

“INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION “

The book of Revelation is a book of hope. It's a book of encouragement. Sometimes people read the book and become frightened at the various figures that are used and the terror sometimes presented therein. But, for the Christian, it is a book of encouragement and assurance that under Jesus Christ he can be victorious. The word Revelation comes from a Greek word, which means to “unveil or uncover”. Therefore, the book of Revelation opens with (Rev.1:1) “THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST”, and it is the unveiling or uncovering of Jesus Christ in his present glory. It is an unveiling or uncovering of that glory, and of the victory and triumph he achieved, and which we will achieve in and through him.

(Rev.1:1-3) – The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto 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 the Testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things that are written therein; for the time is at hand.

The word “signified” simply means to sign-ify. Hence by signs and symbols God made known the present glory of Jesus Christ, and of his victory, and that of his followers. Revelation is the book of signs and symbols. These are sometimes difficult to understand, and yet I think an understanding of the Old Testament, the use of symbols used in the Old Testament will help an individual with the signs and symbols and which is needed to understand Revelation. Then you notice, John bear witness to the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy”. I believe the word, (readeth) here is pointing to the one who would read this in the churches. In that day, when they had very few copies of the scriptures, they would have a reader of the scriptures. The hearers of the words would be the general audience of the people who had the words read to them. It is spoken of as a prophecy. The word prophecy does not necessarily indicate something future. We have developed a mistaken concept of the word prophet. We think of a prophet as one who foretells and prophecy as something that deals with the future. It is not necessarily true. The word prophet means “a mouth” (one who speaks for another). So a prophet is more of a forth-teller than he is a fore-teller. Notice (Ex.4:14-16, Ex.7:1) for the definition of a prophet. A prophet then uses his mouth to speak for God in this case. The prophet of God who speaks the words of God is his Son Jesus Christ (Deut.18:15-18). The prophets could speak of the past, present, and future. Moses was God's prophet and he told us of the beginning. He also spoke of the present, and too, he also spoke of the future.

Now, when we consider the book of Revelation, here are some principles we should follow in order to derive at the truth therein. (1) WHAT DID THE BOOK MEAN TO THE PEOPLE OF THAT DAY? It must have had some meaning to them. Hence we shall seek to be able to understand this book in the light of “what it meant to the people of that day”. Now that would raise the question, what was the condition of the people? What was the need of these people? That would also raise the question of the date Revelation was written. Now most of the

books in the New Testament are not important as to when they were written. We need not spend lots of time on the dates of most of the New Testament books defending certain dates. But the book of Revelation is different. In order to understand the book correctly we must determine the date which it was recorded by John. Usually defended dates are in two categories. Some defend the date between 60-70 AD, before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus of Rome. This would be in the days of Nero, emperor of Rome, at that time. Nero was persecuting the church, the church in and around Rome. It was a severe persecution, but not as widespread as the persecution under Domitian.

The second defended date would be about from 96-98 AD this would be during the reign of Domitian whose persecution of the church was “empire wide”. It even extended over into Asia-minor as the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Revelation indicate. It was this Roman emperor who forced the worship of his image upon the Christians in the empire territory. We believe the latter date to be correct. One reason is that in (Rev. 17:18) Rome is being described as the MOTHER OF HARLOTS (v.5), which reigneth over the kings of the earth. As Babylon once controlled the known world, so at this particular time in history Rome ruled the world. We believe the latter date to be in accord with the evidence presented in the book as to date it was written. With these thoughts in mind we will study Revelation in accordance with the date of 96-98 AD, when Domitian was emperor of Rome and binding his image worship in the various cities of throughout the empire. Thus (1) what did the book mean to the people of that day, (2) HOW SHALL WE UNDERSTAND THE BOOK IN THE LIGHT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS? This is very important. Anyone who teaches or studies Revelation should have a great insight into the teaching of the prophets of the Old Testament. There are in Revelation some 400 or more allusions to the Old Testament, but not one single direct quotation. (THERE ARE ONLY 404 verses in the book of Revelation. So it is a must to know something about the Old Testament in order to understand this great book. I will be able to grasp a correct understanding therefore, if I study the prophets as I go through this book. There is an abundance of uses of FIGURES, SIGNS, SYMBOLS, COLORS, and NUMBERS, which are important to comprehend. (3) We must understand the book of Revelation in the light of the New Testament scriptures. Nothing in Revelation is contradictory to neither the New Testament nor the Old Testament. We should have a good and accurate understanding of the New Testament, and to never take a position on Revelation that is inconsistent with the plain, clear teachings of the rest of the New Testament. So we will be following these three principles to understand Revelation.

There are five theories of interpretation and understanding of Revelation:

- (1) FUTURISTS – They view the first three chapters as fulfilled already, and chapters 4-19 as being future. They will be fulfilled just before the Second Coming of the Christ. Then in chapter 20:1-10 the (millennial reign of Christ on earth) 1000 years and then the loosing of Satan (the millennial ends in failure) Chapter 20:11-15 the judgment, then the final state. We reject this theory for it is contradictory to all of the teachings of the Old Testament prophets concerning Christ’s reign as King (1Cor 15:24). Christ is not coming to set up a kingdom, rather to deliver the Kingdom to God.

- (2) PRETERISTS – They say the book was written for the people of John’s day, and fulfilled in the events of the first century, and has little or no value to us today. This could not be so; else God would not have given it unto us by his providence. It is declared by God that “all scripture inspired of God is profitable for doctrine, etc. (2Tim 3:16-17). Most of Revelation was fulfilled in John’s day, but this book has great meaning to us today, especially if we face the persecutions of Satan again as early Christians did in the first and second centuries. (1Cor 5:5) still has value for us today if we face the same situation.
- (3) CONTINUOUS-HISTORICAL – This theory presents the book as a forecast of the body of Christ the “church”. (Apostasy) rise of the pope, Mohammedianism, reformation, and restoration, etc. (This is not true for if it were true it would have no meaning to the people of the first century who were being persecuted by Rome. How would we know in regards to Harnegaddon which battle in history this would be? This does not fit in harmony with the internal evidence in Revelation at all.
- (4) PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY – These people say that there are not actual events in Revelation, but rather symbolic of forces of good waging war against the forces of evil. In Revelation the spiritual forces conquer the physical forces. The book of Revelation is dealing with an historical situation in which the Christian’s of John’s day were involved. Therefore, we reject this theory of understanding Revelation.
- (5) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – These say that the book was written to the people of that particular day, and rooted in the history of that time. The Roman emperor was persecuting Christians and therefore Jesus caused this book to be written to manifest to Christians that they would be victorious in Christ Jesus, even if they had to perish with the sword. In this historical background is seen a message for all time. This is, of course, the particular method or theory we will use in our study of Revelation. We do not intend to be dogmatic, but open-minded in our conclusions.

WHY WAS REVELATION WRITTEN IN SYMBOLS AND SIGNS? We cannot be certain, but perhaps it was to alleviate any further persecution by what the book was teaching, about the fall of the Roman Empire. It was not against the emperor, nor the empire, and by that we mean it was not anarchistic in nature. Revelation was not written to stir up a physical rebellion to Caesar. However, it was written to discourage IMAGE WORSHIP by Christians who were being persecuted. Christians could not render to Caesar the things that were not Caesar’s, but was God’s. These various signs and symbols in Revelation characterize individuals and conditions.

Now back to the text itself (Rev 1:1) – “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto his servants, these things that must (shortly come to pass). Now all these things were SHORTLY TO COME TO PASS. Notice the latter part of verse 3 “for the time is at hand”. Turn to the 12th Chapter, talking about Satan (v.11-12), “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. Therefore, rejoice Oh heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and the sea: because the Devil knoweth he hath but a short time”. Now this short time is not the (1000 years of the 20th Chapter) but the short time before he is going to be bound. Before his binding in Chapter 20:1-3. Now turn to Chapter 22: and look at verse 6, “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”. Note you have the same expression again. Now look at verse 10 – Rev 22 and he saith unto me “SEAL NOT UP THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK, FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND”. Turn to Dan. 12:4, 9 “But thou Oh Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end”. Hence in Daniel’s book the words were sealed up, and pertain to the end, that is the end of the Jewish order. But the book of Revelation is not sealed up for he says, “the time is at hand”. Therefore, we can assuredly know that the FUTURISTS AND MILLENNIAL THEORIES ARE WRONG.

Now to some of the characteristics of the book:

- (1) It is a book of wars. The noun war or wars is found in Revelation 9 times, but only 7 times in the entire New Testament. The verb “to war” is found in Revelation 6 times, and is found only once in the rest of the New Testament. This gives emphasis to the fact that Revelation is a book of strong war or conflict.
- (2) It is a book of earthquakes, thunder, lightning, and earth-shaking events.
- (3) It is a book of rewards for the righteous, and defeats for the wicked.
- (4) It is a book of optimism. The word “OVERCOME” is used 16 times in the book of Revelation and only 10 times in the rest of the New Testament. In all seven of the letters to the churches in Asia it is used. To overcome means to CONQUER. And this is the theme throughout the book, that we are more than conquerors in Christ. Our conflict today is against the world, and worldliness. It is he that overcometh that is going to receive the reward. The more you study this book, the more you can also gain the strength to overcome the EVIL ONE.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION:

To comfort and encourage Christians to remain faithful to Christ even though persecuted and killed. It is a book of glory of overcoming and the striving of the Christian to obtain the glory, which is in God.

The second purpose of this book is to complete BIBLICAL REVELATION. The Bible would be incomplete without the book of Revelation. The final destruction of Satan is recorded therein. He is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). Genesis begins with Satan tempting Eve, and leading the world into SIN. Revelation shows Satan is cast down. Genesis records man being separated from the tree of life and Revelation declares its availability to the inhabitants of paradise (Rev. 2:7). The third purpose of this book is to demonstrate the indestructibility of the Kingdom of God. John the Baptist declared the Kingdom is at hand, and Jesus said it is nigh unto you, and Paul states that you have been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness, and

translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col.1:13). Daniel prophesied it to have no end. Now then just as Jesus Christ confessed he was the SON OF GOD, and that he was from above and not beneath, that he was Messiah, that claim had to be tested. His claim to absolute DEITY was tested when he was put to death. He was proven or declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:3-4). All right then, Jesus was tempted by temptations, trial, and untimely death. He absolutely came out victorious over these things. In like manner the Kingdom of God had to be tested by the Devil with everything he had at his disposal. Which included the governments of men (Rome). Force in the form of the Roman Empire, false religion in the form of paganism, and the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Here Satan throws everything in his arsenal against the Kingdom of God to try to destroy it. But the church comes out victorious. The Kingdom of God stood and proved the testing that it is indestructible. The church gained victory and conquest over all of her adversaries. She was proved to be the Kingdom of God with the Power of God behind her. The church had to be proved like Christ her Saviour. The fourth purpose of this book is to show the conflict between God and Satan. God's power Vs. Satan's power. God is triumphant over Satan and always will be.

Under Jesus Christ it matters not what the conflict is, you and I can be victorious over it also, as Christ and His church was, and is. There is no excuse for any Christian giving way to the Devil and be lost (Jas.4:7-10). The reason he is defeated by Satan many times is because he quits fighting the good fight of faith. He doesn't lay claim to the great power that God has put at his disposal (Eph.3:20-21). See 1 Cor.10:12-13, Phil. 4:13).

This book most importantly must end in victory in me and in you. This victory must be personified in me. This seems to be the purpose of this book preserved for us. It is entirely possible that we will again be persecuted severely as Christians in the long ago, and if we are we may need afresh the hope, optimism and encouragement in this glorious discourse of God. We may now be facing the beginning of the Devil being loosed, for we are oppressed and persecuted on every hand by worldliness, and evil forces. This is why I love to study this book and to teach it. That when your trial comes you may see the victory through your faith in Jesus as early saints. It is hoped that through a study of this book we may all grow closer to God in appreciation for his marvelous power (Rev.12:11). "And they overcame him because of the blood of the lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their own lives even unto death". The spirit by which they overcame is the "MARTYR'S SPIRIT". This enables Christians to bind Satan through their obedience to the gospel. We can overcome Satan, only as long as we maintain that martyr's spirit. If you and I do not have it, and the real test comes, WHAT HAPPENS? We go right over to the camp of the Devil. We yield to temptation and the tempter. However, by a study and understanding of the victory and triumph of the saints, (Rev. 17:14) we can learn to overcome as they did. These shall war against the lamb, and the lamb shall overcome them for he is LORD OF LORDS, and KING OF KINGS; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful. MAY GOD HELP US BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

MEDITATIONS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Introduction: The Bible would not be complete without this complementary book. In the book of Genesis we are introduced to the beginning of the universe and in the book of Revelation we see the passing away of the physical universe (Rev. 21:1). Genesis records the Devil's victorious triumph over man through temptation (Gen. 3) while Revelation reveals the final destruction of Satan and his power over man (Rev. 20:1-10). In Genesis we find the Tree of Life removed from man (Gen. 3:23-24) while Revelation states that those faithful to God will again eat of the Tree of Life in heaven (Rev. 2:7).

Revelation is rich in symbolism, purpose and meaning. Even though there are not any "direct quotations" in the book from the Old Testament, there surely are over 400 allusions back to it, mostly in the major and Minor Prophets. The book of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah contain much valuable material essential to the understanding of the marvelous book of God.

The use of numbers throughout the book is significant and important to an accurate understanding of the Revelation of God. Note the meaning of them.

- "1" This number conveys the concept of unity (see Deut. 6:14) One Jehovah God
- "2" This number denotes strength, courage, enforcement (see Rev. 11:3)
- "3" This sacred number denotes the DIVINE GOD-HEAD (see Mt. 28:19)
- "4" This is the world number example 4 corners of the earth (Rev. 7:1)
- "5" The whole man is represented by this number example (see Rev. 17:10)
- "6" This number indicated sinister destruction, doom or fall short. (Rev. 13:18)
- "7" This is a combination of 3 Divine number and 4 world number so 7 symbolized completeness or perfection (Rev. 6:1) Book of 7 seals
- "3 ½" This particular number indicated "incompleteness". Note Rev. 11:11. Note this is half of 7, the complete number.
- "12" This number also stood for "completeness" or a perfect number. This number came to stand for "organized religion" in the world. (12 tribes of Israel, 12 Apostles, 12 Foundations of heaven.) Rev. 21:19-22 Gates were Pearls
- "10" This is a sacred number also showing or symbolizing "perfection" or "completion". Number 5 multiplied twice. Refer to Rev. 13:1. Ten horns.

Additional symbols used in the book of Revelation include: birds, beasts, persons, cities, elements of nature, weapons, light, darkness, and precious stones of different kinds.

Notice also the definition of “INSPIRATION” is found within the pages of this glorious book of prophecy. The Holy Spirit who “revealed every scripture to man” (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; I Cor. 2:9-13; Eph. 3:3-5) not only told John WHAT TO WRITE BUT WHEN TO WRITE, AND WHEN NOT TO WRITE. See these passages for evidence of this – Rev. 10:3-4; Rev. 14:13. Nothing did God in His wisdom leave to “chance”. There are absolutely no ERRORS in passing the mind of God from the Holy Spirit to the NEW TESTAMENT APOSTLES AND PROPHETS.

The following are some of the “allusions” in the book of Revelation, which can be found in the Old Testament. These passages in the Old Testament provide the key to “understanding” the Revelation of Jesus Christ to his servant, John. Rev. 1:1.

“Description of the Son of Man” – Rev. 1:12 – Read these passages for similar descriptions: Dan. 7:9, 13, 14; Dan. 10:4-6; Ezek. 1:26-28; Ezek. 43:2.

“Book of Life” – Rev.3:5 – All of the names of the saved ones are recorded therein by God. Rev. 20:11-15. Notice these passages in the Old Testament. Ex. 32:33; Ps. 69:28; Mal. 3:16; Is. 22:22.

“A throne set in heaven” – Rev. 4:2 – Notice again in the Old Testament. Is. 6:1-2; Ezek. 1:26-28. God has supremacy in the entire universe, which he himself created. (Col. 1:15-17).

“Four living creatures” – Rev. 4:6-8 – These are pictured in Ezek. 1:10-25; Ezek. 10:9-20. These are shown to be sub-servient to “HIM” who sitteth on the throne and they worship and serve God. These heavenly beings reflect the glory of their creator.

“Book of Seven seals (scroll) – Rev. 5:1-7 – Read Ezek. 2:8-10; Ezek. 5:1-3. Notice these passages depict “warnings and wars” hence these scrolls were “forecasts of that which was ‘soon to come to pass’”. The destiny of “man” is determined by God, as he alone is able to “unveil” the future. The victory of Christ and Christians is foretold also in the “book of 7 seals”.

“Lion of the tribe of Judah” – Rev. 5:5 – Jesus Christ fulfills this image according to the fulfilled prophecy in the Old Testament. Notice for example these passages in particular: Gen. 49:9; Is. 11:1-2; 10. Heb. 7:14 declares that from the tribe of Judah, Christ came forth, speaking of the lineage of his parents.

“Sealing of servants of God in their foreheads” – Rev. 7:3 – This thought is discussed in the book of Ezek. 9:4. God knoweth “them that are his” (2 Tim. 2:19; Eph. 1:13-14). The apostle

John makes it plain in I John 5:2-3 that obedience is the factor which marks one who is “sealed by God”.

“Blessedness and rest of the Redeemed” – Rev. 6:9-11, 14:13; 20:4-6, Notice these verses: Is. 25:8 Ezek. 34:23-24; Jer. 31:16.

“The little book” – Rev. 10:2-11 – This imagery is referred to in Ezek. 2:8-10 and Ezek. 3:1-4. The prophet Ezekiel was commanded to ‘eat’ the roll and then go “speak into the house of Israel”.

“Angel swearing” – Rev. 10:5-6 – This happened also back in Dan. 12:7 and in Heb. 6:13. God swore by himself, since he could swear by none greater, the angel swore also by God, that God’s will was “soon to come to pass” regarding the judgments upon Rome.

“Measuring reed” – Rev. 11:1-2, Ex. 40 and Zech. 2:1-5 are the passages in the Old Testament which deal with this particular “sign” in Revelation. God’s people are measured by his word today. John 12:48-49.

“Michael” – Rev 12:7 – Even in Old Testament times this champion of God stood up for God’s people in his cause. Note in Dan. 10:13 and Dan. 12:1 this “great prince” of God was to deliver God’s people from trouble.

“two Witnesses” – Rev. 11:2-13 – In Zech. 3:1 and 4:6-9 this particular “apocalyptic language” is found. In this case God’s two witnesses were Joshua, the High Priest and Zerubbabel who led God’s people back to their native land of Israel from many years of captivity. When Darius was King of Persia they began to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. (Ex. 4:24-5:14-16). See also Hag. 1:14-16.

“Woman clothed in the sun, moon, and stars” – Rev. 12:1 – This is referring to Israel, God’s chosen people of the Old Testament. Notice Gen. 37:9-12 for here Joseph dreams that “his father, mother, and brothers bow down unto him”. Israel is referred to as “her” in Hos. 2:14-23 where she has rebelled against God and God withholds his mercy from her as long as she remains sinful. But God pictures “the church of Christ” also in I Pet. 2:9-12 as his new “Israel” upon whom he hath given his mercy again. This woman represents Israel of old (physical nation through which Messiah came) and Spiritual Israel even the church of Christ which He established when He ascended into heaven. Rev. 12:5; Matt. 16:18.

“Man Child” – Rev 12:5 – This sign is also mentioned in the writings of Micah. In chapter 5:2 her prophesies regarding one who would be born in Bethlehem and would be ruler of God’s people, Israel. Also in Is. 9:6, this son would be called “ALMIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, COUNSELLOR, WONDERFUL, PRINCE OF PEACE.” Can any deny this to be the Son of God who was caught up to heaven (I Pet. 3:22) where he rules the universe by his mighty hands.

“Dragon” – Rev. 12:1-9 – This, of course, is symbolic language referring to the devil (Satan) the deceiver of the whole world. In the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-6) we find him first deceiving man and leading him into transgression against God. Since that time he has continually waged war against God and His followers. In Chapter 12 however, we note that God’s power is superior to the power of the Devil. The forces of evil are never able to be completely victorious over the forces of good. Eventually it is God who is the victor always and those on his side in battle. In the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11) the Devil tried to devour the man-child (Jesus Christ) through temptations. Christ was victor here as he sinned not, neither yielded to temptation. The Devil through envy (Jewish leaders) had Christ crucified thinking he had destroyed his competition. But Jesus arose from the dead, destroying the Devil who had the power of death and introduced hope to all mankind of “RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD” to an eternal life and escape from Hell (Heb. 2:14-16). By His vicarious death on the cross for mankind’s sins, and His birth from the dead, He cast down Satan and his power from heavenly realms. (Eph. 6:10-13).

“Beast out of the Sea” – Rev. 13:1 – This beast of blasphemy is spoken of in Dan. 7:7, 8, 23-28. Daniel states that this beast would speak words against the MOST HIGH (Blasphemy) and would devour the whole earth. ROME and the ROMAN EMPIRE certainly fit this description (Rev. 17:18), and it was during this KINGDOM that the “God of heaven would set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed” (Dan. 2:44). It was said by Gabriel concerning the Kingdom of Christ (Luke 1:31-33) that it would last forever and be unending. This kingdom would “break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms (Dan. 2:44). Christ was born in Bethlehem during the reign of Caesar Augustus, Roman emperor. Luke 2:1-6 gives the account of Christ’s birth. After some 33 years on earth he was crucified, arose from the dead and ascended into heaven where he then established His Kingdom. All this time Rome was in power and controlled the world. The kingdom of Christ still stands, but ROME HAS FALLEN.

“The Winepress” – Rev. 14:19 – This particular sign can be found in Is. 63:3. God’s great power to execute judgments and his great wrath against evildoers is certainly portrayed vividly in Revelation.

“Song of Moses” – Rev. 15:3 – One can read the victory song of Moses back in Ex. 15:1-21. After God destroyed the Egyptians in the Red Sea by His divine power the Israelites sang this song to exalt God and His greatness which he had demonstrated by destroying the mightiest nation in existence then.

“Har-Magedon” – Rev. 16:16 – In Judges 5:19 and 2 Chronicles 35:22 battles were fought in the valley of “MEGIDDO”. This valley located by the Euphrates River is where King Josiah was killed when he went up to battle with NECO, King of Egypt. In Revelation this symbol has to do with the “Spiritual conflicts” between the followers of God and the followers of the beast and the Devil.

“Babylon the great is fallen” – Rev. 18:2 – This allusion can be found in many Old Testament books. Let us notice Is. 13:1-19 and Is. 14:2-17 as here God declares that Babylon through pride would fall to the Medes and the Persians. So also the Roman Empire (Babylon) would also meet its “WATERLOO”.

“Invitation to the birds” – Rev. 19:17-18 – This sign can be found in Ezek. 39:16-20. God stated that the defeat of Gog and Magog would afford a great dinner for the birds as vultures would eat the remains of the dead.

