While the world drank Rome's wine and became intoxicated with power, wealth, arrogance, and sinful lifestyles the saint would now be vindicated in abstaining from fellowshipping her sins (see Rev. 18:20). All those who committed fornication with her (i.e., fellowshipped her sin) would now face Jehovah's wrath.

2. The "great harlot" was Rome (Babylon the Great) (cf. Rev. 17:5; 18:21). God's judgment of destruction against the harlot was due to her “corrupting” the earth with her deceit, lust and wealth. Interestingly, the word “corrupt” (phtheiro) means “to ruin, waste, spoil, destroy” (LS 860). As in any generation characteristics of false ways, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the vain glories of life will utterly ruin, waste, spoil and destroy the individual.

3. Secondly, the harlot was judged because the martyrs of Revelation 6:9-11 had called out “How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Their blood was now avenged in God’s judgments (see also Rev. 18:20).

B. “And a second time they say, Hallelujah. And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever” (19:3).

1. Herein is the fulfillment of Rev. 14:9-11.

2. It would appear that an immediate judgment and casting into hell for eternal torment had now occurred; however, the following verses simply indicate the certainty of such events (words in prophetic perfect - i.e., events that are so sure to happen that they are spoken of as though they have already taken place). Those who fellowship worldliness in any generation can expect to experience the wrath of God for all eternity. It is certain!

C. “And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah” (19:4).

1. The twenty-four elders have been mentioned at Rev 4:4; 5:6; 7:11; 14:3 and seem to represent the redeemed of all time (past, present and future). These could not have possibly worshiped God at the time of Rome's fall due to the fact that not all the redeemed of the coming generations was with them. The rejoicing under consideration will be the typical joy experienced in heaven upon that time when the Lord will crush all worldliness (personified in Rome) under His feet and cast Satan into the pits of hell for ever with all those who wear his mark.

2. The four living creatures represent the character of God’s government (cf. Rev. 4:6ff; 5:6ff; 6:1-7; 14:3 and 15:7).

D. “And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great” (19:5).

1. The saints have been called upon to rejoice over the fall of Rome as they were called to do so at Rev. 18:20.

2. These saints had suffered and experienced first-hand false teaching (cf. Rev. 2:20).

E. “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (19:6-8).

1. The mighty voice is not identified.

2. A call for praise was requested, and the purpose was that God is the “Almighty.” The word depicts God’s control in all matters. Isaiah spoke of the judgments of God, the “Almighty” (Isa. 13:6). The word means “the all-ruling” (Strong’s Greek Words # 3841).

3. “for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready”

a. The Lord’s people (Isa. 50:1; 54:5; 57:3ff; Ezek. 16:1ff; Hosea 9:1) and the church of Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:4; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22ff) are often portrayed in scriptures as the Lord's wife.

b. Yet this wife is “betrothed” to the Lord and not yet His. The apostle Paul said, “I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ” (II Cor. 11:2). The

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word “espoused” (hermosamen) is defined as “to fit, adapt, prepare, make ready...of marriage, to betroth one’s daughter to any one; to betroth to oneself, take to wife” (LS 118).

4. The clothing of the bride of Christ is set in stark contrast to that of the harlot in 17:4 (seductive and luxurious clothing). The church is depicted as clean, pure, a virgin, and bright which terms are reflective of her character (Eph. 5:27).

F. “And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true works of God” (19:9).
   1. To be “bidden” to the marriage supper is to be “called.”
   2. The gospel of Jesus Christ calls people out of darkness (I Pet. 2:9; I Cor. 1:9; II Thess. 2:13ff). Truly such are blessed (cf. Rev. 21).
   3. The "blessed" of Revelation are the elect of God {theme of study} (see Rev. 1:3 etc.).

G. “And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (19:10).
   1. John did this once again at Revelation 22:8ff.
   2. Jesus is the essence or spirit of this prophecy.

II. The White horse and its rider (19:11-16):
A. “And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war” (19:11).
   1. The horse is the symbol war or battle (Job. 39:19-25; Zech. 10:3) and speed (Jer. 4:13).
   2. John saw Jesus riding a white horse at Revelation 6:2 coming forth to conquer with the gospel message. The purpose of his coming on a white horse in chapter 19 was judgment and war.
   3. The rider is identified as “Faithful and True.” Jesus was identified as “Faithful and True” at Revelation 1:5 and 3:14.

B. “And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself” (19:12).
   1. Again, eyes of fire further identify the rider of the white horse as Jesus (see Rev. 1:14, 2:18).
   2. The complete reality of Jesus may not be able to be put into words by man.

C. “And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God” (19:13).
   1. Apparently the blood that is sprayed upon the garments of the Lord was the blood of the unrepenting godless peoples of Rome (cf. Rev. 14:20; Isa. 63:1ff).
   2. Again, the rider of the white horse is identified as “The Word of God.” John had previously identified Jesus as the Word in Jn. 1:1, 14; I Jn. 1:1.

D. “And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure” (9:14). It may be that these were the great host of heavenly beings who minister unto Jehovah God (Dan. 7:10 see also Rev. 19:8).

E. “And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty” (19:15).
   1. This sword was the sword of the gospel which pronounced judgment upon the ungodly of the world. This sword is depicted as a "rod of iron" that Christ would rule the nations with (see also Rev. 2:25 and 12:5).
   2. The Psalmist tells us that Christ would break the ungodly nations with his "rod of iron" (Ps. 2:9-12 and Isa. 11:4). The world would be tormented in the hardness of their hearts over Christ's laws and authoritative words.

F. “And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” (19:16).
   1. Here is the fourth time a name is given to the rider of the white horse with a sword. He is “Faithful and True...a name written which no one knows but the Lord...The Word of God... and King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”
2. The title, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" was ascribed to the Lamb at Revelation 17:14, and again, this is proof that it is Jesus that is the subject. All nations are under his authoritative rule whether they like it or not.

3. Why should the Spirit reveal four names of Christ in this text? The point is obvious. The name of Jesus Christ ought to strike terror into man's heart. The name of Jesus Christ ought to stir up the utmost respect and reverence within man. These four terms signify his great power, authority, and reverential being (see II Cor. 5:11; Heb. 10:31).

III. Birds of prey invited to a feast (19:17-21):

A. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great" (19:17-18).
   1. The marriage supper of 19:9 is in severe contrast to the feast of 19:17.
   2. Herein were the judgments of God being poured out upon the evil (cf. Isa. 34:6; Jer. 46:10).
   3. Once again, we find parallels of this event in the book of Ezekiel 38-39:17-20.
   4. Every class of man that is not numbered with God will be devoured. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Matt. 12:30).

B. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army" (19:19).
   1. The beast was the Roman Empire (cf. Rev. 13:1ff).
   2. Guided and ruled by the devil, the beast called together an ungodly army to wage war against the Lord at Har-Magedon (see Rev. 16:13-16).

C. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone:" (19:20).
   1. The beast out of the earth was identified as the false prophet or false teachings that deceive and delude the simple (cf. Rev. 13:11-18).
   2. All diabolical forces that set themselves in array against Jehovah God were now cast into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone. They were defeated by Christ and His army!

D. "And the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (19:21).
   1. Christ rules the nations would a rod of iron... he breaks the ungodly with this rod (Ps. 2:12)... he now kills with this sword or rod of iron. All the kings of the earth that allied, fornicated and were seduced by the beast and false prophet were now conquered.
   2. These two shall be cast into the lake of fire (hell), yet not until the final judgment of mankind (Rev. 20:15)
   3. The birds were full. The Lord’s judgments were complete. He was victorious and will ever be. Let every saint gain courage through these words. Let every saint gain confidence to wage effective war in the coming days of this life. Christ will always conquer the dark forces of evil. Make sure your on the winning side!

Concluding thoughts for chapter 19

Those who wear the mark of the beast today should enjoy their short time of worldliness. The day of the Lord comes when Christ shall unleash the wrath of God upon all humanity for all time. Said day will be a vicious day of victory for God and slaughter for the wicked. The crushing blow of the wicked; however, will not last for one day, week, or year. Their misery at the hands of Jehovah God will be eternal in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. God's wrath against their hardness of heart will be mashed upon them for all ages.
Chapter 20

Synopsis:

The unified priority of the godhead has ever been the sanctification of mankind (see Jn. 17:17). The elect of God will separate themselves from sin and the things the world loves (see Eph. 5:3-8). These men and women would "love not their lives even unto death" (Rev. 12:11). The elect are few (see Rev. 3:4; Matt. 7:14; 22:14; Lk. 13:23ff) whereas the spiritually dead number as the sand upon the sea shore (Rev. 20:8). Revelation chapter 20 illustrates the great odds that are against the saints yet even David was able to slay Goliath. The elect of God are able to see through spiritual eyes the true state of spiritual warfare. David once said, "the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you (Goliath - all who set themselves against Jehovah's laws) into our hand" (I Sam. 17:47). Again, the Apostle Paul said, "If God is for us, who is against us?... Nay in all these things we are conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:31-39). Revelation helps us to see, as John, those things the world does not see (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3). The gospel message is a mystery to those who spend little time studying it (see Mark 4:11; Eph. 6:19; I Tim. 3:16). Revelation 20 removes the mystery of the conflict between God and the devil. With a great chain the Lord restrained the workings of the devil (Rev. 20:1). The devil’s work cannot go unchecked (cf. Matt. 12:24ff). The gospel message and the death of Christ on the cross empower every willing soul to wage effective war against the enemy (Satan) (Rom. 1:16; Rev. 19:1ff). The struggle between good and evil (the gospel and worldly lust; i.e., I Jn. 2:15ff) will continue until God determines its end (the time after the 1000 years when Satan is loosed for a "little time" [Rev. 20:3]). The thousand years is a time in which the devil operates in a restrained fashion (not able to touch the true elect and only loosed with unrestrained power in the minds of those who give him place in their lives) (II Tim. 4:1-3; I Jn. 3:8; Rev. 20:3). Though the saint is in the minority victory will be his through faith in Jesus Christ.

I. Satan bound for 1000 years (20:1-3):

A. "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand" (20:1)

1. What a sight this must have been for John in the spirit. John sees an unidentified angel coming down from heaven with a key and a great chain in his hand. Revelation 9:1-3 revealed a fallen star, the devil (Luke 10:18) being "given" the keys (power and authority) over the abyss which was the abode of all demonic forces apposed to God (see comments on 9:1 above).

2. The keys to the abyss no longer belong to the devil. Revelation 20:1 reveals the key to be in the hands of an angel of God.

B. "And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time" (20:2-3).

1. The four descriptive names of the devil used at Revelation 12:9 are once again reiterated. One must note that there is importance in such reiterations just as we indicated the importance of the four different names given to Christ at Revelation 19. The significance of Christ's name is that there is power, fear, and great reverential awe associated with it. Likewise, the four names of Satan carry significance in that he is a force to be reckoned with:

a. Dragon – powerful and ferocious
b. Serpent – cunning and deceiving
c. Devil – accuser and slanderer
d. Satan – the adversary

2. The angel with the chain bound Satan for 1000 years and cast him into the abyss:

a. Peter said, "But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8). The 1000 years is obviously a figurative number representing a time that the Lord prescribes. The devil shall be cast into the abyss and sealed “that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be finished.” This is a time of restraint and not punishment. The devil’s punishment will come in
verse 10. Just because Satan is restrained with a chain; however, does not mean that he does not have any power during this time.