“Gog and Magog” – Rev. 20:8-9 – These descendants of Japheth (Gen. 10:2) are to have God’s judgments meted out to them for their evil. It was the responsibility of Ezekiel to prophesy against them (Ezek. 39:39). In Revelation these forces of Gog and Magog are symbolic of the armies of the devil which in the end are soundly defeated by God (Rev. 20:8-10).

“Book of Life” – Rev. 20:12 – This book of God’s records of the saved is spoken of in many places in the Bible. Notice Dan. 12:1; Ps. 69:28 as these passages confirm the existence of such a book. The name of God’s redeemed are therein, and all whose names are therein escape the “hell of fire”. (Rev. 20:15). Whosoever’s name was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

“The new heaven and new earth” – Rev. 21:1 – Back in Is. 65:17 and Is. 66:22, God stated that He would “create new heavens and new earth”. This again in different words was God saying that he would set up His kingdom in the last days (Dan. 2:44). Christ would be the governor and government (Is. 9:6; Mic. 5:2) and that Israel would be the governed. Therefore heavens represented authority and earth represented those who were under authority. Christ is exclusively in complete authority (Matt. 28:18) and he received his Kingship when he arose from the dead and the church had its beginning. (Acts 2:29-47) In Revelation this symbol “new heavens and new earth” is referring to the church after judgment (Chap. 20) in its glorified state in heaven with God as her ruler. Notice Peter said in 2 Peter 3:13 that only righteousness would dwell there. Notice that Rev. 21:27 declares nothing that maketh an abomination shall be in heaven.

The book of Revelation is an “uncovering” or an “unveiling” of Jesus Christ (Chap.1:1). This book reveals the “glory of Jesus Christ” as he now reigns on “his throne in heaven”. We see Jesus “walking amidst the ‘seven golden candlesticks’”. We see him in His omnipotent glory “watching over and judging” His church on earth. The seven golden candlesticks are signs or symbols representing “churches of Christ” in different locals. The 7 churches of Asia represent a cross-section of “all churches of Christ” from Pentecost until the time ends. It is an “unveiling” of the “victory of Christ and His church” over every adversary (Devil and his puppets or servants). We behold Christ giving “glorification to His saints” who serve him faithfully unto death. (Rev. 2:10) We see that church of Christ “glorified” in heaven with God (Rev. 21:1-6). This is a book of “ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE”. The Christians who were living at the time this book was written were being slaughtered-tortured-persecuted-starved, etc. for holding

fast to Jesus Christ. And this book was given them to “show them” that God is still on the job and reigning supremely on His throne. This book reveals that God’s power is greater than Satan’s power, and that God’s people always triumph over the Devil and sin if they remain faithful unto God. Notice that the word “overcome” is found some 16 times in the book of Revelation. This suggests that God expects those who serve him and work in his kingdom must needs “overcome continually day by day”. This book among other things spreads an attitude of “optimism” among early Saints and followers of Christ even today. We possibly may have again a mass persecution of Christians. If we do we may need this message of HOPE. The martyr’s spirit was prevalent in New Testament times, and it was those who were “killed for Christ’s sake” who were victorious over attacks of their assassins. They “lived and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years” (Rev. 20:4-6). The book of Revelation is a book of “WARS AND CONFLICTS”. The noun war is found some 9 times in Revelation and only 7 times in the rest of the New Testament. The verb, to war, is found 6 times in Revelation and only 1 time in the rest of the New Covenant. Hence, this book describes in different ways the fight between God and Satan – Good and Evil – Christians and the world. The battle of Megiddo or “ARMEGADDON” is a spiritual battle not a physical one. This book is full of signs and symbols and must not be understood always literally but in light of the signs and symbols. God wisely revealed his prophecy to the Christians of that day through these codes so as not to increase the severe persecution upon the church by Roman power.

The Book of Revelation certainly manifests the “indestructibility” of the Kingdom of God (Heb. 12:28). All of the opposing forces of evil and the Kingdoms of man fall helplessly to the “victorious saints” God foretold through Daniel that His kingdom would consume all others (Dan. 2:44, verse 34 is descriptive of Christ and his church). The things which are “signified” were shortly to come to pass. This book is meaningful unto Christians of that day because it dealt with the immediate future. There is no reason to believe that Revelation is yet to be fulfilled. Only a few passages in the final chapters (2nd coming of Christ, Judgment of all men according to their works, and HEAVEN or HELL) are yet future. May we prayerfully and carefully study this book of God with an open mind and willing heart. We do not intend to be DOGMATIC in this study for we must recognize that some parts of this book are difficult and have been challenging the minds of men for centuries. We will, however, with aid from God’s word (the Old and New Testament) and understanding of the prophets of olden times, attempt to understand all of this book we possibly can. I am grateful to other faithful gospel preachers and teachers for enlightenment and understanding which they have furnished through materials they have written and published regarding this marvelous book. We hopefully will learn what this message meant to the “people of that day”. For indeed the reason it was given was to promote confidence and undying courage in the hearts of Christians being persecuted and killed.

There are at least 5 different approaches used by scholars to understand the truths found in this book. Here is a list of them for you to consider.

- (1) The Futurists – Those who follow this approach believe that this book is mostly yet UNFULFILLED. These are the Millennial and Dispensational groups. They say that the 1st 3 chapters are past already, but that the rest of the book is future to chapter 20:11-15.

Then the 1,000 year reign of Christ starts but notice after the 1,000 years Satan is loosed for a season. Hence, the Millenium ends in failure. This approach is contradictory to the teaching of the Old Testament Prophets concerning the Kingdom of God in the last days. Dan. 2:44; Is. 2:2-4. It is also contrary to the New Testament scriptures regarding Christ's reign as King.

- (2) The Preterist – Those who follow this approach say that the book was written for the people of John's day and all of the events therein fulfilled in the 1st century and that the book has little value for us today. But Paul by inspiration said all scripture is profitable for DOCTRINE, REPROOF, CORRECTION, AND INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. (2 Tim. 3:16-17) Certainly Revelation is scripture from God which he has preserved for us to read and study and learn from. We can, through the hope and encouragement found in this book, overcome every adversary as they did, especially should we find ourselves under sever persecution as indicative of the Roman persecution. Reading this book provides assurance that God and Christ and the Spirit are in command always and that we are "more than conquerors through Christ who loved us" (Romans 8:35-39).
- (3) The Continous – Historical – This approach presents the book as a forecast of the church. Within the pages they say can be found the RISE OF PAPAL POWER (Catholic pope system), MOHAMMEDIANISM, REFORMATION, and RESTORATION, etc., but that Revelation had no meaning to CHRISTIANS OF THE FIRST CENTURY. Why would God have given a book to people who would derive no benefit therefrom? Indeed the early Christians derived the "SPIRITUAL STRENGTH" necessary to overcome the persecution of Rome. This approach is not in harmony with the material found in the book itself.
- (4) The Philosophy of History – Those who approach Revelation in this manner say that the accounts therein are not necessarily actual events but symbolic of forces at work. They seem to say the spiritual forces of good against the evil forces of destruction characterize this book. The spiritual forces of Right ultimately overcome the forces of Wrong. This sounds good on the surface, but it completely leaves out the people of John's day to whom this book was written to help bolster their courage.
- (5) The Historical-Background – This approach takes into account that this book was written to the PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS OF THE FIRST CENTURY to give them reason for living and dying for Christ, but also takes into account that Christians of today since the first century can profit and learn from the glorious message within the confines of this book of God. Revelation was not only "written to the people of that day" but was rooted in the history of that day. The Roman emperors were persecuting Christians severely, and this book depicts the victory of Christ and his church over the Kingdoms of men and all persecuting powers. All of God's people for all time can gain fortification and eternal hope by reading and studying this book. All evil forces who war against God and his

people can read this book and know that they “will be defeated” and will face “horrible destruction” when the end comes. This is the approach we intend to follow in our understanding of this book. For indeed it does carry to all of its readers many valuable and important lessons to profit them thereby today. This book was not written to incite rebellion against Caesar for this would be contrary to the teachings of Christ in Matt. 22:18-22.

EMPERORS OF ROME

<u>Name</u>	<u>Reign</u>
Augustus	27 B.C-A.D. 14
Tiberius	14-37
Caligula	37-41
Claudius	41-54
Nero	54-68
Galba	68-69
Otho	69
Vitallius	69
Vespasian	69-79
Titus	78-81
Domitian	81-96
Nerva	96-98
Trajan	98-117
Hadrian	117-138
Antonius Pius	138-161
Marcus Aurelius	161-180
Commodus	180-192
Pertinax	193
Didius Julianus	193
Septimius Serverus	193-211
Carcalla	211-217
Macrinus	217-218
Elagabalus	218-222
Severus Alexander	222-235
Maximinus Thrax	235-238
Gordian I & Gordian II	238
Pupienus	238
Balbinus	238
Gordian III	238-244
Philippus	244-249
Decius	249-251
Gallus	251-253
Aemilianus	253
Valerian	253-260
Gallienus	253-268
Claudius II	268-270
Aurelian	270-275
Tacitus	275-276
Florian	276
Probus	276-282
Carus	282-283
Carinus (W)	283-284
Numerius (E)	283-285

<u>Name</u>	<u>Reign</u>
Diocletian	284-305
Maximian	286-305
Galerius	305-311
Severus	306-307
Constantino	306-337
Licinius	308-324
Maximinus	310-313
Constantius	337-361
Constantine II	337-340
Constans	337-350
Julian	361-363
Jovian	363-364
Valentinian I (W)	364-375
Valens (E)	364-378
Gratian (W)	364-378
Valentinian II (W)	375-392
Eugenius	392-394
Theodosius I	379-395

EMPERORS OF THE WEST

Honorius	395-425
Valentinian III	425-455
Petronius Maximus	455-457
Majorian	457-461
Libius Severus	461-467
Anthemius	467-472
Glybrius	472-473
Glycerius	473-474
Julius Nepos	474-475
Romulus Augustulus	475-476

Between 283 A.D. and 395 A.D. Rome was usually ruled by two or more Emperors at once. Sometimes the Eastern (E) and the Western (W) portions of the empire were ruled by separate emperors. At other times as many as four Emperors rule the empire. Quotation from the World Book Encyclopedia.

“REGARDING THE DATE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION”

Introduction: There are two schools of thought as to the date of this book. We intend to set forth evidence for both of these dates.

- A. 68 A.D. or before 70 A.D. – This would be before the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by Titus the Roman emperor around 70 A.D.
- B. 90 A.D. – 98 A.D. – This would be during the reign of Domitian emperor of Rome, who persecuted the church very severely. His persecution reached to the outer reaches of the Roman empire into every part of the world Rome controlled.

In order to grasp a clear and accurate understanding of this book, and the message of Jesus Christ to the readers thereof, it is important to determine the correct date of this written Revelation from Christ. To this end we set forth these facts for your consideration.

EARLY DATE: 68-70 A.D. before destruction of Jerusalem

1. One of the evidences given to support this date is Chapter 11:1-2 Temple standing Remember Revelation is symbolic language and cannot be taken literally. If one will study carefully this chapter you will find the temple being discussed here is the “church” of Christ or his Kingdom. (Note verse 8 talking about Spiritual Jerusalem and also note verse 19. Ark of Covenant in Physical temple in Jerusalem, but this refers to the Ark of Covenant in heaven.
2. Scholars say that Nero is the emperor numbered 666 in Chapter 13:18. However this particular person is referred to as trying to bind emperor worship (MARK OF BEAST) on Christians. Nero is not known to have ever done this during his reign, according to secular history. Furthermore the persecutions of Nero were more centrally located around Rome and the immediate area. They did not expand out into Asia-Minor where the “churches of Asia” were located mentioned in Chapter 2-3.

Therefore it is our conclusion that this book was not written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. And this book is not a description of the fall of Jerusalem.

LATER DATE: 90-98 A.D. during the reign of Domitian emperor of Rome.

1. History shows that Iraneaus who lived during the 2nd century declared that the Revelation was written and the visions were seen almost in our generations, and was at the end of Domitian’s reign.
2. This would make the time of writing around the end of the first century which would account for the writing to the “7” churches of Asia of the persecution & tribulation

which was about to come upon them. This date is nearer in harmony with the circumstances found in the book of Revelation than the early date.

3. Domitian did bind emperor worship upon all the citizens of the Roman empire, which included Christians. If Christians would bow down and serve Domitian they betrayed Christ. But if they flatly refused to worship the emperor as God, or admit that Rome was Diety then they were persecuted, imprisoned, killed, and slaughtered in great numbers, even thrown to wild beasts or burned as torches.

THE DATE OF THE REVELATION

Introduction:

- A. Two views: Among those who acknowledge the apostle John to be the writer of the book of Revelation there are basically two theories on when this prophetic book was written.
1. The early date puts the writing at about A.D. 69, or about the time of emperor Nero's death.
 2. The late date has the writing at about A.D. 96, or toward the close of Domitian's reign.
 3. In recent years most scholars have accepted the later date, but the early date is not without its respected and scholarly advocates.
 - a. Scholars holding to the late date include: Robertson, Moffatt, Orr, Barnes, Hailey, Lenski, Kendriksen, Summers, Halley, Barclay, Horne, Vincent, Thiessen, Zahn (according to Thiessen), and Harrison.
 - b. Defenders of the early date include: Schaff (who once held the late date position), Randell, Farrar, Westcott, Wallace, Sanday, (according to Robertson), and "Lightfoot, MacDonald, Neander, Plummer....Weiss" (according to Hailey).
- B. The importance of the question: In contrast with some books in the NT the date assigned to the writing of the Revelation is a question of practical significance.
1. "The date of Revelation is important, for one's interpretation of the book depends largely on the date which he assigns to the writing." (Hailey,p.1).
 2. "The question whether the Apocalypse was written at an early date or in the very closing period of the apostolic ministration has importance as bearing on the interpretation of the book. A true exposition depends, in no small degree, upon a knowledge of the existing condition of things at the time it was written; i.e., of the true point in history occupied by the writer, and those whom he originally addressed....If the book were an epistle, like that to the Romans or to the Hebrews, it might be of comparatively little importance, in ascertaining its meaning, to be able to determine whether it was written at the commencement of the apostolic era or at its very close." (MacDonald, The Life and Writings of John, p.151-152; quoted by Wallace, p.22).
 3. If the Revelation was written before A.D.70 then it is possible that some, or even much of the vision concerns the threatened downfall of the Jewish state; but if written toward the end of the 1st century then other events must be considered as the subject of this vision.
 - a. Obviously if one begins with the wrong date he could miss part or all of the vision's historical fulfillment.
 4. It is assumed that the method of interpretation followed is some sort of historical or preterist view, rather than a futuristic approach which views the prophecy as a vision of things far removed from the 1st century.
 - a. The premise that a historical approach is the right approach is based on Rev. 1:1,3; Rev. 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20.
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- b. Obviously if one separates the book from the background in which it was given then the question of its date becomes purely academic.
- C. Our purpose: We want to consider the evidence for or against the various positions held regarding the date of this prophetic book.
1. Two types of evidence must be considered and weighed: Internal evidence (evidence within the book), and External evidence (evidence from the statements of the early “Christian writers”.)
 2. It should be recognized that arguments on internal evidence will be affected by the meaning assigned to the various passages cited, while the weight of the external evidence will be determined by one’s attitude toward the writer’s knowledge and accuracy.
- I. OTHER THEORIES: IN ADDITION TO THE EARLY AND LATE DATE POSITIONS ON THE DATE OF THE REVELATION THE FOLLOWING THEORIES HAVE ALSO BEEN SUGGESTED.
- A. During the reign of Claudius, A.D. 41-54 (Discussed by ORR (p.2584), and by Barnes (p. 1532).
1. A 4th century writer named Epiphanius put the exile of John to Patmos in the reign of this emperor.
 - a. Objection: “but as, in the same sentence, he speaks of the apostle as 90 years of age, it is plain there is a strange blunder in the name of the emperor.” (Orr, p.2584)
- B. During the reign of Galba, A.D. 69 (Advocated, according to Summers, by Arthur Weigall in a book entitled Nero).
1. Objection: “Weigall is wrong because Galba was never recognized by the provinces as the emperor. He is also wrong in taking the position that John believed the Nero redivivus myth.” (Summers, p.82).
- C. About A.D. 86 during the reign of Domitian (Asserted by Halley alone, p.684).
1. This date may be a typographical error for “A.D. 96,” but it is made three times in one paragraph.
- D. During the reign of Vespasian, A.D. 69-79 (Discussed by Summers, p.81-82).
1. Only one point of evidence is offered--a questionable interpretation of Rev. 17:9-11.
 - a. Objection: The passage can be interpreted to apply to other emperors.
 - b. Objection: “Vespasian did not persecute the Christians, and every bit of evidence, external and internal, points away from him.” (Summers, p.81-82).
 - c. Objection: Vespasian “does not seem to have interfered with Oriental cults.” (Moffatt, p.317-318).

II. THE EARLY DATE: THE FOLLOWING ARGUMENTS HAVE BEEN ADVANCED IN SUPPORT OF THE CONTENTION THAT THE REVELATION WAS WRITTEN BEFORE A.D. 70.

A. Internal evidence: Arguments based on statements found within the book.

1. The seven kings (Rev. 17:9-11): “In popular apprehension the first Roman emperor was Julius Caesar; in strict constitutional law, the first who held the empire as an established form of government was Augustus. The series of ‘kings’ might legitimately begin with either of these but not with one later.” (Summers, p.81).
 - a. Some begin with Julius and count: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero—making Nero the sixth, and Domitian several years later, the seventh which was “not yet come” (Wallace, p.32).
 - b. Some begin with Augustus and make Vespasian the sixth (Schaff, p.835).
 - c. Either way one counts it puts the sixth king, and the writing of the book, before Domitian.
 - d. Objection: “The Neronic date . . . exerts most of the fascination on those who cling to too rigid a view of the book’s unity, which prevents them from looking past passages like xi.1f. and xvii.9f.” (Moffatt, p.317).
2. The number of a man (Rev. 13:18): “It is commonly held that . . . the numbers stand for Nero Caesar written in Hebrew character (rather than Greek or Latin), and numerical value of the Hebrew letters yielding exactly the required sum of 666.” (Harrison, p.447).
 - a. This argument is made by almost all, if not all, of those defending the early date position.
 - b. Objection: “It is said that if we omit the yodh in the Hebrew words Kaisar Neron, we get the number 666. But the defective writing of Kaisar, i.e., without the yodh, is rather unusual, as is also the final ‘n’ in Neron . . . we would say that this solution is inadequate.” (Thiessen, p.322).
 - c. Objection: “Weigall . . . is guilty of overstatement when he says that scholarship is pretty well unanimous, that the number 666 is a cryptograph for “Neron Kaisar” (Greek) reduced to “Nron Ker” (Hebrew) reduced to the numbers . . . which add up to 666. Scholarship is far from unanimous on this. Those who hold this opinion appear to be in the minority.” (Summers, p.80).
 - d. Note: Opponents the number 666 being applied to Nero offer no positive theory in their introductions.
3. John’s style: “Since the Apocalypse is inferior to the Gospel and the Epistles in its linguistic qualities, some hold that the Apocalypse was written first, when John did not know his Greek very well, and that the other books were written later, when he had learned a good deal more Greek.” (Theissen, p.322).

- a. For additional statements on this argument see: Harrison (p.477), Tenney (p.402), Randell (p.iii), Schaff (p.428) and Wallace (p.43f).
 - b. Objection: “But we have already explained the linguistic difference as due to change of subject-matter and circumstances, differences of amanuensis, etc.” (Theissen, p.322).
 - c. Objection: The idea that John did not know his Greek when he wrote the Apocalypse is “wholly imaginary” according to Hendriksen (p.20).
 - 1) Reply: Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort didn’t think so (see Harrison, p.447).
 - d. Objection: Wallace (who defends the early date) says, “Such differences, if their existence is actual, are attributable to the apocalyptic character of Revelation – that it is not an epistle of John’s composition, but was dictated to John by the angel; therefore it was the language of the angel and not in his own style. In his own epistles the Holy Spirit utilized John’s personality, style and language, but in Revelation it was that of the angel of Christ as plainly stated in Chapter 1:1.” (p.15).
 - 1) Note: Wallace then goes on to make an argument on the “Hebraistic element” of the Revelation in contrast with the later Gospel (p.43-44).
4. Jerusalem standing (Rev. 11:1-2,8): “Jerusalem is mentioned (chap. 11) as though it were still standing.” (Harrison p.447).
- a. Objection: “one cannot safely hold that chapter eleven indicates that the Temple was still standing. The book is written in such symbolic terms that we cannot be positive that the Temple was still standing.” (Summers, p.79-80).
 - 1) Reply: “But the allusion to the crucifixion compels us to think of the historical Jerusalem.” (Schaff, p.835).
5. The seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1-3): “The existence of only seven churches in Asia, at the time of the vision, sets the date before the destruction of Jerusalem. . .it is evident that the vision was received when there were only seven churches in proconsular Asia. But after the destruction of Jerusalem, as a result of the diffusion of Christianity, the Asian churches were numerous, as was foretold in the Lord’s description of these events in Matthew 24, verses 30-31” (Wallace, p.35).
- a. Objection: The churches of Colosse and Hieropolis were both in Asia, yet they were not included in Rev. 1-3.
 - 1) Reply: Wallace appeals to Schaff’s Dictionary of the Bible and MacDonald’s The Life and Writings of John to show that Colosse and Hieropolis were destroyed by an earthquake (A.D. 62) and that the churches of those cities probably merged with the church at Laodicea which was close by (p.36).
6. Tribulation ten days (Rev. 2:10): “There were exactly ten successive persecuting emperors, beginning with Nero, as mentioned in chapter 17:10, and there can be

no manufactured events of the future which could more accurately fulfill the figurative ten days period, which is supported by the actual history of that time.” (Wallace, p.37).