b. It may be well to interject more on the Premillennialist view (see introduction and comments on premillennialism at Revelation notes chapter 7): “Significant differences exist among Premillennialist, but common to them all is the view that the Parousia (coming to be present) will inaugurate a thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints (Rev. 20:4), and that this reign will take place here on earth. The Parousia precedes the reign; hence the name ‘premillenial.’” The idea is that after Christ has established his kingdom on earth and reigned for 1000 years then he would ascend into the heavens with the saints (first resurrection of Rev. 20:5) at which time there will follow seven years of tribulation against the ungodly (see proof text Rev. 7:14; Dan. 9:24-27). After the seven years of tribulation, Christ will come back with his saints (second coming of Christ) to wage the war of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16). Satan will have been loosed and a great battle will be waged. Christ will defeat Satan and cast him into hell. The saints of God will then be resurrected a second time and ever exist in glory with the Lord (Rev. 20:5). There are of course many problems with such ideology: First, the Bible speaks of just one actual bodily resurrection (see Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15) [another symbolic resurrection is found in one’s baptism - see Romans 6:1ff]. Secondly, Christ has already established his kingdom and is reigning as king (see Acts 2; Luke 1:30ff; Col. 1:12-13). Thirdly, the Bible tells us that there will only be one return of Christ to the world (II Thess. 2:8).

3. After 1000 years, the devil is to be “loosed for a little time.” To understand the meaning of Satan being loosed after a thousand years for a "little while" we must take into consideration the context of this book. Symbolism through numbers has been repeatedly used throughout the study. It is safe to say that it is not a literal 1000 years under consideration any more than the time, and times, and a half time (or the 1260 days) were literal at Revelation 12:6, 14). Let us remember two important issues at hand:

a. Chapter 11:2 revealed that the “holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.” Hebrews 12:22-25 revealed the “holy city” to be the church. For an indefinite time the church was to be persecuted by the ungodly. During this same time period, the Lord’s faithful witness proclaimed the word of God (Rev. 11:3) and all were given the opportunity to repent (see Rev. 9:20). This would not be the only time through history that the church was to be persecuted by Satan's forces (see this chapter: 20:7-9).

b. Secondly, Revelation 17 spoke of kingdoms that had of yet not reigned in terror yet their coming is sure. They to would receive authority and power through the beast that was and was not and will come again (see Rev. 17:9ff). The battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16) and the war with God and Magog (Rev. 20:7ff) are examples of the current and future struggles the saints will have with Satan. The meaning of the thousand years that Satan is bound and then loosed for a little while must take the above context into consideration. Let us continue to unfold this mystery.

II. Identity of the Elect and Spiritually Dead who fight Satan’s Battles (20:4-9):

A. “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (20:4).

1. The antecedent of the plural pronoun “them” would be the souls of the beheaded and they who worshipped not the beast nor received his mark on their head and hand (cf. Rev. 13:16-19).

2. The long wait for those souls under the altar was coming to an end (Rev. 6:11). The dragon had been restrained and would soon be eternally punished.

3. While Satan is bound with chains for 1000 years the faithful reign with Christ for 1000 years (a complete time as judged by Jehovah God). The 1000 year restraint of Satan coincides with the 1000 year reign of Christ and his saints.

13 Morris, L. ISBE; Vol. 3, pg. 667
4. Note that as the saint reigns with Christ they are recognized as alive.

B. "The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection" (20:5).
   1. In contrast to those that had died yet now live are those who are dead and never have "lived."
   2. The "resurrection" of Revelation 20:5 is not a bodily resurrection as mentioned in I Cor. 15, but a symbolic resurrection representing victory over sin and death. Those souls under the altar who awaited the Lord’s vengeance upon Rome and for those who never received the mark of the beast yet kept pressing forward are identified as alive rather than dead.
   3. The "rest of the dead" then would be those who did love their lives and were unwilling to remain committed unto the Lord (those who wore the mark of the beast and drank Rome's wine). Such individuals have no victory nor triumph in Jesus and, therefore, were not depicted as those who were resurrected from spiritual death and reigning with Christ (i.e., the spiritually alive / cf. Dan. 12:2; Rom. 5:17; 6:1ff; Rev. 5:10).

C. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (20:6).
   1. Here is the fifth of seven blessed statements mentioned in Revelation. Herein do we find the theme of Revelation repeated. The "blessed" are those recognized as the elect of God who love not their lives unto death (see study #16)! The other blessed statements are:
      a. Blessed are those who read, hear, and obey (Rev. 1:3).
      b. Blessed are those who die in the Lord (i.e., remain faithful till death - see Rev. 2:10) (Rev. 14:13).
      c. Blessed are those who watch and keep one's self from sin (i.e., do not fellowship sin - see Rev. 18:4) (Rev. 16:15).
      d. Blessed are those who answer the call of the gospel and attend the Lord's wedding feast (Rev. 19:9).
      e. Blessed are those who take part in the first resurrection (i.e., raised with Christ in baptism and alive spiritually - up from being dead spiritually) (Rev. 20:6 / Rom. 6:1ff).
      f. Blessed is he that keeps the words of the prophesy of this book (Rev. 22:7)
      g. Blessed are those who wash their robes (Rev. 22:13).
   2. Those who reign with Christ for 1000 years are those who were holy and without blemish, those who have had their sins removed by the blood of Jesus and continued in faithfulness throughout their lives. These people are spiritually alive as opposed to spiritually dead (see Eph. 2:1ff).
   3. The "second death" has absolutely no power over these individuals.
      a. Remember that in Revelation 2:11, John recorded, "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
      b. Revelation 20:14 states that the second death was the eternal existence in hell.
   4. These reigning saints shall be priest of God and of Christ:
      a. John had earlier said of the saints of God that they shall be "a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father" (Rev. 1:6).
      b. The saints (priest) would reign upon the earth with Christ (see Rev. 5:10).
      c. Peter referred to saints as a holy and royal priesthood that were to offer spiritual sacrifices unto God (I Pet. 2:5, 9).
   5. The "first resurrection" is obviously the resurrection that occurs when one is baptized for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:1ff).