7. Jewish persecution (Rev. 2:9 and 3:9): “The reference to these Jewish persecutions in the chapters and verses named identifies the date of the Revelation with these early Jewish persecutions.” (Wallace, p.30-31)
8. Judaizing teachers: MacDonald argues that there are signs of Judaizing teachers in the book, therefore the vision was before A.D. 70 (Hailey, p.2).
 - a. “There are clear and repeated references in the letters to the churches, and other parts of the apocalypse to the prevalent activities of the Judaizers (Wallace cites 2:1-6 and 11:13, sic) . . . But after the destruction of Jerusalem, the demolition of the temple, the overthrow of their theocracy and the end of the Jewish state, the activities of the Judaizers became nonexistent, and their influence null and void.” (Wallace, p.31).
9. The twelve tribes (Rev. 7:4f): Some argue that the Jewish state was still extent because of this statement (see Hailey, p.1).
10. Jerusalem: Some argue the book was written before A.D. 70 because “an event of such magnitude as the fall of the city would surely have been noticed in the Apocalypse if it had occurred.” (Harrison, p.447).
11. John’s future work (Rev. 10:11): “After the visions John expected to be an active emissary to prophesy again, ‘before (or among) many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.’ It is hardly possible, and altogether improbable, that John, at the supposedly advanced age of ninety-six, would or could have undertaken a mission requiring several years to accomplish.” (Wallace, p.43).
 - a. “And in the light of the testimony of Jerome, that in the year A.D. 96, the apostle John was so aged, weak and infirm, that ‘he was with difficulty carried into the church, and could speak only a few words to the people’, such an itinerary would have been wholly impossible. It adds evidence to the argument for the earlier date of Revelation and the younger age of John.” (Wallace, p.43).
12. Parallels with Matthew 24: “The following comparisons will show Revelation to be an enlargement and extension of the discourse on Mount Olivet in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. . . of which Jerusalem and Judaism and the Jewish state were the subjects and objects.” (Wallace, p.41-43).
 - a. The parallels offered by Wallace are: (1) Mt. 24:34 with Rev. 1:1; (2) Mt. 24:21 with Rev.1:9, 3:10, 7:14; (3) Mt. 24:2 and 23:37 with Rev. 11:8, 18:10;

(4) Mt. 24:16-21 with Rev. 12:6; (5) Mt. 24:7-8 with Rev. 18:8; (6) Mt. 24:31 with Rev 11:15.

B. External evidence: Arguments based on statements by early non-biblical writers.

1. The Syriac version: “in the later Syriac version, the title-page declares that it was written in Patmos, whither John was sent by Nero Caesar.” (Barnes, p. 1532). See Wallace (p.23).
 - a. Objection: “This version, however, was made in the beginning of the sixth century, and can have little authority in determining the question. It is not known by whom the version was made, or on what authority the author relied, when he said that John was banished to Patmos in the time of Nero.” (Barnes, p.1532).
2. Clement of Alexandria (150? - ?220): ”Clement of Alexandria puts the story of John and the robber chieftain after John’s return from the isle of Patmos and represents the apostle as vigorous enough to run after the youth.” (Harrison, p.447).
 - a. Randell discusses Clement’s statement at length and concludes that it is evidence for the early date, which he accepts. (p.iv-v).
3. Tertullian (160? - ?230): Tertullian made a statement that “closely associates the banishment of St. John with the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul, who are generally believed to have suffered martyrdom under Nero. And secondly, it expressly states that the banishment of St. John took place at Rome, which answers one objection made against the earlier date, viz. that the Neronian persecution was confined to Rome.” (Randell, p.v).
4. Jerome (340? – 420): See: II (Early date), A (Internal evidence), #11, point “a”.

III. THE LATE DATE: THE FOLLOWING ARGUMENTS HAVE BEEN ADVANCED IN SUPPORT OF THE VIEW THAT THE REVELATION WAS WRITTEN TOWARD THE CLOSE OF DOMITIAN’S REIGN.

A. Internal evidence: Arguments based on statements within the book are generally admitted to be less forceful than those advanced in favor of the early date.

1. The condition of the churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3): “This date agrees with the conditions of the churches in Asia as reflected in the letters to the churches. Ephesus has left its first love. Sardis is virtually dead. Laodicea is lukewarm. A considerable interval between the founding of the churches in the days of Paul and the time of writing of the Revelation is needed to explain this declension.” (Harrison, p.446).

- a. Objection: “The religious development of the churches is often held to presuppose a considerable length of time, but this argument must be used with caution. Worldliness and error and uncharitable feelings did not require decades to spring up in the primitive churches of Asia Minor and elsewhere. No great stress can be laid on this feature.” (Moffatt, p.318; Moffatt defends the late date).
 - b. Objection: “The condition of the Seven Churches was indeed different from that which existed a few years before when Paul wrote to the Ephesians; but the movement in the apostolic age was very rapid. Six or seven years intervened to account for the changes. The Epistle to the Hebrews implies a similar spiritual decline among its readers in 63 or 64.” (Schaff, p.834).
 - c. Objection: “But the apostasies of the Galatian churches ‘so soon removed’ from Christ, as stated in Gal. 1:6; and of the Hebrew teachers and members, as mentioned in Heb. 6:1-6 and 10:25-39, together seem to refute the impossibility of such an early apostasy of the Asian churches. . . .” (Wallace, p.16).
 - d. Reply: “Of course, these evils can grow rapidly, especially in a pagan environment, but it is hardly to be expected that they could grow so fast in a period of four or five years. They would have to do this for the book to represent true conditions and fall into the Neronian period.” (Summers, p.83).
2. Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22): “Laodicea appears as a prosperous city (chap.3). Yet, in the year 62, during Nero’s reign, it was destroyed by earthquake.” (Harrison, p.446-447). The argument is: what John said about the church could not have been true soon after the city was destroyed.
 - a. Objection: “Laodicea was overthrown by an earthquake (A.D. 60) but was immediately rebuilt, so that its being called ‘rich and increased with goods’ is not incompatible with this book having been written under the Neronian persecution (A.D. 64).” (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, p.1524).
 - b. Reply: “It is true that the city was soon rebuilt, but some time must be allowed for recovery. This favors the Domitian date.” (Harrison, p.447).
 3. Exile (Rev. 1:9): “Exile is never mentioned as a form of punishment during the Neronian period; it was far too mild for the pagan city.” (Summers, p.80).
 - a. “John has been ‘banished’- - a very common form of persecution during Domitian’s reign. . . .” (Hendriksen, p.20).
 - b. Barnes cites evidence that Domitian exiled Domitilla, his niece, to a desert island for being a Christian. (p.1532).
 - c. Schaff who defends the early date, admits that banishment was one of Domitian’s “favorite modes of punishment.” (Schaff, p.427).

4. Heresies: The “character of the heresies described in ii.-iii. Certainly presupposes an acquaintance with incipient gnosticism which requires a later period than 70A.D. for its development.” (Moffatt, p.318).
 - a. Summers makes the same statement word for word, (p.83).
 - b. Objection: It is certain that the false teachers were Gnostics? DW.

5. The Nicolaitan party (Rev. 2:6,15): There is no trace of this heresy in Paul’s epistles, but at the time Revelation was written it was widely distributed and firmly rooted. (summers, p.83).

6. Emperor worship: “No worship of the emperor, adequate to explain the date of the Apocalypse, was enforced under Nero” (Moffatt, p.317).
 - a. “Revelation clearly indicates that the Christians were being persecuted because they refused to worship the emperor. There was no such demand during the time of Nero. He persecuted Christians to divert from himself to others the blame for burning the city of Rome.” (Summers, p.80).
 - b. Objection: But Summers admits there was emperor worship before Domitian. He says “Julius Caesar claimed divine honor and placed his statue among those of the gods in the temples. Augustus forbade the offering of divine honors to himself in Rome; yet he accepted the title ‘Augustus,’ hitherto the epithet of the gods, and in the provinces he sanctioned temples to himself in conjunction with the goddess Roma. The cult thus established continued through the following reigns, varying somewhat in the emphasis laid upon it according to the disposition of the respective emperors, but gradually becoming an essential factor in the imperial religious system.” (Summers, p.84).

7. Persecution in Asia (Rev. 2-3): “It was only in the reign of Domitian that the worship of the living emperor began to be promoted in Asia. Nero’s persecution seems to have been confined to Rome and was not for religious reasons.” (Harrison, p.446).
 - a. “The Neronian persecution was confined to Rome; it never reached the other parts of the empire.” (Summers, p.80).
 - b. “It is evident that the effect, as well as the cause, of Nero’s persecution, were confined to the walls of Rome’ (Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol.I, p.605).” (Hailey, p.2).
 - c. Objection: Mosheim and Schaff lean to the view that the persecution extended beyond Rome. The question is debatable.” (Hailey, p.2).

8. Martyrs: “The allusions to the martyrs (ii.13, and especially vi.10-11. . .) surely presuppose a much longer period than three or four years.” (Moffatt, p.317).
 - a. Objection: “The unmistakable allusions to imperial persecutions apply much better to Nero than to Domitian.” (Schaff, p.428).

9. New Jerusalem: The “conception of the new Jerusalem implies a post-70 date” (Moffatt, p.317).
 10. Propriety: “In favor of the traditional date may also be urged an intrinsic propriety that the book which closes the canon, and treats of the last things till the final consummation, should have been written last.” (Schaff, p.428).
 - a. Objection: Is it certain that the Revelation does deal with “the last things till the final consummation”? DW.
- B. External evidence: Statements of early “Christian writers” are generally considered to be the strongest ground for the late date’s defense.
1. Irenaeus (ca. 140-202): “Referring to the Revelation, Irenaeus says, ‘It was seen not very long ago, almost in our own generation, at the close of the reign of Domitian’.” (Harrison, p.446).
 - a. “The testimony of Irenaeus is of especial value since he was born about 120 and was a pupil of Polycarp, who in turn was a pupil of John. Irenaeus was also acquainted with Papias, ‘a hearer of John’ and a friend and companion of Polycarp.” (Lenski, p.7).
 - b. “Irenaeus was an intimate associate of Polycarp, who died in A.D. 155. He was contemporary with the apostle John for more than thirty years. There is little chance for Polycarp not to have known the true date, or for Irenaeus to have misrepresented his information. The testimony of Irenaeus is of the highest class.” (Hinds, p.ix).
 - c. Objection: “Irenaeus, writing a century after the fact, may easily have made the mistake of putting the name of one famous persecuting emperor instead of the other, and it is remarkable that his statement is supported by no other writer earlier than Victorinus of Pettau, after a second interval of a century.” (Randell, p.iv).
 - d. Objection: “Guericke purposes to take ‘Domitianou’ as an adjective, and to render the clause ‘near the close of the Domitian rule,’ i.e., the rule of Domitius Nero.” (Farrar, p.407).
 1. Reply: “But the absence of the article on which he relies gives no support to his view, and no scholar will accept this hypothesis, though he may admit the possibility of some confusion between the names Domitius and Domitian.” (Farrar, p.407); Farrar defends the early date).
 - e. Objection: “Irenaeus may have been misinterpreted; but even if not he might have made a ‘slip of memory,’ and confused Domitian with Nero. I myself, in talking to an eminent statesman, have heard him make a chronological mistake of some years, even in describing events in which he took one of the most prominent parts.” Farrar, p.408).

- f. Objection: “It is indeed difficult to set aside the clear testimony of Irenaeus, . . . But we must remember that he was mistaken even on more important points of history, as the age of Jesus, which he asserts, with an appeal to tradition to have been above fifty years.” (Schaff, p.427 footnote).
 - g. Objection: “Irenaeus, of course, is no great authority by himself on matters chronological” (Moffatt, p.320; Moffatt defends the late date).
 - h. Objection: “Here the critical reader (of the Greek sentence) will observe that the subject of the verb was seen, is ambiguous, and may be understood either of John or the Apocalypse. . . . To say the least, in fairness, one construction is as correct and legitimate as the other.” (Wallace, p.25; Wallace is summarizing Terry’s argument from Biblical Apocalypics, p.256-257).
 - i. Objection: “the chief witness for the late Domitian date is Irenaeus, of the second century, and the admissions of the ambiguity of his testimony renders its evidence null and void. . . .the argument has been reduced to a logomachy, a war of words, as to whether the statement of Irenaeus meant that John was seen or that the apocalypse was seen, and it has little, if any value, as evidence.” (Wallace, p.24-25).
 - j. Objection: “in the second century a ‘church father’ named Irenaeus is said to have seen Polycarp who is also said to have said that John was seen by him in the latter part of the reign of Domitian- - and that has been taken to mean that the apocalypse was seen, rather than John, at that time. The most that can be said of this contention is that it is rather a circuitous method of arriving at a point of chronology, and it sounds like hearsay than history.” (Wallace,p.15).
2. Tertullian (160? - ?230): “Tertullian was so sure that the book was written during the reign of Domitian that he begins with Domitian as the ‘one who is’ and reasons forward and backward.” (Summers, p.82).
- a. Objection: “He commits several historical blunders in doing so. His system makes Galba the first Roman emperor- - that is unforgiveable. . . .” (Summers, p.82).
 - b. Reply: “Tertullian’s theory is worthless except it reflects the belief of the day that the book was written under Domitian.” (Summers, p.82).
3. Origen (ca. 185? - ?254): “Origen says that John wrote the book while exiled on Patmos, no doubt holding the tradition of the Domitianic exile. . . .” (Summers, p.83).
- a. Objection: The above assertion is pure supposition for Origen “does not name the emperor.” (Summers, p.83).
4. Eusebius (260? - ?340): “Eusebius (Church History 5,8) quotes Irenaeus to the effect that Revelation was seen almost in the memory of men then living, namely ‘toward the end of the reign of Domitian’. . . .” (Lenski, p.7).

- a. “Eusebius says: ‘The apostle and evangelist John related these things to the Churches, when he had returned from exile in the island after the death of Domitian.’” (Barclay, p.17).
 - b. Objection: “but, even if he be not misunderstanding that the meaning of Irenaeus, his evidence goes for little, since he leant to the view that the Apocalypse was written by John the Presbyter, and not by the Apostle.” (Farrar, p.408).
 - c. Objection: “the fact that Eusebius denied that the apostle John was the author Revelation, and assigned its authorship to what is called ‘another John,’ casts serious reflection on the worthiness of this particular testimony and renders its value as evidence virtually nil.” (Wallace, p.25).
 - d. Objection: “Eusebius and Jerome, in the fourth century, do not strengthen what they merely repeat (that is, the statement of Irenaeus, DW).” (Randell, p.iv).
5. Victorinus (ca. 300): “Another testimony is from Victorinus at the end of the third century. ‘When John said these things, he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the mines by Caesar Domitian. There he saw the Apocalypse; and when at length grown old, he thought that he should receive his release by suffering; but Domitian being killed, he was liberated.’” (Harrison, p.446).
- a. The statement of Victorinus is also cited by Barclay (p.17).
6. Jerome (340? – 420): He said “In the fourteenth year after the persecution of Nero, John was banished to the island of Patmos, and there wrote the Revelation. . . Upon the death of Domitian, and upon the repeal of his acts by the senate, because of their excessive cruelty, he returned to Ephesus, when Nerva was emperor.” (Barclay, p.17).

Fall of the Roman Empire

The great historian, Gibbons, who wrote "*The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*," gave five reasons for *the fall of the great dynasty*.

First: Rapid increase of divorce, with the understanding Of the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society.

Second: Higher and higher taxes; the spending of money bread and celebrations.

Third: The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.

Fourth: The building of gigantic armaments, when the real enemy was within; the decadence of the people.

Fifth: The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to guide it.

A review of these principal factors in the decline of the Roman Empire can easily be related to our own time, and may portend our own decline from the status of a prominent world power. "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*" Again, "*Blesses is the nation whose God is Jehovah.*"

“Textual Study of the book of Revelation”

Verse 1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ

This suggests two thoughts:

1. Jesus Christ is the revealer of this message (Note: Gal. 1:11-12). Unless religious teaching of any kind comes from God it is not TRUE GENUINE REVELATION.

Example: (Matt. 15:8-9) – ‘Ye worship God in vain teaching for doctrine the commandments of men’: such as the book of Mormon – Discipline – Manual – Confession of Faith – Catechism. See what God says in regards
(I Thess.2:13) to these doctrines (Gal. 1:6-9)

2. Jesus Christ is the one (being revealed) His present glory – His total authority. He is the subject of the book and His power over His enemies. Also His position as head of the church is proclaimed in glorious fashion.

Example: His presence in the “churches of Christ” (Col.1:18; Eph. 1:20-23; Rev.2:1)

His victory over Satan and over death, and all His enemies (Rev. 1:17-18)

The victory of His saints who are faithful unto death to the Lord (Rev.2:7; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 3:20-21; Rev. 12:10-12)

3. Since this is a “Revelation” which means to “unveil or uncover” this IS a book which can be understood. Note these passages (Eph. 3:3-5; I Cor. 2:9-13). God meant for the message in the book to be “written” so that it could be read, heard, understood, and obeyed (see Rev. 1:3). Those who would teach that Revelation is a “MYSTERY” which cannot be understood are wrong. For it is an “uncovering”. On the other hand neither is Revelation a book which can be simply understood without great meditation and thought. One should have knowledge in depth of the Old Testament (Prophets especially) as well as an indepth knowledge of the New Testament. Study the book carefully, and prayerfully “rightly dividing the word of truth”. (II Tim. 2:15)

4. “To show unto His servants” – Because God cared for His servants and to comfort them in affliction and persecutions and death, God gave this message. He declared within the book that He is greater than “Devil, Caesar, or Rome”. That His power is supreme, and that none can withstand or resist Him without defeat. (Rev. 12:7) This book was written to show them that God is actually on the throne, and that He has perfect control of Destiny, Human government,

His people, and all things. This gave His people (church) confidence to trust completely in God (die for Him).

5. “Things which must shortly come to pass” – The events mentioned in this book were eminent. That is why God said (Rev. 22:10) not to seal up this book, for the time was “at hand”. (Note the contrast of Dan. 12:9). God told Daniel to “shut and seal these things, until the time of the end (they were a long way off from being fulfilled). This is why the theory of the “FUTURISTS” is wrong. They put the fulfillment of these coming tribulations and events in Revelation at the second coming of Christ. They say that Christ will set up His perfect Kingdom upon the earth in Jerusalem and reign a thousand years (UTOPIA). (Luke 1:31-35)
6. “Sent and signified these things by His angel to John” – This book is written in apocalyptic language even as Daniel, Zechariah, and Ezekiel in the Old Testament.

God used signs and symbols to depict present and future happenings. To interpret the Book of Revelation (signs and symbols therein) literally one would be led into some absurdities.

Example:

(Rev. 14:3-5) The 144,000 would be literal virgins – no men included at all (redeemed).

(Rev. 12:3-4) Great red dragon so large that it drew one-third of the stars of heaven down with its tail to the earth.

These signs and symbols simply stand for something else.

7. Throughout Biblical Revelation (angels) have brought God’s message to men (Heb. 2:1-2; Luke 1:31-35; Luke 1:11-20). The mission of angels is described in (Heb. 1:14).
8. John is spoken of as a “servant of God”. There is no greater honor that this (Tit.1:1). (He would be the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven let him be the servant of all). This is certainly true of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt. 20:26-28).

Verse 2

1. John bore witness of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ. This is the basis upon which “FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD” can be obtained (I John 1:3-7). Paul declared this also in (I Cor. 2:1-5). Peter also declares in (Acts 2:33) that they

were witnesses of Christ and His Resurrection. In order for anyone to please God they must adhere to the apostle's doctrine (Acts 2:42). See also (Acts 4:20). The word of the apostles is reliable for they were all "eye witnesses" of His miracles, His death, and resurrection from the dead. Note in (II Peter 1:16-21) the Holy Spirit divinely guided these apostles as they recorded their testimony of Christ and His church. (FELLOWSHIP CANNOT EXIST OUTSIDE THE APOSTLE'S DOCTRINE – Acts 1:8; I Cor. 15:1-8).

2. Prophecy has always come in visions and such like: See (Is. 1:1; 2:1). He saw prophecy by signs and visions. So the account of Revelation is a product of prophecy coming by visions like in the Old Testament.

Verse 3

1. Blessing pronounced upon the readers and hearers of this book – Since few copies of the divine scriptures existed in those days each church had "readers" who would read the scrolls to the churches in the assembly. As far as this book was concerned God knew how important it was that the "reader" be correct in his delivery (see Rev. 22:18-19). It was important that it be read with the right attitude, and voice and diction, etc. in order that it might accomplish what God intended (Is. 55:8-11). It is possible to (PREACH and TEACH) the gospel of Christ but not in love (Eph. 4:15). If so it will not be as effective as otherwise taught (TRUTH IN LOVE). It is also possible to preach the "Truth" (arrogantly, of envy or strife) - (Phil. 1:15-16). Certainly this will be a detriment to the effectiveness of God's word.
2. God's word has always been given unto man for many reasons:
 - a. Man may enjoy the blessings of God, which he receives from being obedient unto God. Note these passages (Jas. 1:25; Matt. 7:24-27). Christ is the (AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION) to all who obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 7:21-23). Unless one is obedient unto God through His word he has no right to call Him "LORD" (Luke 6:46).
 - b. To enable man to escape from Temptations which would ensnare his soul (Ps. 119:110). This the very means by – which the Lord overcame His great temptations (Matt.4:1-10). He declared boldly unto the Devil "it is written".
 - c. That men might know how to enjoy life here upon this earth to the fullest: Note in (I Tim. 4:8; Matt. 19:28-30).
 - d. That man might know (II Tim. 3:16-17) every good work God wants him to do to please Him and glorify Him as he lives upon God's created earth. (I Cor. 10:31-33).
3. God's word has been given unto us in "written" form for two reasons:

- a. God is glorified when I “of my own free will” chose to pick up the Bible and read and study it. If God had revealed His will directly to the mind of all men he would have no autonomous choice as to whether he knew God’s will or not.
- b. God intended for all mankind to have 1 message which everyone could understand alike. He intended for all men to be untied together in Christ in the same way. By writing down His message it was impossible that man could ever change it. To do so brings the curse of God down upon man (Gal. 1:6-9).

(God is no respecter of persons so He provided “ONE” message of truth for all.)
 ((Acts 10:34-35). See also (John 8:31-32). There is only ONE FAITH (Eph. 4:4-6))
 (God cannot be blamed for the religious confusion in the world today. He wrote His)
 (laws down so that there need not be any (who would go religiously wrong).)
 ((Eph.3:3-5; 5:15-17))

Verse 4

1. God is writing to the “7” churches in Asia – Since this number (7) stands for “perfection” or “completion”, and since Revelation has been preserved for us by God’s providence, it is to be understood that these churches and their situations and circumstances are representative of the LORD’S CHURCH in its entirety from Pentecost until the end of time. God is using these churches to represent a cross-section of the CHURCH. These churches represent the CHURCH in every stage of spiritual growth, and spiritual malnutrition.
2. There was at this time other churches of Christ in Asia-Minor besides these listed:
 - a. Hieropolis (col. 4:13) Colossae (Col. 1:2) Troas (Acts 20:5-7)
3. Because there were other churches in this area in the one Roman province made up of Lydia, Mysia, and Caria is one reason we conclude that God is using the expression “to the seven churches in Asia” as symbolic to include the Lord’s church “universally”.
4. Grace is the “UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD” which saves us through our obedience to the gospel of Christ (Eph. 2:8-10). The gospel of Christ is truly the “word of His grace” (Acts 20:32).
5. Peace is the “RECONCILIATION” we have with God through His Son who is our “peace” (Eph. 2:14). This peace can only come through Him who is the “PRINCE OF PEACE” (Is. 9”6). He brought the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15). In Christ we have peace that passeth all understanding to guard our hearts and lives in Christ Jesus. We obtain this “peace” through faith and obedience (Rom. 5:1-2) which gives us access into God’s grace. See also (II Cor. 5:18-20).

6. From “Him who is, who was, and who is to come” – Certainly this phraseology is a great tribute to the ETERNAL NATURE OF GOD (Ps. 90:1-2; I Tim. 6:15). He who is eternal controls time and events. The great I AM THAT I AM is the revelator of this message of Revelation. He is the one who addressed Moses in the long ago (Ex. 3:14). God has always existed in the present. There was never a time back in eons of eternity that God did not presently exist, neither will there ever be a time in the future that he will not presently exist. He is “before all things” (Col. 1:15-17). See also (John 8:24, 58).

The conclusion we can draw from this description of God is that He will always be around to reward those faithful unto Him, and He will always be around to inflict righteous judgment and punishment upon the disobedient. He is the great OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT (all knowing and all powerful) God. (Ps. 147:5)

He worketh “all things” after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:9-10).

7. The (7) Spirits of God – The Holy Spirit in his fullness and brilliant glory (perfection) is seen in this description.
 - a. His work of Creation in the beginning (Gen. 1:1-3)
 - b. His work of Inspiration of those who wrote the Bible (II Pet. 1:20-21; I Cor. 2:9-13)
 - c. His work of Revelation (guiding the apostles into all the truth) (John 16:13)
 - d. His work on Confirmation of the spoken word of Christ and apostles (Heb. 2:3-4)
 - e. His work of Convicting the world of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment (Rom. 6:16-18) by the gospel of Christ which the Holy Spirit revealed this is accomplished. (Eph 1:13)
 - f. His work in “indwelling the Christian” and bringing forth fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24; I Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:20-22)

Verses 5 – 7

1. The scope and the ministry of Christ are clearly seen in these passages. The Holy Spirit has summed up in three little verses (few words) the accomplishments and the glory of Christ. Let us take each thought separately and study it carefully:
 - a. Faithful Witness – Eternal Nature – (John 18:37-38) Christ came into the world to bear witness to the truth that (John 3:16) God so loved the world that he sent His Son to die for their sins (Rom. 8:31-32). God would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:3-4). Jesus Christ was a faithful witness even unto death even as He expects us to be (Rev. 12:11-12). He faithfully expressed unto man what GOD IS LIKE. He is the express image of His

Father (Heb. 1:2-3). The righteousness of God is truly revealed in Christ His Son. (I John 4:8-14).

- b. First-born from the Dead – Absolute Pre-eminence – (Col. 1:18) – This was the crowning achievement declaring Christ the Son of God with Power (Rom. 1:4). It was stated in prophecy (Is. 53:12) that He would divide the spoil with the strong. Also note (Matt. 12:29) which is part of the fulfillment of this prophecy when He casts out (demons). Note also (Luke 10:17-20) which describes Satan as lightening falling from heaven as Christ conquered him and his demons. When Jesus overcame the Devil’s temptations in the Wilderness He was spoiling the strong men (Matt. 4:1-10). Satan and Death – But the crowning act of VICTORY OVER SATAN AND HIS ENEMIES was His (“Resurrection from the dead”). Note the description of this is (Heb. 2:14-16). He accomplished the mission He was sent to perform and that was to destroy the works of the Devil (I John 3:8). When Jesus entered the (realm of death) (Matt. 27:50) He went alone in combat with the Devil (Matt. 27:46). But He came forth victorious (having the keys of death and hades). There is no realm or domain where Christ is not “all powerful” (I Tim. 6:16) ONLY POTENTATE...
- c. Ruler of the Kings of the earth – Universal Authority – (Ps. 2:6-12; I Tim 6:15) – Jehovah ruled in the Kingdoms of men in the Old Testament times (Deut. 4:17, 25, 32). He had the power and exercised it to raise up powers and nations to serve His purposes (Is. 10:5-12). He used Babylon to destroy other nations which in God’s judgment needed punishment, and then He turned around and destroyed Babylon for being evil (Is. 12-14). Note also these passages which describe how God ruled the nations through His providence (Jer. 18:7-10). Also read (Amos 3:1-8).
 - 1. It was stated in prophecy that when Christ would become the “annointed” of God, sitting upon the Holy Hill of Zion (Heb. 12:22-23 which is the church), that Christ would rule the nations with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:5-12), and that the kings of the earth would be subservient unto Him (verse 12). This was fulfilled when Jesus ascended into heaven after His resurrection from the dead (I Pet. 3:22). Notice the apostle Peter by inspiration declares that angels, authorities, and powers were made subject unto Him. Since Paul by inspiration refers to the (government of men) as “powers that be” (Rom. 13:1-6) then Jesus Christ is ruler over all human government by His providence. He is truly the “ruler of the kings of the earth”.
- d. He loveth us and loosed us from our sins – Merciful Atonement – Sacrifice – The love of Christ constraineth us to be His servants (II Cor, 5:14-15). His love for us (to die for one so unworthy) surpasseth knowledge and understanding (Eph. 3:19). Note also (Rom. 5:8-10; John 15:13). He shed His blood for the remission of the sins of mankind and in order to accomplish this He had to empty Himself and become a humble servant (in the form of a man) and die on the cross (Phil. 2:1-9).

1. He endured the cross, despising the shame, for the glory set before Him (Heb. 12:1-3)
 - a. Why did He do this? What glory was before Him? (Tit. 2:13-14) purify a people for His own possession. A possession He [prized above all (Eph. 1:14; Eph. 5:25-27). He loved the church more than He loved His glory as “GOD”. Why again we ask???

Because of His entire creation He created, this is all that He will be able to salvage. Note (II Pet. 3:10-13) the earth and the works therein shall be burned up. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The wicked people of all time will be cast into “HELL FIRE” (Rev. 20:15; John 5:28-29; Matt. 25:46).

All that God will have left of His entire creation is His church (glorious). No wonder Christ loved the church enough to die for it (Eph. 5:25-32).

But God thought it was worth it all when he spared Noah and those with him in the Ark (Gen. 7:23). Look at how much the obedience of one man means to God.

- e. Kingdom and Priests – Kingly and Prophetic and Priesthood Office – Not only is Christ the prophet of God unto men (Heb. 1:1) but He is also High Priest and King of God’s people. (I Tim. 6:15; Heb. 4:14-16).

1. There is no other like Him who served in all three offices except Melchizedic (Heb. 6:20-Heb. 7:1). He is King in His kingdom the church (Col. 1:13-14). The Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of God are the same (Eph.5:5). Christ began His spiritual reign on the throne of David on Pentecost (Acts 2:29-36). This fulfilled Gabriel’s announcement concerning Christ and His birth to Mary (Luke 1:31-33). When Christ became King He fulfilled (II Sam. 7:12-13). He ascended into heaven and there He became our High Priest when He entered into the Holy of Holies (Heb. 4:14-15). See also (Heb. 7:26-27; Heb. 10:11).

2. In Christ Jesus as sons of God (Gal. 3:26-27) we are priests and kings also and reign with Christ in His kingdom (Rev. 5:9). It is through Christ that we as priests offer up “spiritual sacrifices” acceptable unto God (I Pet. 2:5). We also offer ourselves as a living sacrifice unto God (Rom. 12:1-2). As kings we reign with Him (Eph. 2:4-6) in the heavenly places (spiritual realms). As we are faithful unto Christ through obedience to His word we (reign) over Sin and the Father of liars.

- a. Therefore the church (people bought by the blood of Christ) is a (ROYAL PRIESTHOOD) (I Pet. 2:9-11). It is by the help of our King (Jesus) we

overcome Satan and his devices (Jas. 4:6-10). We are citizens of the great Kingdom of God's dear Son (Eph. 2:19-22). What abundant honor hath been bestowed upon us to be **KINGS** and **PRIESTS** of God.

- f. Coronation as "LORD AND CHRIST" (Acts 2:36) – Prestigious Position – (Eph. 1:20-22) – This was foretold by Daniel (7:13-14). "One like unto the Son of man came unto the Ancient of days and there was given unto Him Dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom." After His resurrection Jesus openly to His apostles declared that "all authority was His in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18-20). David also foretold of this **MESSIAHSHIP** of Christ in (Ps. 110:1-2).
 - 1. Christ will reign until He comes again. But when the end comes and judgment takes place upon all mankind Christ will relinquish His throne to the Father (II Cor. 15:24-28). This certainly contradicts the theory that when Christ comes He is going to set up His Kingdom on earth. On the contrary the New Testament teaches that when He comes again He is going to deliver the Kingdom (church) back to God (verse 24).
 - a. Christ will reign on His throne as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16), until He hath put all His enemies under His feet, until He hath abolished all RULE-AUTHORITY-POWER. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. And this will be accomplished when the Resurrection of mankind occurs when the Lord Jesus comes to give glorification unto His saints, and to punish evildoers eternally (John 5:28-29).
 - 1. If Christ is not "KING" now, then He does not have all authority as He said He had in (Matt. 28:18). He would only have partial authority. Premillennialists say that Christ will become King when He comes again, which in essence denies that He is now King of His Kingdom, the (church). Paul stated in (Col. 1:13-14) that He was in the Kingdom of God's dear Son and in it had forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ. John also declared that he was in it (Rev. 1:9).
- g. "Behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him" – Awesome Judgment – This of course is pointing out that Jesus Christ is JUDGE of all (Heb. 12:23). All must stand before His judgment seat and give account unto Him for the way they lived their lives while on earth (II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10). This particular verse not only includes the final judgment, but is true of all of the judgments of the Lord.
 - 1. Note in (Is. 19:1), that when it is mentioned that Jehovah cometh upon a cloud, that it means that He is coming in a judgment upon His enemies. Note also (Zeph. 1:14-15) and (Matt. 26:64). God is describing how He is going to

come in judgment upon the Jewish nation through (Titus-Roman emperor) around A.D. 70.

2. God executed judgment upon Pharaoh and his army out of the cloud (Ex. 14:24).
3. In (Rev. 14:14-16) judgment upon the evil is depicted here as done while riding on a white cloud. The white cloud being a symbol of purity and righteous judgment.
 - a. Jesus Christ will be the great judge (John 5:22) because he is a son of man. None will be able to offer human reasons or excuses for disobedience for since Christ was man He Himself knows all that we are capable of and the temptations we face.

From the standpoint that He is “GOD” He also knows by divine knowledge why we did or did not obey His voice. So Christ is equally kindred to God and man.

1. God says that every knee should bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. When would this occur?

At the final judgment none will be there who doesn't know Christ is Lord. Rest assured that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by His Son whom He hath raised from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

- a. Read (Matt. 25) to get a clearer understanding of Christ as judge.

Verse 8 Alpha and Omega – First and last letter of Greek alphabet:

1. This simply means that God is not only the first and last but everything in between. First cause of all effect. This is in harmony with (Col. 1:15-17). He is eternal in nature, not subject to death nor limited by time and space (II Pet. 3:8; Ps. 139_7-10).
2. The Almighty – descriptive of His omnipotence and power (Ps. 147:5; Ps. 66:3-4)
 - a. Man isn't almighty with his hydrogen bombs, awesome jets, laser weapons, cannons, rockets, and atomic power. Note the magnificence of God's power (Ps. 113:3-5) note also these verses (Is. 46:9-11). Man will never be able to traveling at the speed of light reach the outer limits of the universe to the stars which are over millions of light years away. Yet God put those stars out there by the word of His power (Obad. 4) man cannot go far away enough to get away from God.

Even if he could go to the farthest star GOD WILL BRING MAN DOWN to humility (see Dan. 4:35).

God was able to hurl those hot boiling globes of gases out in space known as the stars and yet controls their output of energy so man isn't hurt by them (Is. 55:8-9).

Verse 9 John (your brother and partaker with you in tribulation).

1. In order to be meet to be partakers of the inheritance in light (Col. 1:12) we must need to be partakers of tribulations and persecutions and sufferings with Christ (Rom. 8:16-18). Note also that God makes this promise to all who serve Him faithfully (II Pet. 3:12). It is the trying of our faith which builds us up and makes us strong and purifies our lives in Christ (I Pet. 1:6-10; Jas. 1:2-4). It is the persecutions we receive which allows us to share in fellowship with Christ (Phil 3:9-11). We glorify God in this way (I Pet. 4:16).
2. In the kingdom – The Kingdom of Christ is already in existence at this time as John was in it along with those of the “7” churches of Asia.
3. Patience is involved in our salvation – Note these passages which teach the necessity of this quality of steadfastness or perseverance (Jas. 1:12; I Pet. 5:8-9; Heb. 12:1-2; Luke 21:19). Rev. 14:12 teaches that the patient are those who keep the commandments of Christ until the end of life. See for example (Rev. 2:10,13) Antipas was faithful unto death.
4. Patmos is where this letter is written and John is exiled there.
 - a. Patmos is an island about 45 miles out in the Aegean Sea west of Miletus, It was about 30 miles in circumference and in John's day almost no inhabitants at all. Today this island is called “PATINO, PATIMO, OR PATMOSA and it has an excellent harbor now.
 1. John is exiled there because of his holding fast the words of Christ, and the word of His testimony (Rev. 12:11).
 - a. Perhaps in the providence of God he is exiled here so that in solitude he may receive the message of this book to write down for all mankind to profit by.

Verse 10 “In the Spirit” – What is the meaning of this expression made by John?

1. Here this expression means “under the control and influence of” (II Pet. 1:20-21; John 16:13).

- a. The Holy Spirit gave the New Testament apostles and prophets the words and thoughts by INSPIRATION leaving nothing to chance in the process of Revelation (I Cor. 2:9-13). They were “borne along” by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. They only wrote “:when the Spirit told them to write” (Rev. 10:4). And they wrote only that which the Spirit told them to write (Rev 14:13). This is INSPIRATION.... They did not write anything without the “moving of the Holy Spirit”.
2. On the Lord’s Day – This is an expression referring to the (1st day of the week). The Greek word “KURIAKOS” is only found in one other passage in the New Testament. Read (I Cor. 11:20) and notice that it is connected to the “supper” of the Lord. This word indicates pertaining to or ownership. The first day of the week is the day Christ arose from the dead (Mark 16:9) and this was the day that the apostles met together to partake of the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7). This is also the day the Lord gave unto all mankind the opportunity to be saved from sin. This is the day early Christians gave of their assets to help the church accomplish the work God gave the church to do (I Cor. 16:1-2). While the brethren in the “7” churches of Asia would be worshipping God on the 1st day of the week, at the same time John was caught up “in the Spirit”.
- a. This is not to be confused with the (day of the Lord) which would indicate judgment (II Pet. 3:10-13). This is referring to the final day of judgment of the Lord.
 - b. Neither is this referring to the Sabbath day as some teach (Mark 2:27-28).
 - 1. The fourth commandment (remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy) is not in the New Testament (Ex. 20:8-11). This day was bound only to the Jews (Deut. 5:1-3).
 - a. God said He would change His law because the Jews did not keep it. Notice these passages refuting the keeping of the Sabbath day under the law of Christ (Jer. 31:31-34; Hos. 2:11-Sabbath would cease, Amos 8:4, 5 and 9).
 - b. This was fulfilled on the day Christ was crucified on the cross (Matt. 27:45).
 - c. Paul declares that the day Christ died He nailed the Old Testament to His cross. Therefore no one can bind the Sabbath day, or judge you for not observing it.
 - d. The voice which John heard behind him (as a trumpet) demanded his undivided attention. It is the voice of the ALPHA and OMEGA (I am that I am). Since it was behind him, he turned to look at the voice which spoke to him. For (I AM) notice (John 8:57-58; John 14:6). Prophecy here comes by visions which he is able to write in the book and send to the (7) churches in Asia. Prophecy did not come by some method of cold dictation. (John 16:13) (John 15:26; and 14:25-26).

Verse 12 Vision of the (7) Golden Candlesticks:

1. Seven Golden candlesticks: Indicates value God places upon the church in His sight.
 - a. Gold would indicate the preciousness of church because of the price paid for it (Acts 20:28).
 - b. Gold would be indicative of the rarest and purest of metals upon this earth (Matt. 7:13-14). Notice also the description of the church (Rev. 5:9). See also (Tit. 2:14).
 - c. The faith of each Christian is more valuable than the purest refined gold when it is tried and proven faithful (I Pet. 1:3-9).
 - d. Here we also see the comparison of the Golden candlesticks with seven lamps in the Old Testament tabernacle (House of God). Note (Ex. 25:31-40). The lamps on the Candlestick received their fire from the oil places in the base of it.
 1. In like manner the Lord's church receives her light from Him (Christ) who is the light of the world (John 8:12).
 - a. The church is to be like a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid (Matt. 5:14). From each member of the church the righteousness of God should shine to light the way for all who behold it to the Salvation of their souls in Christ.
 1. The church is to be a glorious "church" not having a spot or blemish or wrinkle. (Eph 5:25-27)
 - e. God warned Moses (Ex. 25:40) to make Golden Candlesticks with seven lamps according to the divine pattern God showed him on the mount. See also for reference (Heb. 8:1-5).
 1. No church today is the Lord's church unless it is according to the pattern of Christ's church shown us in the New Testament (Rom 16:16-18).

Verse 13 Christ in the midst of the (7) Golden Candlesticks:

- a. John is about to behold the fulfillment of the teaching of Paul (Eph. 1:22-23). Jesus not only is the head of the church, but the church is the fullness of Christ and Christ is the fullness of the church. Here we see not only the truth that Christ is always with His church but we see His providential care for them as He controls the destiny of the church. Jesus said "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world". (Matt. 28:18-20).
- b. Here also is included some insight as to how Christ cares for His church (Heb. 13:5).
 1. He loves them more than He loves Himself (died for the church)-(Eph 5:23-25).

2. He guides them continually through His words (gospel of Christ)-(Acts 20:32).
3. He answers their prayers when they ask in faith and are faithful unto Him. (I John 3:22).
4. He rewards them when they obey Him for He forgives their sins daily (I John 1:7-9).
5. He punishes them when they go astray so they will repent and return unto Him (I Cor 11:32; Heb 12:5-7).
6. He gives them complete protection from all of their adversaries (Devil and man) – (Rom. 8:16-39). Notice also these things (Rev. 6:10; Rev. 8:3-4 – answer in verse 5 - judgments follow).

Yes truly Jesus is in the midst of His “SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS” or His church.

- c. The description of Christ here arrayed in His High Priestly attire, as well as Kingly garments and as Prophet.

Compare (Dan. 10:5-6; Dan. 7:13) same appearance.

1. Long robe that is of the High priest (Ex. 28:4; Ex. 39:29-30, 41; Ex. 40:13). Aaron’s clothing especially made by the instruction of God. Beautiful, expensive, sanctified.
 - a. Like Christ our King and High Priest is clothed in Righteousness and purity so also we should clothe ourselves in garments of righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). Christ is pure and so should we be who pattern ourselves after Him (I John 3:1-3).

(1) Note in connection to these thoughts (Rev. 3:4-5; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 19:8). We are priests serving God under Christ our High Priest so let us be holy and without blemish.

2. And the golden girdle Christ was clothed with is TRUTH (John 14:6). He is King of Truth (John 18:36-38). Like Christ girded about with TRUTH so also let us be (Eph. 6:10-11). As God’s prophet he speaks only the truth (John 8:31-32).

Verse 14

3. His head and His hair as white as white wool - (Dan. 7:13).
 - a. This would be a great tribute pointing to His infinite knowledge and eternal existence (Rom. 11:33-34, He is the ANCIENT OF DAYS).
 - b. The hoary head is also a symbol of honor (Prov. 16:31) none deserveth honor more than Christ. He has a name above every name (Phil. 2:7-9).
 - c. His head was white as snow (I John 1:6-7). God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. This again is descriptive of His character of holiness (I Pet. 1:15-16).

4. His eyes were as a flame of fire - (I Pet. 3:12)
 - a. This would indicate His ability to see all things whether good or evil (Prov. 15:3).
 - b. Also this shows that no evil can be done upon earth (even) in darkness that God doth not see and will recompense (Jer. 16:17; Ps. 139:11-12). See also (Amos 9:8 – Jer. 16:17).
 - c. The all-seeing eyes of Christ are discussed here (Heb. 4:13). Saw His children who were faithful being persecuted and gave them this message of Revelation to comfort them, and give them hope to fight the good fight of faith until death (Zech. 4:10).

Christ also noticed the enemies of His people and punishes them totally (Eccl. 12:13-14). He will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing.
 - d. The penetrating eyes of Christ behold all that His churches do. (I KNOW THY WORKS). He seeth their obedient work, and he knoweth their every problem and evil deed. Christ is indeed intimately acquainted with every Christian in His body.

Verse 15

5. His feet like unto burnished brass as if refined in a furnace: (Dan. 10:6)
 - a. This of course would show the strength of Christ in overcoming his enemies. Notice in connection (Ps. 110:1-2; I Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:22-23).

- b. Burnished brass was the strongest metal of the day (hence indicated great power). Notice description of serpent Moses made and put up for all to look on and be healed (Numbers 21:9).
 - 1. In prophecy God compared the feet of his faithful remnant who would be faithful to him (Messianic referring to the church) as having hoofs of brass. This showed their ability to conquer through Christ Jesus who died for them.
 - 2. With His hoofs of brass (feet) he conquered Satan and death and sin (Heb.2:14-16).
- 6. Voice as the voice of many waters - Roaring – authoritative (Ezek. 43”2, Ex. 19:16).
 - a. Who has a more authoritative voice than the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 17:5).
 - b. Voice would be attention getting (Matt. 7:28).

Verse 16 – Seven stars in His right hand – two-edged sword out of His mouth – Brilliance counsel

- 1. Since it said (in verse 20) that the seven stars are the seven angels of the churches, and since Christ hath these stars in His right hand of power, this seems to indicate that He has “the inner working light” of the churches in His power and providence.
- 2. Some also think that this picture (Christ holding the seven stars in His hand indicates that the (DESTINY) of all churches is in the hand of Christ.
- 3. There are also some who believe that the angels of the churches (stars) in Christ’s hand are representative of the messengers who would carry the book of Revelation to the different congregations and read the message to the churches (hence the reader), see verse 3.

Personal comments are found within these dark lines:

This author's contention is that No.1 is correct and that the angels of the churches are simply the "ministering spirits" of the local congregation. This seems to hold in accord with the contents of each letter to the churches. For therein each letter the (WORKS) of the church are being discussed (whether good or bad).

Certainly No. 2 is true in the sense that Christ holds all things in His providential hands.

It is also true that they would have a reader to read the message of this book to each church.

4. Out of Christ's mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword (war weapon) like a spear.
 - a. Representative of the power of Christ (John 1:1-3).
 1. With His word (Rom. 1:16-17) He wars against the forces of evil.
 2. We see the conquering Christ with His sword victorious in (Rev. 19:15).
 3. Man findeth spiritual life by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).
 4. The word is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12).
 5. Notice the conquering words of Christ destroying His enemies (John 8:7).
 6. Notice how His words serve to comfort His people (II Thess. 1:7-9).
 7. It is the voice of Christ, which will call the dead forth from graves (John 5:28-29).
 8. When Christ returns to punish the evil and reward the good His voice will be the destruction force to devour His enemies (II Thess. 2:8). See also (John 5:28-29).