D. "And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (20:7-8).
   1. It seems apparent that the 1000 years are used symbolically to illustrate the generational faith of those who loved not their lives even unto death (see Rev. 12:11). Such faith in Jesus and the contrite disposition to ask forgiveness of sins was an actual restraining of Satan. When such faith wavers, Satan is loosed to work deception among the minds of the worldly. The devil's primary
tool is that of deception as from the beginning in the garden incident (Gen. 3:1-5). The 1000 years of Satan's restraint and little time of being loosed thereby represent generational issues with Satan.  

2. The war with "Gog and Magog" is similar to Har-Magedon (see Rev. 16:14-16). Har-Magedon ended in the defeat of the beast out of the sea and out of the earth (Rome and false religion; cf. Rev. 19:19-21). Similar spiritual wars shall rage until the end of time (see I Tim. 4:1-3). Satan no longer works through one empire but through the “four corners of the earth.”

3. Gog and Magog are introduced as figuratively representing the ungodly forces of the devil. Ezekiel spoke of this in chapters 38-39.

   a. Gog is identified as the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. Magog is “named as a son (or descendant) of Japheth in a list that includes Gomer, Tubal, and Meshech (Gen. 10:21; I Chr. 1:5). In Ezekiel’s prophecy Magog is the kingdom of Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal (Ezek. 38:2; 39:6) and an invader of Israel. Josephus identified the Magogites with the Scythians, who were a sinister military power in the 6th cent. BCC. (Ant. i.6.1[123]).”

   b. Jehovah, through the prophet Ezekiel, pronounces that He is against Gog and his armies. The Lord will gather together Gog with his allies from the four corners of the world (i.e., Persia [east], Ethiopia [south], Put [west], Magog, Gomer, and Togarmah [north]). Like a storm, Gog will come up against Israel in the “latter years” (Ezek. 38:16).

   c. Verses 17 is the key to understanding Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. Ezekiel writes, "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Art thou of whom I spake in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, that prophesied in those days for many years that I would bring thee against them?"

   d. The battle under consideration is spiritual and so John is shown, while in the spirit, this same illustration here at Revelation 20:7-9. The “latter days” of Ezekiel not only encompass the Messianic era but the future church as well. God’s people will always be assaulted by wicked men who have their hour (cf. Rev. 11:2; 17:12-14).

   e. Ezekiel 39 depicts the colossal size of Gog’s army in that Israel would burn their weapons for firewood for seven months and it would take seven months to bury all their dead from the battle. Furthermore the dead of the battle will be viewed as a sacrifice that God offers for every single bird and beast to come feast upon the dead bodies flesh and blood until they can eat no more. All of this language is reminiscent of the wine of God’s wrath that will be poured out upon the ungodly in judgment mentioned at Revelation 14:10-20; 19:11-21. Let the saint see that there is always, in every generation, victory through Christ and defeat through worldly living.

   f. Satan will, therefore, be loosed. He will gather his hordes against the people of God; however, the Lord shall defeat him and all will surely know that Jehovah, He is God!

4. “And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them” (20:9).
   a. Interestingly, the word “camp” was used in Acts 21:34 to refer to the barracks or headquarters, so that the meaning is the army of Jehovah (the saints of God).
   b. The “beloved city” is the church (Heb. 12:22).
   c. The saints of God and the church are the continued object of the devil’s wrath no matter what time period we are examining (cf. Rev. 12:17).
   d. It seems apparent, therefore, that the hordes (Gog’s army of Magog) represent every evil force at the disposal of the devil to accomplish his objective of destroying the saints of God and His church and likened unto Rome in every generation (1000 years and then loosed) (cf. I Jn. 2:15-18). As the sand upon the seashore, the forces of the devil work upon the saints of God in the form of lust, glory, riches, and false teaching (see I Tim. 4:1ff).
   e. As with the promise made to the faithful during the days of the Roman Empire, so the promise remains today. There is victory through Jesus Christ; He will always prevail, and so the faithful child of God shall always prevail. As David said, “the battle is Jehovah’s, and he will give you (false teachers, lust, glory, and worldliness in general) into our hand” (I Sam. 17:47). Every saint must be armed with the confidence in Christ else one will give in to the seductive Kool-aid of worldliness.
   f. Let the saint see that Gog and Magog's numbers illustrates the great contrast of saint to sinner. The true elect saints are few and the sinners are great in number. Though the odds are seriously against the saint he nonetheless will always be victorious because Jehovah God is on their side. We must, therefore, never ever give in to the seductive vices of this world!

III. The final Judgment of Satan and all of Mankind (20:10-15):
A. “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (20:10).
   1. The devil finally meets his demise. He is committed to eternal torment with those who sympathized with his devises, worked his cause, and received the mark of the beast in the form of living and lusting after the things of this world.
   2. The word “torment” is “basanizo” = “to vex with grievous pains, to torment” (Thayer 96). The same word was used of the torment of a scorpion striking a man and causing grievous pain in Rev. 9:5. This torment is an everlasting torment just as eternity for the righteous will be eternal bliss (cf. Matt. 25:41-46). The Greek word for "eternal" as used in Matthew 25:46 is "haionion" = "indeterminate as to duration, eternal [having a beginning but without interruption or end... unaffected by time; timeless... infinite, endless period of time], everlasting" (Moulton 11). Though some may believe the torment at judgment will be short and then the wicked cease to exist the Holy Spirit obviously states otherwise. Torment for the wicked shall be for ever and ever.
   3. When the seventh bowl of God’s wrath was outpoured upon the ungodly, “every island fled away, and the mountains were not found” (16:20). Even so, now at the presence of Jesus, “the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place for them.” As noted from the four names of Christ at Revelation 19 now we see once again the fearfulness and the great respect and reverence that come with the name of Jesus Christ.
   a. The author of Hebrews quoted from Psalms 102:25-27, saying that the foundations of the earth and the heavens God made and shall pass away, but not so with Jehovah (cf. Heb. 1:11).
   b. The apostle Peter said, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Pet. 3:10).
e. John actually saw this taking place as though it were occurring before his very eyes. Of a surety, Jehovah God will perform this act and ALL will then know that Jehovah, He is God! He who declares the end from the beginning will be denounced by no one at that awful yet glorious day (cf. Isa. 46:9-10).