It is the word of Christ which will be the standard of judgment in the end (John 12:48).

5. Countenance was as sun shining in His strength (Acts 26:13). When Christ appeared to Saul he appeared in light brighter than the noon-day sun.
 - a. Christ dwelleth in light no man can approach unto (I Tim. 6:15-16).
 - b. This is a similar description John gives of what he saw on Mt. Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8).
 - c. These words regarding His countenance are symbolic describing His glory and majesty.
 - d. Christ is truly the (Heb. 1:3) effulgence of God's glory, image of His substance.

Verse 17 Effect upon John of this awesome scene and vision: (Matt. 17:6)

1. He fell down at the feet of the Lord as if he were dead (took his breath away). Acts 9 – Saul, compare also (Dan. 10:7-9).
2. In the spirit he was able to behold Jesus in His glory, but even then it was fearsome.
3. Christ laid His right hand upon John in gesture of comfort and assurance.
 - a. The great hand which formed the Universe and all things therein. The great hand which formed man out of the dust of the ground. This Christ with His mighty hand condescends unto John to place His hand upon him.
 - b. The hand of the Lord is gentle enough to caress John and give him strength, and comfort. This is the same hand that reached down and destroyed SODOM and GOMORRAH with fire and brimstone (Ge. 19:24-28).
4. The comforting words of Christ: (I Thess. 4:13-18)
 - a. First He tells him not to be afraid (Matt. 14:29-30). Peter was afraid but the Lord comforted him with words, as He took his hand and lifted him up out of the waters.
 1. The He tells him “WHY” he should not be afraid:
 - a. For I am the first and the last and the Living One:
 1. This is implying that He is the (first and last) to enter the realm of Hades and death and return (Matt. 16:18-19). Jesus declared death

could not hold Him and that He would arise from the dead (Matt. 16:21).

- a. Hades has gates (Ps. 9:13), (Ps. 107: Death has gates also).
- b. When Christ arose after doing battle with the Devil alone (Matt. 27:46) He had the keys of Death and Hades therefore had power even in Hadean realm. **THUS HE IS THE (FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD) (Col. 1:18) has preeminence.**
 1. He will use that power in the judgment day (John 5:28-29).

INTRODUCTION “The seven churches of Asia”

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS.

THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA.

THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS.

THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA.

FACTS ABOUT JEZEBEL.

THE CHURCH AT SARDIS.

THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA.

THE CHURCH in LAODICEA.

There is no need to entertain possibilities in our mind concerning the meaning of the ‘7’ candlesticks. They are said to be representative of the SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA or “the church of Christ” in its entirety.

As we enter into the study of Chapters two and three, we may be cautious and careful not to be dogmatic or at the same time too over confident that we know and understand all in these passages and their relevance to us today. Certainly we can profit today by studying the situation of the “church” in the first century.

CHAPTER 2 Verse 1-7: This letter is written to the Angel (working or ministering spirit of the church). It is also possible that Angel could be the messenger to each church, who would read the letter to the congregation.

Ephesus was the greatest city in the Roman province of Asia-minor. It was from this city that all Asia heard the word of the Lord while Paul was there three years preaching and teaching Christ (Acts 19:10, 26 and Acts 20:31). Notice how much good can be done by one church in personal evangelism working autonomously, under the oversight of elders (I Pet. 5:1-4). It is interesting to see how the word of the Lord flourished and grew even though this city was the headquarters for the worshippers of Diana. In fact the temple of Diana was located here in this city. Notice how the preaching of Christ and His church by Paul brought persecution upon him (Acts 19:23-41). The word of the Lord increases more under the threat of violence and persecution (Acts 8:1-4).

Jesus introduces himself unto them in this manner – “These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, and He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks”. This assures the church that Christ is ever with them, providing for their every need. This was true as long as they walked in the light of His work (I Jn 1:7). He assures them that He knoweth their works. Christians may deceive many other Christians, and they may deceive themselves, but rest assured as God can read the hearts of men (Mark 2:8) and seeth in the darkness as if it were light (Ps.139:11-12) He knows their works and He is not deceived in any way.

He knoweth the extent of our works. It is evident that God knows if we are endeavoring to do all that he hath commanded us (Matt. 28:20). And it is also equally true that He knows what we are leaving undone (Matt. 23:23). He knoweth whether or not we are doing our best to do better from day unto day, or whether we are doing only what we think we can get by with as minimum service. He also knows whether or not we are working as Christians who love God and the souls of men supremely, or if we fight the good fight of faith simply as an obsession to rid the world of sin and sinners. It is evident that Christ knew that the motivation of the church in Ephesus was not love. They were toiling hard without love. They were toiling with patience (perseverance or steadfastness). It is absolutely necessary if we are to attain success as workers for God and with God that we achieve this mark of maturity (Gal. 6:7-9). They knew their labor was not in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58). They also knew that faith and that works was pleasing unto God (Jas. 2:24). Let us run with patience the race before us also (Heb. 12:1-3). It is mentioned in (II Peter 1:5-11) as necessary for growth unto the life which is eternal.

The church in Ephesus is commended for its doctrinal soundness. The Lord said they could not bear evil men. They tried them using the word of the Lord as the standard (I John 4:1-5). There were men there who claimed to be apostles but were really nothing but imposters. I can read the New Testament about the signs of a true apostle. In (II Cor. 12:12) Paul discusses this. The apostles had all nine of the Spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:7-11). The true apostle could pass the Holy Spirit unto others by the laying on of his own hands upon others (Acts 8:18). If a man was a true apostle he taught only the gospel taught by the inspired apostles (Acts 2:42, Gal. 1:11-12). Men today who claim to be apostles are false because the day of spiritual gifts have ceased (I Cor. 13:8-10) and no man today can pass the Holy Spirit unto another through the laying on of hands.

REV. 2:3-7: It is pointed out by John these Ephesians were suffering as Christians for the sake of Christ and were not ashamed (I Pet. 4:16). They had never grown lazy in their labor for the Lord for they realized the great reward awaiting them after the battle was over (II Tim. 4:6-8). It is pointed out by the Lord, however, to these brethren in Ephesus the seriousness of working diligently without the true and proper attitude and motivation factor. Paul states to these same brethren that (Eph. 4:15) they must “speak the truth”, but that it must be spoken “in love”.

God’s message is indeed the truth that leads men to the Heavenly and Eternal God (John 14:6). But it will only accomplish what God wills for it to accomplish (Is. 55:11) if it is presented

truthfully in love. Man should be able to see that God is a God of truth and love, and justice and vengeance (Ps. 31:5; I John 4:8-10); Dan. 4:37; II Thess. 1:7-9).

Jesus said “the truth shall make men free” (John 8:32), and Paul said (I Cor. 13:4) “if I give my body to be burned and have not love” it is not worth nothing or profits nothing.

So it is evident the Lord means for us to “have a faith that works by love” (Gal. 5:6). May we never get carried away with the obsession of fighting evil, that we do not manifest our genuine love for God. If we start to drift in that direction may we take heed to the advice of Christ, which follows.

“Remember therefore from which thou art fallen and repent” is the wise counsel to these people. They were to think back to the time when they first obeyed the gospel and were zealously happy and in love with the Lord, and the desire to save others was a driving force which carried them into the white fields of harvest working relentlessly. The Lord is asking them to return to this former attitude of mind and work patiently for their own salvation and the salvation of all men. List to the words of David when he said (Ps. 51:12-13), “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit, then will I instruct transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted to the Lord.” When Jesus tells them to “repent” he is asking them to come to a change of mind sufficient to motivate them to change their lives. But if they refuse to do so punishment would be meted out unto them. Jesus said he would come quickly and remove their candlestick out of place.

This is an indication that Christ would not own or recognize the church as belonging to Him or following His word. Notice the criteria for recognition by God (II Tim. 2:19). God has stated in His eternal word every good work that he wants His people to do (II Tim. 3”16-17). I can only do what He has said if I want to please Him. For any person to do More or Less than what Christ has authorized is Sin (I John 5:17) and removes one from being in fellowship with God and His great Son (II John 9).

Jesus was not making an idle threat. For it is apparent that God has removed His candlestick from many such churches as Ephesus. Man can not know the day or the hour that God does remove His sanctions and approvals of a congregations’ activities, but we can know that a church is not following God’s laws by its works and actions. It is not within man’s jurisdiction to judge the hearts of men (Matt. 7:1-2) but it is up to us to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24) and the standard we must use for that judgment is God’s word (John 12:48-49).

Therefore is any church today does MORE or LESS than what the Lord’s churches did in the first century by the approval of the Holy Spirit inspired apostles, this church is in error and as Jesus advised Ephesus to “repent” or else... so also must they. If not it is plain to all that they do not respect Christ not His word, for by their actions they deny Him. Let all Christians take heed.

REV. 2:6-7: The commendation to the church regarding their hatred in regards to the deeds of the NICOLAITANS. This word means “destroyer”. The doctrine, which they held to, was destructive to all the souls of those people who were involved in it. This doctrine advocated satisfaction of the “lusts of the flesh” even to the point of fornication and adultery.

God warns in (Gal. 5:19-21) that to fulfill the lusts of the flesh would keep a person out of heaven and fit him for hell. It is very evident from (Tit. 3:3-6) that to live such a life is deceptive, foolish, and disobedient unto God. Those Gentiles who walked in the lists of the carnal man in Corinth (I Cor. 6:9-11) were required to give up this sort of life in order that their sins be forgiven them.

God states that “those who do such things” are worthy of death and His wrath (Rom. 1:28-32). Yes God hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but certainly was not willing that a one of them should perish, but that all of them come to repentance (II Pet. 3:9). We must as God does, also hate the deeds of evil men, but love their souls enough to try to snatch them away from the fires of eternal torment (Jude 22-23). Let us adamantly hate SIN but love the sinner with all our heart. This is the very purpose and reason Christ left heaven and was put to death and raised again (Luke 19:10).

Just as God warned the church in Ephesus to repent and do the beginning works, so also must we heed the warning of the Lord and repent of every transgression of God’s laws we are guilty of. This truly is the meaning of “he that hath an ear let him hear”.

Jesus ends His message to the church in Ephesus with the beautiful promised blessing “to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God”. The promises of God are always conditional. Here the condition is that a Christian must be an “overcomer”. This means he must have remained faithful in facing persecution, affliction, temptation, and ultimately death. Notice these passages in regards to “overcoming”. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life (James 1:12). “If any man suffereth as a Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name (I Pet. 4:16). “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). Be an overcomer for God.

What a beautiful scene is pictured here. The tree of life is in the midst of the “paradise” of God (garden of God). Man is separated from the tree of life in the garden of Eden by his disobedience and sin against God (Gen. 3:22-24). The book of Revelation openly declares to the “overcomer” that he may have “right to the tree of life” (Rev 22:14). This verse shouts that the tree of life would be his to eat of once again. The leaves of the tree of life will serve as healing for the nations throughout eternity of all the redeemed of God (Rev. 22:2). This, of course, is symbolic of eternal life which is the gift of God through Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

In summary what are some valuable lessons we can learn from this inspired letter to the church at EPHESUS?

1. That all Christians are to hold fast to the faithful word (Tit. 1:9).
2. Let us do only the authorized works of the Lord Jesus (II Tim. 3:17).
3. To realize that God's all-seeing eye is watching us (I Pet. 3:12).
4. That patience or steadfastness is a necessity to have (Heb. 12:1-2).
5. That above all, we must speak the truth in love always (Eph. 4:15).
6. That we must hate sin in all forms and try to correct it (I Thess. 5:22).
7. That heaven will never belong to the "quitter" (Rom. 8:35-39).
8. The souls of the sinner are precious to God and to us (Matt. 16:26).

REV. 2:8-11: The message of Christ to the church in Smyrna is herein:

This letter is also addressed to the "angel" of the church in this city. Again we reiterate that since the message deals with the actual works of the Lord's church here, that the "angel" of the church would be referring to the "ministering spirit" of the church.

The church receives only "commendation" from the Lord. He has ought against them. The church here had learned that true riches did not in God's eyes consist of abundance of earthly possessions (Luke 12:15-21). They were "poor in this world's goods" but "Oh so rich toward God"! It is very evident that they were just the opposite of the church in the city of "Laodicea" (Rev. 3:14-18). It is possible that this church had its beginning when Paul was in Ephesus (Acts 19:10) and all Asia heard the WORD of the LORD.

The "preeminence of Christ" is asserted here when he declares himself as the "first and the last" to ENTER the realm of Hades through the gates of death, and there battle Satan and CONQUER him and destroy his power and hold over mankind (Heb. 2:14-15). When He arose from the dead, He manifested His VICTORIOUS TRIUMPH over the "prince of Darkness" (Col. 2:14-16). His RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD declared Him to be the SON OF GOD WITH POWER (Rom. 1:4). This is "He" who is speaking to the church in Smyrna. They were being addressed by the "blessed and only Potentate" (I Tim. 6:15-16). They should pay the most careful heed to His VOICE.

Jesus assures them that He "KNOWS" their works and tribulation and poverty. Just as God knew the "persecution of His people" (Ex. 3:7-8) in Egyptian bondage, and came to their rescue through Moses to deliver them, so also God is AWARE of the church and her tribulations and persecutions in the world. It is certain that Jesus knew who the genuine Christians were in the congregation, and he also knew who the "infiltrators of Satan" were also. (Those who said they were Jews but were NOT)! Here the word JEW is used to refer to those who were "spiritually kindred" to Abraham through their obedience to Christ (Gal. 3:26-29). Since BOTH "Jew and Gentile" could enjoy salvation in Christ, by the forgiveness of Sins through His shed blood, (Eph. 2:12-18) the Jew as a physically related descendant to Abraham was not important to God. The Jews who were Jews "inwardly" (Rom. 2:28-29) were blessed by God in Christ Jesus, as the people of God. Not the Jew who glorified "in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3), but those who worshipped God in the Spirit. God is NOT "interested" in the slightest today in the "physical nation of Israel" except only to save the souls of all through the gospel of Christ. It is the

“heavenly Jerusalem” (the church of Christ) according to (Heb. 12:22-28) that God delights in. The “DAPPER” day prophets who today blow up like a large balloon the MESSAGE that “Christ is going to gather all Jews into Palestine and there reign over them, and all the earth for a 1,000 years, when He comes again”, are victims of “spiritual ignorance”! These “prophets of Satan” misunderstand the Old Testament “true prophets” and their message concerning Christ and His Kingdom. Christ is NOW “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” (I Tim. 6:15). His Kingdom is the “church” (Matt. 16:18-19) and (Eph. 2:19-23). Even during the days of the NEW TESTAMENT many Jewish priests were leaving the religion of the Jews and becoming Christians (Acts 6:7). This is God’s will for a world filled with Jews and Gentiles. Certainly those Jews who reject Christ and His gospel are “blasphemous”, whether they lived in the 1st Century, or in the modern world of today.

Tribulations and suffering can serve many useful purposes, if we have the right and proper attitude towards such (Jas. 1:2-4). The church in Smyrna was standing up to the test of “glorifying God while suffering as Christians” (I Pet. 4:14-16). They were told to “fear none of those things which were about to come upon them” (Rev. 2:10). Of course this is not to say that they should not fear GOD, for to serve God ACCEPTABLY requires that we serve God with REVERENCE AND GODLY FEAR (Heb. 12:28). But Jesus is assuring them that they should not fear “him that can destroy only the body” (Matt. 10:28). If the Lord is our Shepherd and we are in His FLOCK, we have nothing to fear from our adversaries (Heb. 13:1-7). This comfort is given ONLY to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

(Rev. 2:8-11) continued: The Lord’s church here was going to receive tribulation “ten days”, which implies a “limited duration”. The Devil was going to cast some of them into prison where their faith would be TRIED and TESTED. Since the Crown of Life would be given to the FAITHFUL and the OVERCOMER, they had some obstacles to hurdle and temptations to conquer to prove themselves “a living sacrifice unto God” (Rom. 12:1-2).

Their faith would be valuable to them “after” it passed the ENDURANCE TEST. According to (I Pet. 1:6-9) our faith shall be tried as “gold tried in the fire” to remove the impurities within us. They could only learn patience and steadfastness under this great duress and pressure (I Pet. 5:8-9). Also it may be true that “heaven will seem that much sweeter” to us after living a persecuted and afflicted life here on earth (II Cor. 4:16-18). It is certain that FAITHFULNESS unto God in “every circumstance and situation” is absolutely required in order to enjoy that “heavenly rest”.

Perhaps they would have to make the choice of “denying Christ”, or watch their families be torn into pieces by wild animals in the Coliseums. It is evident that many 1st Century Christians loved the Lord Jesus Christ whom they served, more than their own flesh and blood and even their own lives (Rev. 12:10-11). It was their lot as they were cast into prison to do without proper food and clothing and the necessities to survive. In these cold dark dungeons sanitation conditions were non-existent, and the rats infested the cells. This is part of what it meant to “suffer as Christians” (I Pet. 4:16). Could we be an OVERCOMER if conditions today were the

same as “back then”? It is entirely possible that in the future we shall all be called upon to be tortured, suffer and die for the Lord and our Faith in Him. But remember this: many times our day to day TEMPTATIONS of “prosperity and worldliness” do much damage to our soul. All Christians must be constantly on their guard against “loving this world and the things in it” (I John 2:13-15).

Again the Holy Spirit requires and urges those who HEAR these words to pay “urgent attention” to them and heed the GLORIOUS CHRIST who is speaking. Then those wonderful words “to him that overcometh, he will not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11) are spoken by the Lord to the church here and to US. Those who are righteous have this great promise and blessing from God. Even if we follow Christ into the jaws of death and also horrible persecution, we shall win the VICTORY IN CHRIST (Rom. 8:35-39).

The “second death” is the LAKE THAT BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE (Rev. 21:8). It is the place of eternal punishment for the wicked of all time. It is described as being “unquenchable fire” (Mark 9:43-48). ONLY those faithful in Christ will escape this eternal nightmare. Does the description of “hell fire” scare YOU? Just by itself, it is a great incentive to encourage loyalty to Christ and obedience unto God. The first death is that of Sin (Eph. 2:1-3), and the wages of Sin is the “second death” (Rom. 6:23). This is the everlasting death of the soul, according to (Matt. 10:28). Of this death there shall be “no end”, just a never-ending eternity of torment beyond description. To the soldier of Christ who fights the good fight of faith, bliss and happiness shall reign eternal in the presence of the God-head (Rom. 1:20).

“VALUABLE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS STUDY”

- A. Assurance that there are “faithful churches of Christ” today!
- B. Christ gives us strength to overcome tribulations and temptations (I Cor. 10: 12-13).
- C. Even though we may be “physically poor” we can be “spiritually rich”.
- D. We have no reason to “fear man” IF we are faithful to the Lord and His WORD.
- E. That absolute obedience is required by Christ to enter into the heavenly home.
- F. The horrible alternative to “obeying God” is to be a victim of the “second death”.
- G. That the righteous constantly should be on their guard against the cunning of Satan.

TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS: (Rev. 2:12-17)

No “guardian angel” of local church here. He is addressing the working spirit of this “local church of Christ”. Hence He declares I know thy WORKS!

- A. Authority of Christ affirmed: The sharp sword with two edges is symbolic of the gospel of Christ. In the gospel of Christ God pronounces “Salvation to the obedient” and judgement and destruction upon the disobedient! Notice for example (Matt. 25:23) and (II Thess. 1:7-9). There is “only 1” who has ALL AUTHORITY both in heaven and also on earth (Matt. 28:18-20). Christ exercises that AUTHORITY through the GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Notice the words of Jesus Christ in (Matt. 7:24-27 and John 12:48-49). This is the same word that God has given unto men for PROTECTION from the deceit of the Devil (Eph. 6:17). This is also the POWERFUL WORD, which will call all men from the tomb on the judgement day (John 5:28-29). This sword is also a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Christ is asserting His right to be HEARD and OBEYED.
- B. Omnipresence of Christ: The penetrating “eyes” of Jesus Christ observe all and know all (Heb. 4:13, I Pet. 3:12). Since He is EVER PRESENT and sees “every work” done whether GOOD or BAD, He has the right to speak and be heard and obeyed. The church did need to appreciate the fact that Jesus Christ had knowledge of all the good works that they had accomplished (Heb. 6:10-12). Christ commended them for their obedience and for “not denying His name”. The Lord is NEVER unrighteous to “forget our work of faith and labor of love”.
- C. Dwellest where Satan’s seat is: The “concilia” was located here in this city. This was the Roman Emperor’s committee that enforced “emperor worship” on the citizens of Roman provinces throughout the Empire. The church here lived in the midst and presence of an ERECTED ALTAR OF THE EMPEROR. All Roman citizens were required to “burn a pinch of incense” once a year on this altar to show their loyalty to Rome and Caesar. The Christians could not do this without being guilty of IDOLATRY. This would also constitute “spiritual adultery”. Christians who would not “worship the beast nor his Image,” would be killed and imprisoned and tortured also (Rev.13:15). They were pressured to the very point of not being able to “buy and sell” to support their own families. See also (Rev. 13:17) for proof of this persecution and affliction. A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN would have to refuse to “worship the beast and his Image, and in this way they become OVERCOMERS. Some ended up being “Martyrs” for the cause of Christ, such as Antipas.
- D. Sometimes the cost of discipleship is very high: Antipas would not renounce Christ nor His precious NAME. Therefore, in the presence of the “church” he was slain and his blood spilled for the Lord. The “concilia” may have thought that this was a means by which to discourage others from serving the Lord faithfully and would “unnerve” some followers of Christ. So they killed him in public to scare them all. Would it cause US to weaken today if we saw one of our fellow Christians killed by government officials? Jesus taught the “high cost of discipleship” in (Luke 14:26-33). Unless a Christian met this “criteria” he cannot be the disciple of Christ. If he wasn’t willing to sacrifice his FAMILY-LIFE-POSSESSIONS-FRIENDS and “all things” he was not worthy to be the

disciple of Christ (Phil. 3:7-8). This must be our attitude also. A glance at the history of the “early church” (Acts 8:1-4) will show that when persecution and threats did ascend on the church and those who wore the name CHRISTIAN genuinely, this served to bolster and edify the followers of the Lord, and gave courage to the faithful.

- E. Held fast the NAME OF CHRIST: This simply means they endeavored to uphold the AUTHORITY of Christ and keep His commandments even though they were persecuted and killed for doing so. This is the only NAME in which Salvation is found (Acts 4:12). They glorified God with all their heart, and gave glory to His NAME while suffering for Him (Rom. 8:16-18).

LETTER FROM JESUS CHRIST TO HIS “church” IN PERGAMOS CONTINUED:

Martyred for the cause of Christ: Jesus Christ was indeed the TRUE and FAITHFUL witness of God, unto His own cause. For he was obedient unto God to the point of his own death! (Rev. 1:5, Phil. 2:5-9). Antipas was able to “run with patience the race before him” for he looked to Jesus as his example of GOD’S DIVINE MARTYR (Heb. 12:1-3). The only way that we can be victorious over “temptation and adversity” is to fasten our “eyes of faith” on the Lord Jesus Christ and remain strong and faithful in his POWER and MIGHT (Eph. 6:10-18). The “violent death” of Antipas did not escape the vision of the Lord. The Bible teaches that “precious in the eyes of God is the death of His own saints” (Ps. 116:15). The moment death claims a Christian is also the moment that the untold blessings of God unfold to a deeper degree in Christ. For the Christian is delivered by the angels into “Paradise” (Rev. 2:7, Luke 16:22). Let the example of Christ and His faithful servant Antipas serve to give us the strength to stand for the Lord regardless of the personal cost to us. Jesus will give us strength in the “hour of trial”. Yes it is very true that Antipas being dead, still speaks as does Abel (Heb. 11:4).

I HAVE A FEW THINGS AGAINST THEE: Whom the Lord loves He chastens (Heb. 12:5-11).

Jesus Christ will not allow His “longsuffering and mercy” to overlook our Sins without US repenting of them and correcting our faults. Christ realizes that by informing the “church” here of their errors they can repent of their wrongs, and bear a greater influence in the world for Christ “once they repent” and obey truth. This is needed in order to convert sinners to Christ. In this case Jesus knew that “silence wasn’t golden”. If they continued condoning “compromising brethren”, the church would slowly be “leavened” by the conduct of evil men (I Cor. 5:5-11). One cannot flirt with Sin nor its’ participants (Eph. 5:5-9) and not get duly burned.

SOME HOLD THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM:

It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew language “Balaam” meant DEVOURER OF THE PEOPLE. The term “Nicolaitans” in the NEW TESTAMENT, also means the same thing. Both lived by the desires of the flesh, and sought to gratify those desires in Sin. It is abundantly

clear that Paul in (Eph. 2:1-3) describes conduct like this as being “obedient unto Satan “, and makes those who do so the “children of wrath”. In (Tit. 3:3-6) the beloved apostle Paul states vividly that he also once lived that way and while doing so was “disobedient-deceived-foolish”. Unfortunately, today many members of the body of Christ “have allowed themselves to become entangled again in the affairs of this life”, and are polluted spiritually (II Pet. 2:20-22). They are “hypocritically” wearing the NAME of Christ and Christian, pretending to be worshippers of God, but are compromisers of the TRUTH. They live by the desires of the flesh and the mind. But true Christians will remember the words of the Lord in (II Cor. 7:1) and seek to be pure and holy before God. From the reading of (II Cor. 6:14-18) it is clear that God calls such sinful and unholy.

RESPONSIBILITY OF CORRECTING THE SINFUL PROBLEM AND BRETHREN:

In (Eph.5:1-10) teaches explicitly that God will not tolerate this condition in the church and instructs the faithful in Christ Jesus” to cleanse the church through proper corrective measures (Matt. 18:15-18, I Cor. 5:1-11, II Thess. 3:6-14, Tit. 3:10-11) and other passages. Here in Pergamos Jesus places this responsibility of correcting the erring on the shoulders of the FAITHFUL. They must correct these problems and persuade, if they can, the wicked to “repent and ask God for forgiveness”. Failure on the part of the faithful to act forthwith, and correct these problems would bring God’s wrath upon the whole church. Through their refusal to correct these matters, they would find themselves at WAR with God. God would be their adversary not their Shepherd any longer. Nothing can stand against the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16-17) nor defeat the POWER of God’s word. The PURITY of the local “church of Christ” was at stake here, and God was not playing games with them.

ADMONITION TO THE CHURCH TO HEAR “WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES”.

- A. The warnings, blessings, promises, and teaching of Christ were meant for all of the churches of Asia-minor, and for all the “churches of Christ” today also. Truly every “church of Christ” would be wise to read and hear and keep the sayings of the Lord tonight in this great book. “He that hath an ear, let him hear, what the Spirit saith unto the churches”!

PROMISES MADE BY CHRIST TO THOSE WHO OVERCOME THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO TRUTH:

- A. He that overcometh shall eat of the hidden manna: This is symbolic of the Eternal Life that shall be enjoyed by those who serve God’s Son (Rom. 6:23). Just as God fed His people in the wilderness with nourishing bread called “MANNA” (John 6:31), so also CHRIST is the “true bread which cometh down from out of heaven” (John 6:33). This BREAD giveth life unto the world for these are the commandments of God (Rev. 22:14). Blessed are they that “do His commandments” that they may have the right to the tree of life and enter through the gates into the city!

- B. He that overcometh will receive a white stone: The meaning of this is the tribute paid by God to the Christian who submits to doing the will of God and symbolizes “Victory” or “Triumph”. White would indicate the “honor” heaped upon the righteous who had lived a life of purity and holiness before God (Jas. 1:27). Notice in (Rev. 14:3-4) that those saved were said to be “virgins” (not defiled with women). But they FOLLOW THE LAMB where so ever He goeth (I John 3:1-3). This stone would represent the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS bestowed by the Lord on those who had “fought a good fight” – finished the course –kept the faith! This reward is spoken of in (Jas. 1:12) and is given to the Endurer of temptation (II Tim. 4:6-8). This crown of Holiness, Beauty, and Glory, is the right to live and dwell in the land of eternal glory and feast upon EVERLASTING LIFE WITH GOD. It was customary that those who were victorious in the races and games of that day to be given white stones to honor their great VICTORY. This paid tribute unto them for their achievements. Our lives will be fulfilled and we will recognize the great love of God and His bountiful blessings. God will say to us by His love and grace “enter thou into the joys of the Lord” (Matt. 25:21).
- C. New name written which no man knoweth: (V.17) Since God can read the hearts of man (I John 3:22), only He could bestow this HONOR upon the SAVED. And only the SAVED would know and understand the significance of ETERNALLIFE, and appreciate this “new name”, “BLESSED OF MY FATHER” (Matt. 25:34). Only he who obeys the gospel shall know and understand the greatest privilege of all “tabernacling with God” in His Holy City (Rev. 21:1-9). We will be God’s SONS AND DAUGHTERS for all eternity.

Rev. 2:18-29

WHAT DOTTH THE SPIRIT SAY UNTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST (Thyatira).

- A. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THIS CITY: Located on the road from Pergamos, to Sardis. Being on the outskirts of the “capital” of Asia-minor, this city was the gateway to Pergamos. This city grew up as a result of the traffic which passes through it going to Pergamos.
- B. GREAT CENTER OF MANUFACTURING AND TRADES: Among some of the more prominent industries of this city were WOOL PRODUCTIONS, MAKING OF POTTERIES and EXPENSIVE DYES. Lydia, a seller of purple, is mentioned as being from this city (Acts 16:14). This city was well known for the many “TRADE GUILDS” of industry. Unlike our “present day labor unions” these consisted of the EMPLOYER AND HIS EMPLOYEES. Each “trade guild” had its own god or deity. Sometimes they had many IDOLS, which they served and paid homage to. Their meetings would flourish with lasciviousness and wicked conduct. Fornication and adulterous relationships were prevalent in these “TRADE GUILD BANQUETS” . In order to be “somebody in the business world” one must be a member of these groups. This “life style” is wholly incompatible to BEING A CHRISTIAN (I Pet. 4:1-5). Therefore it was indeed very difficult if not impossible for a Christian to be a member of such an “organization” without disobeying God.

- C. DIVINE ATTRIBUTES OF THE SON OF GOD: His eyes as a “flame of fire” penetrate the HEARTS OF MEN (Mark 2:8). Christ is aware of not only everything they do, but He also knows the REASON behind their actions. This is true of the church today also. His feet were like unto “FINEST BURNISHED BRASS”. Truly this indicates His prowess and power of His adversaries. It is true that “GOD HATH PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNTO THE FEET OF CHRIST” (Eph. 1:22-23). He will reign, as the last enemy to be destroyed is death (I Cor. 15:24-27). Jesus is OMNIPOTENT!
- D. FIRST WORKS WERE MORE THAN THE LAST: Indeed this is the most commendable for it suggests SPIRITUAL GROWTH. It is God’s DIVINE WILL that all Christians “grow up into Jesus Christ in everything” (Eph. 4:15). True spiritual growth is shown, by loving in DEED AND IN TRUTH (I John 3:18). The growing FAITH will manifest itself through SHOWING OUT OF A GOOD LIFE HIS WORKS IN MEEKNESS OF WISDOM (James 3:13). You should be doing by far more GOOD WORKS OF GOD, now than when you first became a Christian. Usually it is the other way around, however. When we first obey the GOSPEL we enthusiastically “WORK OUR HEARTS OUT FOR GOD”, but as the months and years come and go, we wane in our service unto Him growing weary in well-doing (Gal. 6:9). Let each of us learn from these brethren that we are to “be faithful”.

I KNOW THY WORKS AND CHARITY, AND SERVICE, AND FAITH, AND PATIENCE: (v. 19). Notice the sequence of the words used here for they lend great import to the passage. Our doing the “works” of God from any motivation factor other than “OUR LOVE FOR GOD” is “vain worship”. OBEDIENCE WITHOUT LOVE IS NOTHING (I Cor. 13:1-4). If we truly obey God with “our whole heart”, our spiritual service will flow abundantly and joyfully, not as a TASK TO DO, but as a pleasure unsurpassed by none other (Rom. 12:1-2). SPIRITUAL JOY in the fruit of FAITH THAT SERVES CONTINUALLY (Gal. 5:22). One can only in admiration and awe behold the PATIENCE of Jesus as each moment of His life brought Him nearer the SACRIFICIAL moment in His life. Yet he “ran with patience the race before Him” as we must also do looking to Christ as our example (Heb. 12:1-3). One cannot possibly resist Satan’s many temptations without being STEADFAST IN THE FAITH (I Pet. 5:8-9).

I HAVE A FEW THINGS AGAINST THEE: Commendations edify and generate more ACTIVITY. But Christ Himself demonstrates the value and needs of REPROOF and REBUKE. These brethren must be shown that GOD HATES EVIL AND WILL NOT TOLERATE IT IN THE “church”. A glorious God indeed is He who will “rebuke and chasten” those whom He loves (Heb. 12:5-9). God knoweth the GENUINE LOVE demands “reprimand” at times. Many men have yet to learn this fact. Christians are to “BEHAVE THEMSELVES IN THE HOUSE OF GOD” (I Tim. 3:15)! When they do not have the disposition of obedience which God requires, they must be “told” THEY ARE MISBEHAVING, so repentance will be sought to SAVE THEIR OWN SOUL. Furthermore, we must not be “timid” in telling them in love, of their transgression. Our delay in telling them their “faults” could result in eternal destruction of their soul and ours (I Tim. 4:12, II

Tim. 4:1-2). Let us all as WISE AND OBEDIENT SONS OF GOD (Heb. 5:8-9) behave ourselves in the house of God that God's warning not be unto us. Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth TAKE HEED (I Cor. 10:12).

THOU SUFFEREST JEZEBEL TO SEDUCE MY SERVANTS: First let us note that responsibility in the church to correct error RESTS upon the shoulders of THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUAL (Gal. 6:1). Failure and neglect of these to correct the erring, leaves the local church vulnerable to "crumbling from within" (Gal. 5:7-9). We cannot afford to SUFFER UNGODLINESS AND DISOBEDIENCE TO REIGN. The meaning of "JEZEBEL" is without cohabitation. The apostle Peter mentions those who have "eyes full of adultery", and that cannot cease from SIN (II Pet. 2:14-19). Such was the character of JEZEBEL. Like all fellow human beings she could by choice refuse to do evil but as a puppet of the Devil she chose to CONTINUE IN SIN. Only if man "wants to" will he indulge in the lusts of the flesh. Only if he "walks after the Spirit" will he not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-24). Jezebel was famous for her "whoredoms and witchcrafts" (II Kings 9:22). For Christians to engage in activities such as these is expressly forbidden by God (I Sam. 15:23). Jezebel not only worshipped BAAL but entertained the PROPHETS of this IDOL god at her table. Those who do such things are worthy of death God declares (Rom. 1:32). The very PURITY of the local body of Christ was being "torn to shreds" by the wickedness of this evil prophetess. JEZEBEL WAS EATEN BY DOGS (II Kings 9:30-37).

JEZEBEL CALLETH HERSELF A PROPHETESS: In the Old Testament this follower of BAAL (I Kings 16:31) influenced her husband Ahab, King of Israel, to worship IDOLS, and Ahab led Israel into SIN. Jesus declares in (II Cor. 6:15-16) that the TEMPLE OF GOD hath "no agreement with idols". The church was committing SPIRITUAL FORNICATION by allowing this condition to prevail in the church (James 4:4). It is plain to see that GOD DEMANDED ACTION of the brethren to correct this EVIL AND ADULTEROUS group of disobedient members. This must be done by every "church of Christ" today as well (I Cor. 5:13).

GOD GAVE JEZEBEL AND HER FOLLOWERS TIME TO REPENT: No man can accuse God "justly" of not being "RICH IN MERCY" (Eph. 2:1-7). The apostle Peter declares that "the long suffering of God is our Salvation" (II Pet. 3:15). God gave the prophets of BAAL opportunity to REPENT (I Kings 18:38-40) but they would not. After Jezebel heard the news about the DESTRUCTION OF THE PROPHETS OF BAAL, she had ample opportunity to REPENT and turn to GOD, but she would not do so, but rather hardened her heart in purposing to kill Elijah as he had killed the PROPHETS OF BAAL (I Kings 19:1-2). We also must grant those whom we "discipline in love" SPACE TO REPENT. Failure to do so will bring us under CONDEMNATION to God. Many times brethren have "hastily laid hands" on others (I Tim. 5:22). But it is so important that we NOT CONDONE EVIL IN ANY MAN. GOD WILL NOT PUT UP WITH IDOLATRY! Neither can the church of the Lord tolerate such conduct on the part of any Christian. GOD FORBID!! Those who will

“repent” makes the time given them to repent VERY WELL SPENT (Luke 15:1-7). God commends all men to repent (Acts 17:30).

JEZEBEL REPENTED NOT: Some say that “repentance” is the hardest command of all to obey. Such involves SURRENDER OF OUR PRIDE, and honestly admit “we have done wrong”. Many are “too proud” and HAUGHTY toward God to REPENT AND BE CONVERTED (Acts 3:19). Jesus plainly said that those who refuse to REPENT, WILL PERISH (Luke 13:3). These IDOLATORS must stop worshipping IDOLS and flee FORNICATION.

GOD WILL CAST JEZEBEL AND HER FAMILY OF EVIL-DOERS INTO A BED OF TRIBULATION: God is not guilty of making idle threats. When God speaks His word is SURE and STEADFAST (II Tim. 2:13). Let every man understand assuredly that “every transgression and disobedience will receive its just recompense of reward” (Heb. 2:2). God will pour out His “righteous judgment” upon all who oppose Him, and His SON (II Thess. 1:6). The punishment God would meet out upon those DISOBEDIENT MEMBERS in the church in this city, would serve as an “EXAMPLE” to all the churches of Christ (Rev. 2:23). It’s come to pass “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY SAITH GOD”. In Heb. 10:26-31 God says “this is what the EVIL can LOOK FOR”.

HE THAT SEARCHETH THE REINS AND HEARTS: This glorifying phrase portrays the truth that ONLY GOD KNOWETH TRULY WHETHER A PERSON REPENTS GENUINELY IN HIS HEART. Paul refers to this quality of God’s OMNISCIENCE in Rom. 8:26-28. Man may fool others by OUTWARD ACTIONS, but God cannot be mocked (Gal. 6:7-9). Since God sees INWARDLY He and He alone is the judge of all (Heb. 12:23). This should cause all man to EXAMINE THEMSELVES, for God will render to EACH MAN “according to his works” (I Pet. 1:17). God’s HOUSE (I Tim. 3:15) is not EXEMPT FROM JUDGMENT (I Pet. 4:12-19).

JUDGMENT COMMENSURATE WITH OUR OBEDIENCE OF GOD’S WORKS: John states in verse 23 that this PROMISE IS TRUE. The apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit wrote (II Cor. 5:10) that we must “all give account unto God” OF THE DEEDS DONE IN THE BODY, WHETHER GOOD OR EVIL. It is “sheer foolishness” to think that works have no bearing on our eternal destiny. James says that “by works a man is justified” and NOT BY FAITH ONLY (James 2:24). God will judge BOTH OUR MOTIVES AND OUR WORKS. The GRACE OF GOD (Eph. 2:8-9 will only be bestowed on those who “walk in the works God hath ordained” (Eph. 2:10). God is warning the “members who are evil” in the church in Thyatira that repentance is imperative and must come immediately or God would pour out His wrath upon them. He had been “merciful” to them.

SOME HAVE NOT KNOWN THE DEPTHS OF SATAN: As in Sardis (Rev. 3:1-5) there were some who “had not defiled their garments”. PURITY AND LOYALTY AND DEVOTION characterized some of these Christians in the “church of Christ” in Thyatira.

No man can serve “two masters” (Matt. 6:24). Just as in this church there were many who “attempted to do so”, there are many “today” WHO ARE DECEIVING THEMSELVES. How does one come to know the Depths of Satan?

First the devil plants:

1. EVIL SUGGESTION IN OUR MINDS TO ENTICE US; (James 1:13-15)
2. INDULGE AND TOY WITH SINFUL PLEASURE IN OUR HEARTS: (Matt. 5:28)
3. DELIGHT IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF COMMITTING SIN: (Prov. 7:18).
4. CONSENT IN OUR MINDS TO LITERALLY COMMIT THE SIN: (Prov. 7:21)
5. ENDEAVOR TO LAY PLANS OF HOW TO COMMIT THE SIN: (ii Sam. 11:14-15)
6. LITERALLY PUT INTO PRACTICE THE EVIL THOUGHT: (II Sam. 11:4)
7. SINNING BECOMES A HABIT AND A CUSTOM WITH US: (II Pet. 2:14)
8. BEGIN OFFERING EXCUSES FOR OUR EVIL CONDUCT: (Matt. 24:25)
9. LITERALLY DEFEND OUR EVIL AND UNGODLY WAYS: (Gen. 3:12)
10. OBSTINACY AND UNCONCERN FOR OUR EVIL DEEDS: (Rev. 9:20-21)
11. SEARED CONSCIENCE AND HARDENED HEARTS: (I Tim. 4:1-2, Heb. 3:13)
12. REPROBATE MIND IS THE ULTIMATE RESULT: (Rom. 1:28, Tit. 1:16)
(Wages of Sin is Death) Romans 6:23

NOTE: This rich material I received from Bro. Dee Bowman in a sermon which he delivered from Auburn St. (Lubbock, Tx.)

ONE MAN CAN NEVER FIND AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF SIN, THAT WOULD EXPLAIN MORE FULLY DIGRESSION THAN THIS ONE ABOVE!

GOD GAVE THEM NO OTHER BURDEN: First they had been exhorted by God to “stop condemning evil and correct it in the church” (v. 20).

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION of the Lord’s church there depended on the actions of the RIGHTEOUS toward the UNRIGHTEOUS. God also exhorted them to “hold fast” (v. 25) to His faithful word (Tit. 1:9).

HOLD FAST TO THAT WHICH YE HAVE ALREADY UNTIL I COME: (Verse 25).

This beautiful exhortation is also found in Titus 1:9 and this is “one of the qualifications an ELDER must possess”. Since ELDERS MUST OVERSEE THE FLOCK AMONG THEM “according to the word of God” (I Pet. 5:2-4 ASV) it is most important that they KNOW ALL THE TRUTH, and that they HOLD FAST to it. It is also necessary for all Christians to HOLD FAST TO THE FAITHFUL WORD and correct ELDERS AND PREACHERS who begin to compromise and leave the truth. When Jesus comes to REDEEM THE FAITHFUL, only those

who “have and are” holding fast to the faithful word will be saved (Eph. 5:24-27). JUST BECOMING A CHRISTIAN is a first step in the direction of going to “heaven”. FAILURE to “go on unto perfection” (Heb. 6:1), ultimately results in DESTRUCTION for “we crucify the Lord afresh”, by our indifference and disobedience to His FAITHFUL WORD. Note especially how (Heb. 6:4-6) ties in with (Heb. 6:1-3). In (I Thess. 5:21) Paul, by the Spirit admonish all Christians to “PROVE ALL THINGS: HOLD FAST TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD”.

AN OVERCOMER KEEPETH THE WORKS OF CHRIST UNTO THE END: Let us be grateful to God for PAINTING US A PICTURE of the one who shall indeed be HEIR OF ETERNAL LIFE (I Pet. 1:3-4, Rom. 8:16-18). It COULD NOT BE MADE MORE PLAIN that “only if we continue in well-doing will we reap in due season the CROWN OF LIFE” (Col. 6:9). Paul always pressed on TOWARD THE MARK OF THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS (Phil. 3:13-16). At the conclusion and apparent END OF HIS LIFE, he said “I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith”. “Henceforth, is there laid up for me a CROWN OF LIFE” (II Tim. 4:6-8). He overcame daily the temptations of Satan by (I Cor. 9:27) BUFFETING HIS PHYSICAL BODILY APPETITES DAILY AND BROUGHT THEM UNDER SUBJECTION. He overcame THE DREADED FEAR OF PERSECUTION AND DEATH (Rom. 1:14-17) in order to preach the gospel to the best of his ability. Many times we cannot OVERCOME a bad case of “sleep-ins” on Sunday morning. Does God promise eternal life to the SLOTHFUL AND LAZY??

PROMISES TO THE OVERCOMER: (V. 26-28) Just as Christ the Messiah was to rule over the nation with a ROD OF IRON (Ps. 2:9-12) so also shall the Christian who is faithful REIGN WITH HIS LORD (Rev. 3:21-22).

Through the word and reign of Christ God giveth Christians:

1. POWER TO RESIST THE DEVIL (James 4:6-10) and his temptations.
2. POWER TO INFLUENCE THOSE ROUND ABOUT THEM TO OBEY GOD (Matt. 5:13-16)
3. POWER TO ‘with all boldness’ LIVE AND DIE FOR CHRIST (Phil. 1:20-21)
4. POWER TO OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD (Rom. 12:17-21) to win souls.
5. POWER TO OVERCOME ALL PHYSICAL THORNS IN THE FLESH (II Cor. 12:7-9) and glorifying in our infirmities while serving GOD.

I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR: (v. 28) This is representative of being a recipient of “EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING” in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

CHAPTER 3 Verses 1-6:

THE LETTER FROM CHRIST TO HIS “CHURCH” IN THE CITY OF SARDIS!

STRATEGIC LOCATION OF SARDIS IS VERY IMPORTANT: this city stood on a plateau about 1500 ft. high overlooking the valley of the river Hermus. Since three sides of the plateau was “sheer impassable cliffs” the citizens of the city “THOUGHT THEMSELVES UNCONQUERABLE”. Only a very narrow pass (usually guarded) was the only entrance into the city. However, Cyrus (King of Persia) conquered Sardis and later on Sardis fell to ANTIOCHES of Epiphanes. This once great and luxurious city at the time of John’s writing of Revelation has degenerated to a great degree. THEY HAD A REPUTATION OF a thriving living city, but they were just about dead as far as COMMERCIALISM was concerned. A great earthquake destroyed the city of Sardis in AD 17. The city was under the Roman ruler Tiberius, at the time. He allowed Sardis to keep the TAX MONEY it usually paid each year as TRIBUTE TO ROME, and rebuild the city. Sardis was one of the greatest cities in the world under the Kings of Lydia.