C. “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works” (20:12).

1. In order for the dead to be standing before the throne, there must be a resurrection of all humans from Adam to the end of time (Jn. 5:28; Acts 24:15).

2. “Books” plural were opened which seem to contain the deeds of humanity (cf. Dan. 7:10). The “book of life” has been previously mentioned in this study (cf. Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 21:27). This book contains the names of the faithful Christians who endure to the end of life the onslaught of Gog and Magog (cf. Rev. 12:11; Col. 1:23). The elect of God who overcome worldliness will have their names written in this glorious book. Therefore, this is not a judgment of the wicked only but of all humanity (cf. Matt. 25:46; Acts 24:15; II Cor. 5:10). Notice it is the “works” that individuals will be judged by (cf. Jn. 12:48).

D. “And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works” (20:13).

1. The judgment picture is clearly seen here as occurring to the masses of humanity represented by the sea (cf. Rev. 13:1).

2. Notice that death and Hades were mentioned as two distinct sources of man after death. Death claims the physical body (cf. James 2:26) and Hades claims the soul of the dead (Acts 2:27). I Cor. 15:52ff; I Thess. 4:13ff; I Jn. 3:1-3 clearly teach that the body separated from the soul at death will be reunited (resurrection - second resurrection of the justified). Both just and unjust will arise, be judged and go to their eternal abode.

3. That which determines the final abode is “their works” (cf. Eccl. 12:14) (see study # 24; The Final Judgment of Man).

E. “And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire” (20:14-15).

1. Paul said that at the end of times death would finally be destroyed (cf. I Cor. 15:26). Hades is mentioned with death probably because of the close association. The two were mentioned together at Revelation 6:8.

2. The place of torment is then the “second death, even the lake of fire.” Jesus spoke of fire and torment for the disobedient in Matthew 25:41ff, and here John saw a vision of a lake of fire burning and tormenting the resurrected souls of those who rejected the authority of Jehovah God while among the living.

3. Any names not found in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire for eternal torment with the devil and his host throughout eternity.

Concluding Thoughts

Saints who “die in the Lord” (Rev. 14:13) are those who overcome, never giving in to “seasons of sin” (Heb. 11:24-26). The victorious saint is indeed blessed (see Rev. 20:6 etc.). The devil has at his disposal Gog and Magog (the masses of ungodly the world over) throughout each generation. Such that number as the sand of the sea leave the sanctified Christian appearing to be in the minority, out numbered, and with little hope of victory. As intimidating as the numbers may appear Jehovah God will provide the victory for all who call upon His most Holy name. The Lord will cast Satan into the lake of fire and his reign of terror shall be over for good (Rev. 20:10). The judgment seat of Christ shall appear, and all shall be judged according to their works (II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-12). The just and the unjust shall be raised (Jn. 5:28; Acts 24:15). The earth and the heavens shall be destroyed (Psalms 102:25-27; Heb. 1:11; II Pet. 3:7-10; Rev. 20:11; 21:1). Death and Hades will give up their dead, and all will be judged (Rev. 20:13-15) (Death and Hades go together; cf. Rev. 6:8). The righteous shall ascend into the heavens ever to be with the Lord (I Thess. 4:16-17). The unrighteous shall be cast into the lake of fire with the devil and his followers (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:15). Death and Hades will now be cast into the lake of fire because they are no longer
needed (I Cor. 15:20-28; Rev. 20:14). Finally, the saints of God shall enter into the gates of heaven. While chapter 20 depicts the horrors of hell with its eternal torments chapters twenty-one and twenty-two paint a vivid picture of the glories of heaven.

Chapter 21
Prelude

The 1901 American Standard Bible has as its subtitle for Revelation 21, "The Consummation." The idea of fulfillment and completion is depicted in the revelation of heaven's identity. The Apostle John sees far into the future. John sees a day when all humanity is raised, judged, and sent to their eternal abode. Satan and his demonic forces have been cast into hell. All that the saints had been promised and ever hoped for now comes to pass. At the point of the consummation the saints may finally have their promised rest (Heb. 4:1). The horrid battles against worldliness and false teaching will be over for ever. Satan's reign of terror ends. The saints shall now reign forever and eternally dwell in the presence of Jehovah God.

I. The new supercedes the old (21:1-8):
A. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more” (21:1).
   1. At the passing of the first created heavens and earth there will be “a new heaven and a new earth.” This new heaven and earth will be clean and undefiled for the permanent dwelling place of those who have overcome the wiles of the devil during their lifetime (cf. II Pet. 3:10-13).
   2. The sea has been symbolic of the masses of humanity (Isa. 57:20; 13:1; 20:13). The masses have now been judged and are no more.
B. “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband” (21:2).
   1. As this present order has its “holy city, new Jerusalem” (the church; cf. Heb. 12:22) even so the new order shall have its “holy city, new Jerusalem” that was longed for (Heb. 13:14).
   2. This new Jerusalem (church or assembly of saints judged righteous) is now presented to the Lord as a perfect bride with no blemishes of sin (cf. Eph. 5:25-27).
C. “And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God;” (21:3):
   1. The word tabernacle means “dwelling place.” When the new Jerusalem appears, the Lord shall dwell with his people. They shall “see his face” (cf. Rev. 22:4; I Jn. 3:2).
   2. For the first time in the history of mankind the saints shall see the Lord’s face (cf. Jn. 1:18). Eternal fellowship is now established with those who loved not their lives unto death!
D. “And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away” (21:4).
   1. With the destruction of the first heaven and earth so all that caused anguish is now eliminated. The devil and sin are done away with so that sorrows no longer exist. Death and Hades have been cast into the lake of fire.
   2. Pain, crying and death are all, therefore, done away with. The beauty of heaven is the absence of Satan. The horrors of hell is the absence of God. Satan had ruined the lives of many and tried desperately to ruin the lives of the saints but he has failed and will never touch the faithful with sorrow, pain, hunger, and heartaches again.
E. “And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true” (21:5):
   1. “He that sitteth on the throne” has been identified as Jesus and or God (cf. Rev. 3:21; 20:11).
   2. The new replaces the old. The old was subject to corruption, death and sin. The new is immune from death, corruption and sin because they have all been throne into the lake of fire and are no longer a factor in the reigning bride of Christ (Rev. 20:13-15).
3. God is a God of justice and righteousness and lies not (cf. Jer. 9:23).