HE THAT HATH THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD, AND THE SEVEN STARS: The identification of HIM WHO IS SPEAKING is asserted here. The OMNIPOTENT CREATOR who “garnished the heavens by His SPIRIT” (Job 26:13) is the AUTHORITATIVE SPEAKER. He that “walketh in the MIDST of the seven golden candlesticks” (Rev. 1:13) CHRIST JESUS determines and has in His CONTROL the destiny of the church or the SEVEN STARS which stand for the “inner working light of the church”. God, our Father, declared that all men “HEAR HIM” when He speaks. He SPEAKETH THE WORDS OF GOD (John 3:34), therefore to reject Christ is to reject HIM WHO SPEAKETH FROM HEAVEN (Heb. 12:25). “EVERYONE” who does not hear Christ and obey Him GOD SHALL UTTERLY CUT HIM OFF (Acts 3:23) from every SPIRITUAL BLESSING and FROM SALVATION. The words of Christ Jesus are truly SPIRIT AND LIFE (John 6:63-68).

THOU HAST A NAME THAT THOU LIVEST, BUT ART DEAD: Jesus knew “the church was living on the laurels of its past reputation”. Just as the church of Christ in Sardis WAS DEAD, so also any church of Christ shall become “WHEN THEY CEASE TO ZEALOUSLY DO EVERY AUTHORIZED WORK OF GOD ACCORDING TO TRUTH”. Every congregation of God’s people must be very alert and watchful against such.

A “church of Christ” can do all of the following and STILL BE DEAD IN THE EYES OF GOD:

1. Support benevolent organizations to care for orphan kids.
2. Support Evangelistic organizations to proclaim the gospel!
3. Join together in JOINT ventures with other local churches.
4. Sponsor and oversee works and projects beside their own.

?? WHY WOULD THESE CHURCHES BE DEAD ??

1. God commands individual Christians (James 1:27) to visit the “fatherless and the widows”. THIS IS PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION, anything else becomes UNPURE AND CONTAMINATED.
2. Each church must be autonomous DOING ITS OWN WORK (I Pet. 5:1-4).

DEAR JOHN

We were shocked by your recent letter, which you claim the LORD Jesus Christ directed you to write. We cannot believe the Lord would ever say what you said about this good church being “dead”. He knows of the outstanding work that we are doing and so does the entire brotherhood. We wonder if it is not jealousy that caused you to accuse us of being “dead”.

We would like to let you know of the great work we are doing. As you no doubt already know we have been for some time the sponsoring church for the Illyricum work. We are overseeing three preachers in that province now. Also we are the sponsoring church for the Bithynian work.

We sponsored the “Goats for Crete” crusade two years ago. Five hundred milk goats were donated by compassionate churches, for the poor barbarians of Crete. We assumed full support for the veterinary missionary who went along with the goats.

We regularly contribute to six orphanages, two old folks homes, two hospitals and one college. We also send monthly donations to ten other sponsoring churches, who in turn contribute to our projects. We have contributed to the “Christian Scholar’s Center” at the University of Athens which is under the oversight of the elders of the church there. We have also contributed to the “youth habit shop” which is in Laodicea.

Last year we sponsored the fifth annual “Asian Bible Conference”. All of the churches in Asia contributed to this fine effort except the two “anti” churches – Smyrna and Philadelphia. At this conference workshops were conducted for preachers, elders, deacons, teachers, Sunday School Superintendents, Personal Work Directors, Ministers of Music and Youth Directors. Doctor Basil Baron Bigwig, head of the Bible Department at “the School of Tyrannus” and one of our truly great preachers was the featured speaker. His subject was “Answers to the Issues of the Day.” He very convincingly showed us the right of churches to contribute to the various institutions among us. We are enclosing a copy of his lecture, which we suggest you read as it settles all of the issues between us.

Dedication services for our new building were held last week. If you could see it you would know that we were not dead. The sanctuary is out of this world. It will seat over 3,000. We had over 4,000 for Sunday School that day, which incidentally is the record Sunday School attendance among Churches of Christ churches. People came from all over Asia Minor, from Achaia, Macedonia and some even from as far as Jerusalem and Rome. The town clerk of Sardis and even the proconsul of Asia attended. They both made short talks praising our contribution to the city and the province. The proconsul said that one new edifice was next to the temple of Diana in Ephesus for its beauty and splendor. A chicken dinner was served in our spacious “fellowship hall”.

Next month we plan to have a province-wide youth meeting. It will be held in our new gymnasium. Slide Lea, all-Olympic discus thrower, and Bat Pone, who has fiddled before Nero on two occasions, have both consented to attend and speak. We have a fine group of young people and are doing all that we can to hold them so that we will not lose them to the pagans.

I must add this church would not be such a live-wire congregation if it were not for our visionary, promoting, fire-ball, preacher-Airy South. He has promoted many first among Churches of Christ congregations. His book "On the Run" has done much to help Churches improve their image in their community. You would do well to read it, "Great Community Church."

Brother John, we are really sorry that you have identified yourself with the reactionary anti movement which seems to be bent on opposing all of the good works which learned and successful brethren have promoted in recent years. If you had gone along with these promotions you would now be well care for in one of our old folks homes instead of being banished on the isle of Patmos. When more of you old foggies are gone we will be able to get more done and will be better received by our pagan neighbors, as anyone should be able to see.

Yours for progress,
W. F. Coward,
For the Sardis elders.

(Any similarity to current persons, places or events is intentional-Jimmy Thomas.
Taken from the West Side Bulletin, Irving, Texas).

BE WATCHFUL (v. 2) – In order to avoid being ambushed by the Devil (I Pet. 5:8) WE MUST KEEP OUR EYES AND EARS OPEN AT ALL TIMES. We must not be ignorant of Satan's devices (II Cor. 2:11) or indeed he will "gain advantage over us" as he had over many in Sardis.

- a. Jesus told His apostles (Matt. 26:41) to WATCH and PRAY that they enter not into temptation, through LUST (James 1:13-15)
- b. Paul admonished the "Elders of the church of Christ" located in Ephesus (Acts 20:17-32) to "be watchful" for GREIVIOUS WOLVES, who would not spare the flock. From among many men who serve as Elders in local churches of Christ today have arisen FALSE TEACHERS SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS.
- c. Let us also be watchful for the Lord's return (Matt. 25:13). If we are "steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord," we can with great joy and anticipation look forward to our Savior's return (Phil. 3:20-21).
- d. It is extremely important that we "WATCH FOR EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD UNTO ALL MEN" (Gal. 6:10) and utilize them unto the best advantage to win souls to Christ. This context deals with SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE WE CAN RENDER (Gal. 6:1-9).
- e. Vigilant watch must also be exercised in BRIDLING OUR TONGUE. Failure to do so can make our whole religion vain (James 1:26). The words

we use which proceed from our hearts can have much bearing on WHETHER WE ARE JUSTIFIED OR CONDEMNED IN THE EYES OF GOD (Matt. 12:36-37).

STRENGTHEN THE THINGS THAT REMAIN: The Devil had not completely overwhelmed them all by any means, for some had NOT DEFILED their garments (v.4). God is asking them to strengthen their weaknesses. The Devil attacks us at the point WE ARE MOST VULNERABLE, which is, our weaknesses. He is terrible and ruthless and will sting us with his poisonous stinger called SIN unless we resist him (James 4:6-10). Here is a list of things which perhaps were weak and which needed strengthening: (Maybe this is also true of US too!)

- a. Maybe they had need of zeal: God told the church in Laodicea BE ZEALOUS THEREFORE AND REPENT. What about us?
- b. Maybe they needed their "PATIENCE" fortified: This is an absolute MUST if one is to enter into Heaven (Heb. 10:36).
- c. Maybe they lacked VIRTUE: All of us need to add to our faith. This is the most noble attribute. Many cannot and do not have the ability AND conviction to LOOK TEMPTATION SQUARELY IN THE FACE AND SAY NO!! All of us need to have moral courage.
- d. Many of us need to develop better self-control (II Peter 1:5-11).

IV. 4 – A FEW NAMES HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS: Strikingly we see here in this passage God's intimate knowledge regarding His people. God knew the faithful BY THEIR NAMES. But realize also that He "knows all of the unfaithful" in His KINGDOM by name also. He has blotted their name out of the BOOK OF LIFE (Rev. 3:5). Let this serve to admonish us.

It is also gratifying to perceive that the works and deeds of the FAITHFUL FEW go not unnoticed by God, in the midst of the slothfulness of the many (Heb. 6:10). Noah found grace in God's eyes (Gen. 6:8) even though EVERYONE ELSE WAS EVIL. This does not mean, however, that God approves of us worshipping in a congregation which goes contrary to His law.

THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE: According to (Rev. 19:8) this is indicative of the "righteousness of the saints". Only the "pure in heart and life" shall see God (Matt. 5:8). A clean and pure mind is the PREREQUISITE for a pure life. The faithful here thought about (Phil. 4:8) these things. When one "brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5) he will have CHRIST LIVING IN HIM (Gal. 2:20). In order to "find grace in God's eyes" we must be OBEDIENT UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK (Tit. 1:16), which God hath furnished us by His word (II Tim. 3:16-17). This would also include KNOWING TO DO GOOD AND DOING IT NOT (Jas. 4:17).

FOR THEY ARE WORTHY: This does not imply that by the merits of their works the had EARNED SALVATION, for “by the grace of God” are we save through faith (Eph. 2:8-10). If we have done all of the things God hath commanded us, we are still UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS (Luke 17:10). BUT THEY WERE WORTHY because they were “justified and forgiven by the precious blood of Christ” because they were penitent, humble servants of the Lord (I John 1:7-9). After we prove our love for God and Christ (John 14:15) by KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD we only become worthy through DAILY JUSTIFICATION BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST (Rom. 5:8-10). We must, however, “be careful to maintain every good work of God” (Titus 3:8). God only gives His saving grace to those who lose their life for the sake of God’s SON (Matt. 10:39). God will do His part – if we do His works!

- V. 5 I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE: This shows the truth that (James 4:12) “there is only One who can save and destroy”, OUR LAWGIVER, JESUS CHRIST. No man hath the PEROGATIVE to “pronounce condemnation or justification” on any other man. But we do have the right and responsibility to tell others that “THE BIBLE TEACHES” that if you do this YOU WILL BE LOST, or if you do this YOU WILL PLEASE GOD. But let us be careful to give BOOK, CHAPTER, and VERSE always.

A CHRISTIAN CAN BE LOST FOR DISOBEDIENCE: Surely here is an implication that “once saved, always saved” is false doctrine.

GOD’S BOOK OF LIFE: (v.5) God states regarding the “OVERCOMER” I will not blot out his name “in the book of Life”. Never let us think that just because God adds us to the “church” of His SON (Acts 2:47) that we CAN NEVER BE LOST, for unless our life on earth is LIVED IN HARMONY WITH GOD’S WILL (Matt. 7:21-23) we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Notice in the Old Testament a passage of scripture (Ex. 32:33) which teaches that GOD WILL BLOT OUT OF HIS BOOK “whosoever hath sinned and transgressed His law” (I John 3:4). Of course if transgressors of God’s law will repent GOD IS GRACIOUS TO FORGIVE (I John 1:8-9). A horrible thought indeed to contemplate on is the fact that GOD HATH BLOTTED OUR NAMES FROM THE “Book of Life”. When our names are not WRITTEN IN GOD’S BOOK OF LIFE, you can rest assured the Devil has it on his roll call of POTENTIAL INHABITANTS OF HELL. Notice who all will be included in the list of Satan’s (II Thess. 1:7-9). EVERYONE “who knows not God” and “who obeys not the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” Notice that God says in Psalms 69:26-28 that those who work “iniquity” do not have their name WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE with the righteous people of God. Notice in Daniel 12:1 that if our names are not written in the BOOK OF LIFE that God will not deliver us from our adversaries but God Himself will become our enemy. Let us take note of His WARNINGS for it is terrible to fall into the hands of the “LIVING GOD” (II Cor. 5:11, Heb. 10:26-31).

In this passage we find clearly taught that it is POSSIBLE TO BE LOST, even after ONCE BECOMES A CHRISTIAN. Today many religious people including the BAPTISTS,

PRESBYTERIANS, and METHODISTS and others, believe and teach others that it is impossible to fall away from God's grace and be lost. They say "once saved, always saved." They indict the apostle Peter as a "liar" for he stated by inspiration that A CHRISTIAN CAN BE LOST (II Pet. 2:20-22). In a clearer passage to understand (Heb. 6:4-6) God says concerning those "who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come (IF THEY FALL AWAY) it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Yes, any who teach that "ONCE saved, always saved" is true indicts GOD, CHRIST, and His APOSTLES, and the HOLY SPIRIT as LIARS and exalt themselves above the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND HIS WORD. Nut let us remember (Rom. 3:4) GOD IS FOUND TRUE though ever man be a liar. God states in His word that the brethren in the "churches of Christ" in Galatia had severed themselves from Christ, and had fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). These are those who had been baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27) and had put on Christ. But they had removed themselves from the gospel, which Paul had preached unto them by inspiration (Gal. 1:6-9) deciding to BIND THE LAW OF MOSES AND CIRCUMCISION as the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even though "once saved" by baptism into Christ (I Pet. 3:21) they had FALLEN FROM GRACE. God said this – who is right?

- I. What are some lessons we can learn from this account?
 - A. Willful subjection of the Holy Spirit unto Jesus Christ: Jesus is described as "He that hath the seven spirits of God" (v.1). Notice John 15:26 as this passage simply indicated that Christ would send the Comforter unto His apostles. There is willful subjection in the God-head. The head of Christ is God the Father (I Cor. 11:3). Notice in Phil. 2:5-9 how Christ willingly gave up His equality with God, to become the Saviour of the world. When Jesus lived on earth He had the Holy Spirit dwelling in Him. He had the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, and the Spirit of Knowledge and the Spirit of fear of Jehovah. The Holy Spirit willfully submitted himself to Christ to reveal and confirm the word of God. Note the subservience of the Holy Spirit unto the Lord Jesus Christ in Isaiah 11:1-2 and John 16:7-13. Let us submit also.
 - B. Faith without works is dead: This church had a name that they were living, but Jesus said "thou art dead"! There may be many such "churches of Christ" today in the same shape. God openly refutes the doctrine of justification by faith only (James 2:17-26). God had not found any works of His perfected or complete in this church. But God intends for those who believe "to be careful to maintain his good works" (Tit. 3:8) which He has authorized (II Tim. 3:16-17). It is further taught by Christ that "faith that works by love" (Gal. 5:6) is the only kind of faith pleasing unto God. All Christians are the workmanship of God created in Christ unto good works which God that ordained before the foundations of the world that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).
 - C. Individual responsibility to keep yourselves undefiled: Too many times it is true that we try to justify our neglect to be faithful to God, by the conduct of others. We are guilty of saying (when we miss the assembly of the saints) "I am not doing any worse than Bro. Jones". God intends for you and me to forsake not the assembly of ourselves together

with the saints (Heb. 10:25) even if everyone else does forsake God. Each person must give an account of himself unto God (Rom. 14:10) in the Judgment Day. I must individually as Paul did (I Cor. 9:27) bring my body under subjection to the will of Christ (II Cor. 10:5). I must individually study God's word daily to show myself approved unto God as a "workman" needing not to be ashamed (II Tim. 2:15). I must individually as I have opportunity visit the fatherless and the widows to assist them in their needs (jas. 1:27) and to maintain pure thoughts (Phil. 4:8) is an individual task. Daily prayer unto God must be a part of my spiritual menu (I Thess. 5:17, Phil. 4:6-7). I must individually be a soul winner (I Tim. 4:16) which involves me individually going to teach others (Acts. 8:1-4).

Rev. 3:7-13

THE LETTER FROM CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH IN THE CITY PHILADELPHIA!

Significance of the name of the city: Names sometimes set forth characteristics and descriptions and attributes. An example of this is seen in Matt. 1:21. Jesus means Saviour. Philadelphia means city of "brotherly love". This city was built some 200-300 years before Christ was born. It was built by the Greeks, under Alexander for the purpose of spreading the influence of Greek culture throughout the world. Here the Greek language and arts were emphasized. This city served as a distribution center for promoting Grecian control throughout the world. It was the desire of Alexander to see the whole world under Athenian power. Hence from this city flowed forth the reality of concern universally for one another. Surely no greater avenue and opportunity could exist for the spreading forth of the gospel of Jesus Christ than here at this crossroads and junction of learning. True unity under Christ would be of much more value to man in every nation under heaven. Jesus said unto them "Behold I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it" (v. 8).

Let brotherly love continue: (Heb. 13:1) In a spiritual sense it is true that the Lord's church is a "city set on a hill which cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:13-16). And in this "city of God" called the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 12:22-23) brethren are to "love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Pet. 1:22). Christ said in I John 4:20 that if we do not "love our brethren whom we see it is impossible that we love God whom we have not seen". Since love is the cornerstone of our service and worship unto God, we must also abound in love toward our brethren (Gal. 5:13). Hence in a sense each "local church of Christ" must be "Philadelphia". If however, brethren in a local congregation "bite and devour" one another (Gal. 5:15) they could not be a "Philadelphia".

Glorification of Christ: (v.7) Throughout the Old Testament He is prophetically referred to as the "Holy One of Israel". Read Isa. 43:14, Ps. 16:10 and be sure that these prophecies refer to Jesus Christ. In the New Testament we find that in Acts 2:29-33 Peter declares Christ to be the Holy One of whom David referred to in Ps. 16:10. Jesus Christ is also called "Great God our Saviour" in Titus 2:13-14, which is a direct reference to Isa. 43:14. The term "holy" is descriptive of God's Omnipotence as the ONLY COMPLETELY RIGHTEOUS BEING in the universe, which reflects His MARVELOUS HANDIWORK. This introduction of Himself to the

church in Philadelphia is given to declare His RIGHT TO BE HEARD AND OBEYED. One of the characteristics that peculiarly belong only to God is that since He is “Holy” that “it is impossible that God should lie” (Heb. 6:18, Titus 2:1-2). A person can always depend on God to “tell them the truth”. Note the contrast between God and man (Numbers 23:19). What Jesus is about to say to His church in Philadelphia is true and spoken to them by the “sovereign of the universe” who hath all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18-20, Col. 1:15-17).

God’s open door for the church: (v. 8) Opportunity to spread abroad the gospel of Christ is the “theme” of God’s providence. Paul discusses how God “opened the door of faith” unto the Gentiles in Acts 14:27. In I Cor. 16:9 Paul had been granted by God a “great and effectual door” of opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ in Ephesus. While there he had the opportunity to convince those dealing in magic and evil practices to stop, and be obedient unto Christ (Acts 19). In Troas God opened unto Paul a “door” whereby he could proclaim the truth, unto those people there (II Cor. 2:12). This door was also opened by the Lord to enable Paul to speak the mysteries of Christ (Col. 4:3). It can be readily seen that “God’s providence” provides the opportunities to preach the gospel of Christ. But it is up to each of us (as it was up to the early Christians) to “utilize each opportunity” to it’s fullest advantage. Note in Gal. 6:10 the instructions of Christ to “buy up each opportunity” to teach and instruct our erring brethren (Gal. 6:1) to repent and serve God faithfully. Never let “one of God’s golden opportunities”, slip through your fingers without utilizing it wisely. We will be lost for “neglect” (Jas. 4:17) if we do not teach the sinner the gospel of Christ, and restore our erring brethren. Letting Christ be “seen in us” (Gal. 2:20) is perhaps one avenue that God has given us all as an opportunity to win souls to Christ and encourage our brethren (Matt. 5:13-16). Surely the harvest is plenteous and fields are white (here and everywhere). There are some 1,000,000 souls or more lost in and around El Paso, Texas. Everyday some 250,000 people die daily in this world, and most are not Christians. Yes, some 8,000 people hourly leave this inhabited world unprepared to meet God. This awesome task rests upon the shoulders of every Christian. Never let us be guilty of folding our hands and crying “what can I do”. God intended for the church to be the “pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15).

God praises their little strength: However large or small they were in number did not determine their “spiritual strength”. We mark a church of Christ as successful if it has many hundreds of members, and a large lavish meeting-house. But God does not measure success of a church by these means. A church, small in number, if it is utilizing its talents and abilities properly, and preaching the truth, and following the New Testament, is measured by God as “growing up into Jesus Christ in all things” (Eph. 4:15). Small churches in number can accomplish great things. It is not necessary that the contribution reach thousands a week before the church can support gospel preaching in other places, besides locally. Large contributions impress man but not God (Mark 12:41-44). Surely we thank God for larger churches whose treasury is such as to provide for supporting (10) gospel preachers. But we thank God for those small churches who have a “little” spiritual strength and physical assets, but make them count for the Lord in a “big, Big” way. Every church is charged by Jesus to support the preaching of the gospel as it has ability.

The synagogue of Satan will come and worship at thy feet: It is very evident that “everyone who loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev. 22:15) of their father the Devil (John 8:44). There was a portion of the followers of Satan who would taste defeat, for trying to withstand God and His people. A “true Jew” in this passage is referring to (Rom. 2:28-29) one who was inwardly a follower of Christ, and spiritually kindred to Abraham by faith and baptism into Christ (Gal. 3:26-29). Everyone who claims to be a Christian today (but lies) is of the “synagogue of Satan”. Unless a man by faith does “repent” and “is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” he is not a Christian, but he lies and is of “the synagogue of Satan”. There are many such IMPOSTERS who call themselves Christians today (who are just members of a Denomination). They “say they love Christ” but they deny what Jesus said is ABSOLUTELY TRUE in Mark 16:15-16. They “refuse to be baptized into Christ” (Gal 3:27), which denial is speaking against the obedience of Paul to Christ (Acts 22:16). Saul of Tarsus loved the Lord enough to “arise and be baptized” which act of faith on his part (Col. 2:12) proved his unquestioning love for Christ. If you want your sins “washed away by God” then you and I and every man must be baptized. If one truly loves Jesus (John 14:15) he will keep His commandments which includes BAPTISM “for the remission of sins” washed away by God (Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16). He “is a liar” who denied that BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL UNTO SALVATION for he opposes Christ and indicts Him as guilty of lying. Ultimately, evildoers will always bow down before the righteous because FAITH IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMES THE WORLD (I John 5:4). Paul even in Romans 16:20 points out this glorious truth when he points to the time that “Caesar and Rome” puppeteerred by the Devil would taste the savage slashing of the sword of God’s spirit (Eph. 6:17). Before Paul died there were “saints in Caesar’s household” (Phil. 4:22). The passage that “says it all” is Rev. 12:10-11. Be a Devil-bruiser and obey Jesus.