F. “And he said unto me, they are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (21:6).

1. From the beginning of God’s scheme of redemption to the end God has achieved his purpose among mankind (Gen. 3:15; 12:1ff; Gal. 3:8, 16; Eph. 3:10ff).
2. As in the past (Isa. 12:3; 55:1) and present (Jn. 4:10ff; 7:37-38) rivers of living water represent the abundant salvation offered in the Lord. The new order, after the consummation, will also have rivers of living waters representing man's eternal salvation (see Rev. 22:1).
3. All who, throughout their lives, hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled (see Matt. 5:6).

G. “He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (21:7).

1. The word "overcome" (nikao) is “come off victorious: of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes, and their temptations and persecutions” (Thayer 426).
2. In the beginning of this study, we said that the word overcome is used seventeen times in Revelation (cf. Rev. 12:11 etc.). The victorious saint shall inherit the new heavens, earth and Jerusalem. Herein is everlasting life (cf. Matt. 19:29; 25:34). True sons of God, the elect, those who loved not their lives unto death shall inherit God's eternal promised blessings (cf. Eph. 1:13-14; Gal. 3:26). This is the message of the book of Revelation! Those who live faithfully until death will be crowned with eternal glory (Rev. 2:10).

H. “But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death” (21:8).

1. In contrast to those who overcome in this world of sin are those who do not. John divides the worldly into eight parts:
   a. The “fearful” (delios) “of Christians who through cowardice give way under persecutions and apostatize” (Thayer 1169). The fearful give up. The fearful do not endure until the end. The fearful go the paths of life that have the least resistance.
   b. The “unbelieving” (apistos) “unfaithful, faithless” (Thayer 57). “Violating one’s faith, unfaithful, false, treacherous, Luke 12:46” (Moulton 39). If the "believing" represent the obedient (Jn. 3:36; Heb. 11:1ff) then the "unbelieving" certainly would represent the disobedient (see Acts 14:1-2).
   d. “Murderers and fornicators” shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (see I Cor. 6:9ff).
   e. "Sorcerers and idolaters" are those who conduct themselves without the authority of Christ (see II Cor. 5:7; I Jn. 5:21).
   f. Lastly, John tells us that "all liars" will be cast into the lake of fire that burns for ever (i.e., the second death). A "liar" is one who does not represent the truth. The liar represents a spirit of antichrist in that his words oppose the true divine revelation of Jesus Christ (see I Jn. 2:21-23).
2. These shall all experience the “second death” which involves being cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone and shall last on into eternity (cf. Rev. 20:9-10, 14).

II. The church in heaven (i.e., the new Jerusalem) (21:9-21):

A. “And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb” (21:9).

1. Revelation 15:1 revealed seven angels with seven bowls of God’s wrath. One of the angels (Rev. 17:1) said to John, “Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters.” It seems likely that the same angel that spoke to John in 17:1 is speaking to him now (one of the seven angels with the seven plagues of chapters 15-17).
2. Herein is a great contrast. On one hand is the harlot (Rome; seduction and worldliness); on the other is “the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” This bride is “the holy city Jerusalem” found atop a mountain of great height (Rev. 21:10).
   a. Ezekiel was shown a holy city atop a great mountain as well (Ez. 40:2).
   b. The holy city, new Jerusalem, the bride and wife of the Lamb has already been identified as the perfect church in heaven (cf. Heb. 12:22-23).

B. “And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal;” (21:10-11).
   1. The heavenly church of God’s redeemed will have the glory of God fill it with His light (cf. Jn. 3:33; I Jn. 1:5, 4:8).
   2. Figurative language describing the beauty and purity of such a city that is filled with holy and unblemished people.

C. “having a wall great and high; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel” (21:12).
   1. The wall again is a figurative idea. Isaiah spoke of the figurative walls around the church as representing salvation and the gates praise (Isa. 60:18).
   2. Some believe that the twelve tribes of Israel represent the redeemed of the OT time period (cf. Rev. 21:14 below).

D. “on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates” (21:13).
   1. Neither the gates nor walls of the city can represent protection due to the fact that the devil and all those who sympathize with him have been thrown into the lake of fire at this point (cf. Rev. 20:10ff).
   2. Ezekiel’s city had four sets of three gates as well (Ez. 48:30ff).
   3. Again, Isaiah spoke of the cities walls having gates of “praise” (60:18).

E. “And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (21:14).
   1. If the twelve tribes of Israel represent the redeemed in the OT times then it is possible that the twelve apostles would represent the redeemed of the NT era.
   2. The apostles laid the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20) and preached the terms of admission into the church (Col. 1:23).

F. “And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs; the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal” (21:15-16).
   1. The word “foursquare” (tetragonos) = “a square with four equal angles; metaph. Square, i.e., perfect” (LS 802). “Shaped like a cube of a tremendous rock” (AG 813).
   2. If one furlong equals 1/8 of a mile, the city was 1,500 miles in each direction, making an enormous perfect cube.
   3. Interestingly, the most holy place in Solomon’s temple was a perfect cube (cf. I Kings 6:14-20). Ezekiel also foretold of this perfect foursquare city to come (see last 12 chapters of Ezekiel).

G. “And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angle” (21:17).
   1. This may very well be the thickness of the wall measured.
   2. 144 cubits (multiples of 12) = 218 feet.

H. "And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. Teh first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; teh eleventh, jascinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (21:18-21).
1. Verse 18-21 describes in figurative language the spender and beauty of heaven:
   a. Walls comprised of jasper.
   b. City made of gold.
   c. The twelve foundations of the wall adorned with “all manner of precious stones” (21:19ff).
   d. Twelve gates of pearl (21:21).
   e. Streets of the city made of pure gold (21:21b).

2. One may be confused as to why all the costly and luxurious ornaments of heaven. Let us recall that the Apostle Peter explains to the saints of the dispersion that their long awaited glorious reward and exaltation was not to take place now but after they had lived their allotted time and judged worthy to receive such glory (see I Pet. 5:4-6). Now is not the saints time for glory and luxury; however, there comes a day in the future when this exaltation will be appropriate (see study # 25; The Glorious Saint in Heaven).

III. The city’s interior (21:22-27):
A. “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof” (21:22).
   1. The promise of Rev. 3:12 is now fulfilled.
   2. The temple or sanctuary is God and the Lamb and represent eternal fellowship with those who overcome.
   3. As there is no need for a temple, there is also no need for light, because the glory of God provides the light (Rev. 22:23).
B. “And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it:” (21:24-26).
   1. All glory and honor belongs to God and is shared with no other kingdom.
   2. The gates are continuously opened for all enemies are gone.
C. “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (21:27).
   1. To be unclean is to be defiled. The word defiled means “To stain, sully, to defile, contaminate morally, pollution” (Moulton 272).
   2. Sin defiles and the blood of Christ cleanses. Those defiled by sin through ignorance or hardhearted un-repentance will not be in the holy city.
   3. Heaven will be for those who overcome and have their name written in the book of life.

Concluding Thoughts

John fearfully sees the dividing line between those who overcome and those who lived in fear and without the authority of Jesus Christ. The saint shall rest forever in a glorious and exalted state; however, sinners shall continue a magnified life of torturous eternal fire. The beauty of heaven, the city foursquare, is depicted as precious while hell will be horrifying. Those who miss out on heaven will go down in history as the greatest of fools.

Chapter 22

Prelude

The book of Revelation ends with a chapter that illustrates the quickness of the prophecies that have been delivered coming to pass. The nearness of the Lord Jesus coming back to this earth to judge and claim his saints is mentioned five times (see Rev. 22:6, 7, 10, 12, and 20). The glorious home of the exalted saint and the horrendous eternal abode of the wicked will come quickly and when we least expect it (see Matt. 24:36-44; I Cor. 15:52).

I. The river of life, the tree of life and Elimination of the curse (22:1-5):
A. “And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,” (22:1).
1. In chapter 21:6 the Lord proclaimed that fountains of waters of life freely belong to the one who desires and seeks after it.
2. This water was mentioned by the prophet Isaiah (55:1) and referred to as the well of salvation (Isa. 12:3).
3. When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, He referred to this glorious fountain of water (salvation) (Jn. 4:10-14).
4. This glorious fountain of living water represents salvation and has a direct correlation to the word of God because it gives man a holy union of fellowship with the Father and eternal sustenance (cf. Jn. 17).

B. “In the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (22:2).
1. The phrase “tree of life” is found in Gen. 2:9 and then again in Gen. 3:22. This was the tree in the midst of the garden of Eden that if a man ate he would live for ever.
2. Jesus had promised in Revelation 2:7 that all who would overcome in this life shall partake of the tree of life in paradise. This promise was now fulfilled!
3. The Greek word for “tree” is “xulon” and means “that which is made of wood, as a beam from which any one is suspended, a gibbet, a cross, Acts 5:30, 10:39; 13:29; Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 2:24.”
   a. It seems apparent that the symbolism here depicts eternal life found in the cross; i.e., the tree.
   b. The blood of Jesus was spilled on that tree for the salvation of man (Matt. 26:28).

C. “And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him” (22:3):
1. The curse of the law was nailed to the cross (tree) (Gal. 3:10-13; Col. 2:14).
2. “What the old rugged cross bought for us is now attained” (Lenski 653).

D. "and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (22:4-5).
1. Salvation is now attained and shall last “for ever and ever” (eternally).
2. That day will the saints “see him even as he is” (I Jn. 3:2). The glory of God shall fill heaven with His glory and thereby there is no need for the sun (cf. Rev. 21:23).

II. Two or more witnesses verify Truth (22:6-9):
A. "And he said unto me, these words are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass" (22:6).
1. Paul told the Corinthian brethren, “At the mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be established” (II Cor. 13:1). Witnesses verify a matter as being factual. The witnesses are now in place that those who read the book of Revelation may know its validity. The first witness mentioned is the Lord (Rev. 22:6) and Jesus (Rev. 22:16) who sent His angel (second witness) to testify of these truths (Rev. 22:8). The third witness is John (Rev. 22:8).
2. Note that the promises of Revelation for those who overcome is depicted as "shortly coming to pass." This phrase is repeated at Revelation 22:7, 12 and again at verse 20. The importance in these verses is that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years (see II Pet. 3:8). The Lord may come today... be ready because His promises are true!

B. "And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" (22:7).
1. The second coming of Jesus, the consummation, and Lord's judgment of the earth is depicted as occurring quickly. One must detect both the warning and hope signified in such a statement.
2. The sixth of seven "blessed" statements is now recorded. The obvious theme of Revelation is once again addressed (i.e., the victor in this life will overcome all Satan's efforts to ruin him by false teaching and worldliness) (see notes at Rev. 20:6).

C. "And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God” (22:8-9).
1. John had earlier worshipped the angel and was told not to do so (cf. Rev. 19:10).
2. Note that which identifies one as a "fellow-servant and brethren" is that they "keep the words of this book." The "blessed" keep the words of "this book." The blessed are:
   a. Those who read, hear, and obey (Rev. 1:3).
   b. Those who die in the Lord (i.e., remain faithful till death - see Rev. 2:10; 14:13).
   c. Those who watch and keep one's self from sin (i.e., do not fellowship sin - see Rev. 18:4) (Rev. 16:15).
   d. Those who answer the call of the gospel and attend the Lord's wedding feast (Rev. 19:9).
   e. Those who take part in the first resurrection (i.e., raised with Christ in baptism and alive spiritually - up from being dead spiritually) (Rev. 20:6 / Rom. 6:1ff).
   f. Those that keep the words of the prophesy of this book through obedience (Rev. 22:7)
   g. Those who wash their robes (Rev. 22:13).

3. The words of "this book" seem to be an allusion not directly to the word of God but rather to following the instructions to overcome Satan which will be done as one strictly adheres to the word of God no matter what occurs in this life. "This book" then would not be the totality of the gospel message but rather the command to overcome through the gospel message. The message of "this book" (i.e., the Revelation given to John) is to overcome Satan (which one may argue is the message of the entire gospel and thereby the message of "this book").

III. The judgment day is coming soon (22:10-21):
   A. “And he said unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand” (22:10).
      1. The angel’s admonition to John is that he would not keep this revelation a secret (sealed up) but that he would boldly proclaim it to all who would hear (cf. Rev. 10:4). People must obey and remain faithful to the Lord throughout their lives (i.e., be victorious over Satan).
      2. By these words men would gain hope and encouragement during the battles of life presented by Satan.
   B. “He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still” (22:11).
      1. The “filthy” (morally unrighteous) are set in contrast with the righteous and clean. The word “still” is a present tense verb that indicates ongoing action. The angel tells John that the unfaithful will remain this way through the hardness of hearts and be reserved for the day of judgment.
      2. Humanity is divided up into two sections (Jn. 3:18-19):
         a. The righteous: i.e., those who hate sin (Rom. 12:9), regret sin (Acts 2:37); sorrow over sin (II Cor. 7:9ff), ashamed of sin (Jer. 6:15), and are willing to repent of sins (I Jn. 1:8; 3:3).
         b. The unrighteous (filthy) are those who “love the glory of men more than the glory of God” (Jn. 12:43). The unrighteous have given themselves over to worldliness and false teaching (I Tim. 4:1ff). The unrighteous have problems with authority and authoritative figures.
      3. The point is that each will continue in their interest. The unrighteous will wax worse and worse (II Tim. 3:13) and the righteous will give diligence in life (II Pet. 1:10ff).
   C. “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is” (22:12).
      1. Personal responsibility is now made concrete. All will stand before the judgment seat and be judged by the word of God based on what YOU did in this life (cf. Rev. 20:12).
      2. The reward the Lord brings is either salvation or damnation (cf. Rom. 6:23).
   D. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city” (22:13-14).
      1. The Lord is the "Alpha and Omega." The Lord God Almighty began all things as man knows and He shall be the end of all things that man knows. Jehovah is the creator and sustainer of all man's existence now and forevermore. Seeing that God is the Alpha and Omega man ought to give careful ear to His instructions.
      2. “Blessed” (happy are they) (cf. Ps. 1:1) that receive the reward of salvation. These shall enter into the pearly gates of the city (see Rev. 21:21). The blessed have "washed their robes" (a symbolic
act of cleansing the soul through the act of obedience and baptism). Condemned are they that receive the reward that is the consequences of the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23).

3. The words “may have” (esomai) (22:14) is conjugated third person future tense which indicates that the blessing of the tree of life has not yet been obtained.

E. “Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone that loves and makes a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star” (22:15-16).

1. Jesus and His angel testifies of the truth of the matter of judgment. Jesus is the “offspring of David, the bright, the morning star” (22:16) (II Sam. 7:12; Lk. 1:30).

2. Those that do not enter into the pearl gates of heaven are recognized as being "without." Those outside heaven are in the lake of fire and identified equally at Revelation 21:8. The unrighteous who rejected God's authorized words, gave in to worldliness and or false teaching are identified by the Holy Spirit as dogs, sorcerers, fornicators, murderers, idolaters, and all who love and make lies.

F. “And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And he that hears, let him say, come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely” (22:17).

1. The final words of the book of Revelation read as an invitation. God calls upon man to come into the gates of pearls and partake of the eternal waters of salvation.

2. All are invited yet few will accept and follow through with all that is involved in overcoming in this life (see II Thess. 2:13-14).

G. "I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book. He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen.” (22:17-21).

1. Revelation ends with a solemn warning against those who would alter His instructions. Moses (Deut. 4:2) and Paul (Gal. 1:6-9) gave similar warnings in relation to adding or subtracting from divine revelation. Man is not at liberty to alter or change God's divine instructions. God's instructions are designed to fabricate a justified man of hope. When man alters God's instructions the result is not a justified man of hope but a fabrication of man's own devices. Added doctrines are truly doctrines of demons (see I Tim. 4:1ff) and subtracted ideas only try to lesson the horrors of hell. God has said it as He deemed sufficient. Who is man to change what the Alpha and Omega had announced? The Lord certainly "comes quickly." How will you and I be found when he comes?

2. Can we all say, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus?" Such a statement indicates a readied soul who has waged war against Satan and is faithfully ready for the eternal rest that God promises. Too many today love this present world too much to say "Amen: come, Lord Jesus." Where do you and I stand?

3. The Apostle John closes with the words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen." God's grace will be that which saves the obedient on into eternity. John's prayers is that the Lord's saints would never give up but rather be victorious through the blood of Christ. We can do it with God's help.

Conclusion

The reoccurring theme of the book of Revelation is that those who overcome Satan's onslaught of worldliness and false teaching shall be eternally exalted in glory. John's final words in this book hammer the point home. John sees the glorious river of life and streets of gold (Rev. 22:1ff). The "blessed" will ever partake in this exalted and glorious place (Rev. 22:7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14). The book ends with both a warning an invitation to all. Let us all partake of the waters of eternal salvation for ever more!