God’s enemies shall see God’s love for His church: (v.9) It is reiterated “over and over again” how much God loved and shows His love for the church (Acts 20:28). The enemies of the apostle Paul saw God’s love for Paul (II Tim 2:9-12). God’s abiding love for His church was seen when (Acts 5:1-11) God destroyed Annanias and Sapphira for trying to corrupt the purity of the church. God’s love for His church is seen by the fact that God exonerateth “none” from discipline (I Tim. 5:17-21). It is seen through many spiritual blessings that God bestows only upon His people (Eph. 1:3). God’s love for His church is manifested in God’s retribution to those evildoers who persecute His people (II Thess. 1:4-6). Every time God is showing His faithful love. God’s enemies see how God’s people grow through being tested and tried and overcome (Jas. 1:2-4; 12). It certainly will be manifest to God’s enemies “how much” God certainly loves His Kingdom when (I Cor. 15:24) He delivers them to God. As long as Israel was penitent and obedient unto God, His love was seen among His enemies for His people (Jer. 31:1-3).

God’s Patient Word: (v. 10) Man can always count on God keeping His word (Num. 23:19). God’ word abideth faithful (II Tim. 2:13) for God cannot deny Himself. Heaven and earth will pass away but God’s word will never pass away (Matt. 24:35). And certainly let us rejoice in the truth that “he that doeth the divine will of God abideth forever” (I John 2:17). God’s word with meticulous patience will always accomplish that purpose which God has designed it for (Isa.

55:11). The word of God will bring forth fruit “with patience” when planted in a good and honest heart (Luke 8:15). The “patient word of God” teaches us of the “exceeding great and precious patience” (faithfully, steadfastly) the race of life (Heb. 12:1-2). Every man through study of “God’s patient will” can bloom for himself the patience he needs so much to please God (Heb. 10:36). These loyal Christians in Philadelphia obeyed fully God’s patient word.

The Hour of Trial: Jesus faithfully promises these brethren, he will “succor them” in their hour of trial (v. 10). Notice just why Jesus is able to deliver them from the trials which were about to come upon them (Heb. 2:17-18, 4:15). Jesus walked through the valley of temptation never once yielded to Satan. Because of this (Heb. 4:15) Jesus is touched by our infirmities. But isn’t it interesting to note that in (Jas. 1:2-4) God says that it is through “endurance of temptations” that patience is developed. Notice again the beautiful promise of God in Jas. 1:12. God will not “allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear” (I Cor. 10:13) but graciously provides a “way of escape” so that we may be able to bear it. It is through continuing to live according to the “perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25) that God “patiently” delivers Christians from temptation. Listen to these marvelous words of God (I Tim. 6:11). “But thou, oh man of God, flee these things (love of money, foolish lust – v.9-10) and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, and love, patience and meekness. Fight the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12). Even though these Christians in Philadelphia, lost their lives, they would be blessed by God (Phil. 1:20-21, Rev. 14:13).

Behold I Come Quickly: (v. 11) The word “behold” carries with it an exhortation and admonition to be “alert and vigilant”. Every Christian needs to caution himself against complacency for if we are not careful enough (Matt. 24:1-10) like those foolish virgins we will not enter into the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev. 19_7-9). Jesus said in Rev. 2:5 that He would remove Ephesus’ candlestick quickly unless they repent. Again this would suggest “without prior announcement” (unexpectedly). God does things “quickly”. And God said (Gen. 1:3) let there be light and there was light (instantaneously). Jesus plainly teaches in II Pet. 3:10-13 that His second coming will very quickly come to pass in the sense of “as a thief in the night”. Have you heard of a thief who would send a telegram to his victim to tell him to expect him at a certain time to rob him?

Beware of crown stealers: (v.11) – The crown of “eternal life” is extremely valuable so constantly guard your “living hope” (I Peter 1:3-4). The Devil will, through every deceptive means, which he has in his evil arsenal of destruction, (Col. 2:8) seek “to spoil you”. Paul warns of those evil men who would “rob you of your reward” (Col. 2:18-20). If they could get you to “forsake” the teachings of Christ who is the head of the church then you would lose your crown (Eph. 4:15). Again, if the Devil can influence and persuade Christians to “get tangled again in the affairs of this life” (II Pet. 2:20-22), they will lose their crown by disobedience unto God (Jas. 1:12-15). God is talking to Christians and telling them to be careful for they could be “lost” again.

Hold that Fast which thou hast: (v. 11) – How does a Christian hold fast to that which he hath??? He must grow continually up into Jesus Christ in all things (Eph. 4:13-15). This requires a child of God to (II Pet. 1:5-11) “add to his faith” the following things:

Virtue – The moral courage to “resist the Devil” (James 4:6-10)

Knowledge – Search God’s word daily to learn the truth (acts. 17:11)

Temperance – Bring your body and mind under subjection (I Cor. 9:27)

Patience – Continue steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine (Acts 2:42)

Godliness – Do all to the glory of God for He sees you (Heb. 4:13)

Brotherly Kindness – Love one another fervently (I Pet. 1:22, Heb. 13:1)

Charity – Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart (Matt. 22:37)

In addition to the above in order to obtain by God’s grace (Eph. 2:8-10) the crown of life (II Tim. 4:6-8) we must as Paul did too:

Fight the good fight of faith: “Put on the whole armor of God”. See Eph. 6:10-18, which prepares us to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. We must “earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3). We must take on God’s two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12) and charge the enemy.

Finish the course: God will not give, nor has He promised that “eternal life” will be given as a reward to the “quitter”. If a man enters a race and goes all around the track “nearly” reaching the finish line, he “will not win the race nor get the winner’s prize”. How sad indeed to see Christians who have worked and served God for 30-40 years, go “back into the world”: (II Pet. 2:20-22). The latter end is far worse than the first. Many times it is impossible (Heb. 6:4) to renew them “again to repentance”.

Keep the faith: Faith is “shown by works” (James 2:17-24) and without our demonstrating our faith unto God by “faithful obedience” (Gal. 5:6) we manifest a “dead faith”. Notice the words of Jesus in Rev. 2:10, “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”. Salvation is “conditional”. If I do not show my love unto the Lord by (John 14:15) “keeping His commandments” then, I cannot expect to “have the right to the tree of life, and enter into the gates into the city of heaven” (Rev. 22:14).

Verse 12 – FIVE ETERNAL REVENUES FOR THE OVERCOMER

1. **PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD:** This certainly points to the eternal honor God bestows upon a Christian who had been obedient on earth as a Christian. Note (Gal 2:9) which refers to the apostles as “pillars” in the church in Jerusalem. In the Old Testament the “Pillars in the temple: were made of the gigantic cedars of Lebanon (I Kings 5:3-6) overlaid with gold. It is that Christian whose faith has been purified through many trials and tests, which remains faithful unto God (I Pet. 1:5-9) that will in heaven be a “pillar”. To be a “pillar” in God’s house (I Tim. 3:15) here on earth, and in heaven after judgment is the noblest of ambitions.

2. **HE SHALL GO NO MORE OUT:** In Heb. 9:6-7 God’s ordained people (priests) went into the temple (holy place) and offered sacrifices for the people to “come out again”. Then once a year the “high priest” went into the “most holy place” and in the presence of God (mercy seat)

there offered a sacrifice for himself and the people of Israel. In the Lord's abiding "temple" (Eph. 2:19-22) which is the "church" of Jesus Christ we "walk by faith in God's presence" (II Cor. 5:7). Since all Christians are "priests" (I Pet. 2:5) they pray to God by faith, sing praises unto His name (Eph. 5:19), and Christ abides and dwells in their hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17). But if you will notice in Rev. 21:3 that in heaven God will dwell with them and they shall be His people and He shall be their God. This scene depicts the "church" of Christ in her glorified state with God in heaven after the judgment is over. As Christians we can "fall away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12) through unbelief. But "once we enter the portals of glory", (Rev. 21:27) we will never "go out" anymore. We will be permanent inhabitants of the "new heavens and the new earth".

GOD'S IDENTIFICATION MARKS FOR HIS PEOPLE: In Rev. 7:3 we see that God's people bear the "seal of God upon their foreheads". This finds it's meaning in Jer. 31:33. God writes His law upon the tables of their heart even as Paul so states in II Cor. 3:1-4. God knoweth these that are His because (II Tim. 2:19) as God's people they "depart from iniquity". There will be none in heaven that defileth or maketh an abomination (Rev. 21:27). Slaves were often times branded wearing the "name of their master". I can read where we are "servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16-18). As servants of righteousness we are "branded as bond-servants of God". When a person is "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27) he is "sealed" by God with "the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1:13) of which He promised to all Christians (Acts 2:38). Our obedience unto His commands "mark us or brand us" as God's children (I John 5:2-3). But in heaven the saved will be known as "God's redeemed" (Rev. 14:3). We will no longer wear the name "Christian" for our Saviour we love will (I Cor. 15:24-28) be Himself subject unto God. We will wear the great name "redeemed of God". We glorify God the Father now through His Son Jesus as Christians.

NEW JERUSALEM WHICH COMETH DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD: It is a glorious statement in verse 12 as spoken by John. Many times the "church of Christ" is spoken of as the "heavenly" Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-23). Since the Lord's church is composed of "new creatures" (II Cor. 5:17) it truly is the "New Jerusalem". And everything regarding the church cometh initially from God out of heaven. The "church" is the fulfillment of "God's manifold wisdom" (Eph. 3:10-11) planned before the foundations of the world (Eph. 1:3-14). The Son of God who cometh from heaven (Is. 9:6) is the responsible "head" of the spiritual government of the church (Eph. 1:22-23). The sacred "law" of Christ the King cometh down from God out of heaven (I Cor. 2:9-13). The "pattern of worship" for the church is also God-given from heaven (John 4:24-25). The Lord's church is glorious because she wears the "heavenly" name of Christ (Rom. 16:16). The "New Jerusalem" spoken of in this passage is the Lord's church as described in Eph. 5:25-27, a glorious church not having "spot or wrinkle". It is "holy and without blemish". This passage portrays magnificently the glorious "church" of Christ serving God as eternity rolls on.

There is also another "scriptural position" regarding this beautiful description of the Lord's church. In II Pet. 3:13 the apostle makes mention of "new heavens and new earth", wherein

dwelleth “righteousness”. The prophet of old (Is. 65:17, Is. 66:22) makes mention of this “symbol” also. We know that Isaiah was speaking of the “church” or Kingdom of God (Matt. 16:18-19) because in Is. 65:9 he speaks of the seed of Jacob and Judah as the “inheritor” which is Jesus (Ps. 2:8-12). And in Is. 66:7-9 God makes mention of a “nation”, born in one day. This happened on the day of Pentecost as the “church of Christ” had its beginning on that day. Read Acts 2:36-39, 41, 47 and you will be able to determine for yourself the “truth” of this. God added them (v.41) to the “church” of Christ or the “Kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col. 1:13-14). Also if you read this passage you will readily be able to comprehend that God added those to the church who followed the inspired apostle Peter’s instruction (Acts 2:37-38) and “repented and were baptized” – for the forgiveness, of their sins. This baptism in water (Acts 8:36-39) put them into Christ (Gal 3:27) where they found salvation (Acts 4:12). None can deny this for the “gospel of Christ” truthfully declares this to be “so” (John 17:17). This “church”, is described in (Rev. 21:1-3) again in its radiant beauty. Chronologically speaking in (Rev. 19:20) God destroys His enemies “false religion, and the Devil’s puppeteers”. The final judgment is pictured “symbolically” in (Rev. 20:11-15). The great amassed force of the Devil is defeated by Christ (Rev. 20:8-9) then God casts Satan (v.10) into Hell “the lake of fire and brimstone” and his followers also. The righteous enter heaven (Rev. 22:14) home of the righteous.

REV. 3:14-22

THE LETTER FROM JESUS CHRIST TO HIS “CHURCH” IN LAODICEA!

Great center of industry and finance: Strategically this city was located on the Lycus River, south of Colosse, and Hierapolis in Asia-minor. Destroyed by an earthquake about A.D. 64 this city was in the process of rebuilding at the time John receives these “visions” by the Spirit. Industrial plants of special products were located here, even a plant which manufactured “special eye-salve”. Also bankers and financiers were found in abundance. This city of great wealth thought they “were rich and had need of nothing”. It is easy to see how this attitude prevailed in the body of Christ.

Christ introduces Himself as the “Amen”: This little expression means “let it be so”. This phrase points to theological power of “God” even as He is described in creation in Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26-27. The scriptures openly declare that God said “let there be”, and “it was so”. Indeed God is truly “let is be so” God, for He commands, and “whatever He says” comes to pass.

Jesus is the Faithful and True Witness: Christ left His glory above to “witness” to man the infinite “love of God for man”. The crucified “lamb of God” is God’s truest and faithful witness of God’s love and concern for sinful man. He was “tempted in all points as we are” (Heb 4:15) yet He did not “sin against God”. Jesus truly is the “Way of the Truth that leads to eternal life” (John 14:6). Jesus never faltered in His God-given purpose to offer Himself “once and for all” (Heb. 9:12). He was faithful unto death as we also must be to win the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

Jesus is the beginning of the creation of God: The great apostle Paul stated in Col. 1:15-17 that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, created “all visible and invisible things”. Jesus, Himself, was not

created by God (Is. 43:10-11). But He Himself existed “in the form of God” (Phil. 2:5) even before there was “time or eternity” (John 1:1-3). The great prophet in Mic. 5:2 said that “Jesus Christ” goings forth have been “from” of old even from everlasting. If you willingly will read (Ps. 90:2) you will see that only God is described as “everlasting to everlasting”. Notice in Rev. 1:8 that Christ gives Himself the inscription of “He who was, and He who is, and who is to come”. Jesus Christ is the God of this “created universe”. The first cause of it all. It certainly can be shown that God the Father had someone else “in the beginning” (Gen 1:1) who worked with Him “creating” all things (Gen. 1:26-27). The Holy Spirit in addition to Jesus Christ the Son of God was present and helped create (Gen. 1:3). Any who denies the deity of Jesus Christ plainly indicts God the Father as a liar. Notice Heb. 1:8-10. Here the Father Himself declares Jesus Christ to be God forever.

Care-less Christians: (v.15-16) – There is no way to determine in just exactly what ways these Christians were “lukewarm”, but below you will find a list of possibilities. Certainly many Christians today exemplify “carelessness” magnified.

Care-less about Bible Study – Even though David said by inspiration (Ps. 119:11) that it was the word of God stored up in his heart, which gave him “power” to overcome temptation, many neglect “their storage tanks of their mind”.

Care-less about continuity of prayer – The apostle Paul directs by inspiration to “pray without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17). In Luke 18:1-8 Jesus points out the need for diligent repetition in prayer. In Phil. 4:4-6 the apostle Paul teaches the need of talking to God about “everything” whether big or little. Christ teaches that “unless we pray to the Father” privately we show no dependence upon Him for our needs. Our supplications as “sweet incense” should daily rise toward heaven.

Care-less about faithful attendance – Jesus expressly stated in (Heb. 10:25-26) that “forsaking the assembly” of the saints carried with it the extreme penalty of “fierceness of fire” (v. 27). One way to check the “spiritual temperature” of a Christian is to observe his regularity of attendance. Failure of this to manifest spiritual interest and thoughtful love by faithful attendance, makes one guilty of “trodding under foot the Son of God” (v. 29).

Care-less about purity of heart – This kind of Christian will give no thought as to the filth that fills their mind as they fascinatingly are captivated by devilish soap-operas (II. Cor. 10:5).

Care-less about the lost – This Christian fills his off-hours with bowling, tennis, ball games, and such like, while never once giving thought to the “perishing”. Off the job he occupies himself with his “right within themselves hobbies” while the fields “white already unto harvest” (Matt. 9:36-38) are dying.

Care-less about giving as prospered – Failure in the part of a Christian to “give cheerfully” as God hath prospered him, is sin (II Cor. 9:7, I Cor. 16:1-2). By our neglect of this we manifest just how “unmerciful” we are toward the lost, as the Lord’s money goes to support the gospel preachers who proclaim the gospel to the lost (Rom. 12:8).

Care-less-ness is their general attitude – There are numbers of Christians who as “unwise stewards” manifest carelessness, in every aspect of their life. They exercise no caution concerning their speech, their actions, or their thoughts. What a tragedy indeed to be lost eternally for “caring less” about Christ and His church. Care and “share” in eternal life.

I AM RICH AND IN NEED OF NOTHING: (v. 17) – Their concept of richness was “increase of goods”. But God’s word describes those that are rich as (Acts 9:36) being filled up with “good works” authorized by God (II Tim. 3:16-17). God’s concept of “increase” is found in Col. 1:9-10. The person who does not have “Christ dwelling in him richly in all wisdom” (Col. 3:16) by faith (Eph. 3:17) is just absolutely a “pauper”. He is “spiritually bankrupt”. Without God all men are “nothing” (John 15:5).

THEY CONFUSED “PERISHABLES WITH IMPERISHABLES: In Acts 8:20 Peter told “Simon the sorcerer” that unless he repented and asked God for forgiveness he would “perish” with his money. In view of this “perishable”, Jesus spoke these words (John 6:27). “Labor not for the meat which is perishable, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life”. Again God says in I John 2:17 that he that doeth the “will of God abideth forever”. These Laodicean Christians worked for the “goods which perisheth” bought with “money which perisheth”. But only “labor for the God of heaven” is valuable in eternity (I Cor. 15:58).

LUKE-WARM CHRISTIANS WILL BE MISERABLE: When a Christian “forsakes the assembling together with saints” this breeds miserable-ness for he knows it is willful sin (Heb. 10:25-26). When a Christian realizes that whether he goes to heaven or not depends on his “use of hospitality” (see I Pet. 4:8-10) he is miserable when he does not express such. Christians who do not study God’s word regularly will certainly be miserable because they express contempt for God and His Son, and the “wonderful words of life”. It is sure that the Christian who does not bring someone to obey the gospel will never experience the joy of this servitude unto God and others (John 4:34-36) but will be miserable thinking of the souls which died in sin because of his lack of interest in their souls. How sad to be just “religious enough to be miserable”. God demands “pure and undefiled religion” (Jas. 1:27). Nothing less will please God. The apostle Paul discusses those most miserable in I Cor. 15:19. He points out that to “have hope in Christ” both in our sojourn here on earth and “beyond death” is most important. It must be a “nagging thought to the lukewarm Christian” who marches on towards judgment. Hell is what I am preparing my soul for by disobedience unto God and His word. Think of the many people the lukewarm Christian has discouraged by his “hypocritical” manner of life. This thought could only make those “once enlightened” (Heb. 4:4-6) miserable and wretched. What a “twisted and perverted” state of mind and life those Christians had attained unto. If you are “spiritually”

neither cold or hot but lukewarm, heed these warnings “look carefully therefore how you walk” (Eph. 5:15-17). Be wise.

Spiritual “eyes” of the mind: (v.17) Jesus points out to these brethren that the “eyes of their understanding” (Eph. 1:17-18) needed to be enlightened by the wisdom and knowledge of God. They needed to have an in-depth understanding of their “hope in Christ”, and “how precious”, they were in God’s sight, and the exceeding greatness of God’s power in Christ to conquer the Devil, and save souls of all who obey Him (Heb. 2:14-16, 5:8-9). Jesus speaks to those who have “eyes full of adultery” (II Pet. 2:14). People who are “spiritually blind” and cannot cease from sin are called cursed children. If your mind is not “filled with light and understanding of truth” it is true that you are spiritually blind. The vision of Christians is dependant upon their “walking by faith” (II Cor. 5:7) which means they must have proof (authority) for their words and deeds (Col. 3:17). They needed urgently to have a “one track mind” (Phil. 3:13-16).

Shame of spiritual nakedness: (v. 17) – In (Rev. 19:8-9), Jesus points out that clothing of the saints is the linen of purity (righteous acts of the saints). The Christian who does not “practice what he teaches” is naked. The “naked” follower of God is described in Matt. 25:41-45, and his eternal doom also in v. 46. When a Christian does not cultivate and incorporate into his character “fruits” of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24), he is barren and naked. We need to understand that the “neglectful” child of God is shamefully exposed and God will execute judgment upon him for indecent exposure! Just as our outer garments need to protect and cover our outer man (I Tim. 2:8-10), with much more urgency we need to “clothe our souls” with obedience to the truth (I. Pet. 1:22). Just as a person could die in cold weather due to exposure, so also a Christian can diet spiritually (Jas. 5:19-20), if he leaves obeying God’s voice (truth) and exposes himself to the Devil. All realize that “clothes are expensive” when we buy them. It is true also with “spiritual clothing” as well. The price we must pay to be adorned modestly spiritually is expensive. Total and complete surrender is what God requires. Consecration to the “core of our soul” is what God desires and requires of all men. Knowledge and wisdom (clothing) come only through my surrender of time to study and learn. Patience comes only by total surrender of my will to God’s. I can never clothe myself with “mercy and justice” unless I leave completely my selfishness and deceitfulness behind. I can never love God with all my heart, soul, and mind, (Matt. 22:37) until I cease loving entirely the world’s enticements of Satan (I John 2:15-17). Yes it is true! To clothe yourself spiritually will cost you your time, and effort, and assets, and allegiance. God wants “all of you” and all of what you have. But the interest He pays on your investment is the “highest in this universe” (Phil. 3:20-21). When we are spiritually clothed we glorify our God!

Counsel of the “Great Physician”: In prophets language (Is. 9:6) Jesus Christ is glorified by the descriptive title “Counselor”. In Rom. 11:33-34 the apostle Paul by the Spirit magnifies Christ’s qualifications to counsel and direct mankind “in every subject”. These Christians in the city of Laodicea were “spiritually ill” and desperately in need of the Great Physicians’ healing medications.

Spiritual “gold” for sale: We are told by God in Prov. 23:23 to “buy the truth and sell it not”. Laodiceans had purchased “fools gold” which Satan had sold them at compromising prices. God’s word is described in Ps. 19:7-11 as being “more to be desired than fine gold”. In Ps. 12:6 the total purity and holiness of God’s word is magnified greatly. God’s spiritual gold is the best bargain of all. Unlike the “gold market” of today, this gold increases in value (Col. 1:9-11) daily instead of fluctuating.

Fire-proof faith in God’s word: These Christians had many impurities in their daily lives which they needed to correct, as well as the desire to sin against God. Jesus said that our “faith is precious” only when we (Jas. 1:12) endure temptation. Our faith becomes more precious than gold tried in the fire. When we overcome the “fiery darts which Satan hurls at us” (Eph. 6:10-16), we purify our hearts a little more each day. God wants more than just “untried and untested” innocence. We must prove our spiritual valor on the battlefield of life. The trying of the Christian’s belief in Christ worketh patience (Jas. 1:2-4). I can count on God and His word always to “purify my faith”. But “can God count on me to listen and follow His counsel”? Am I going to sell all that I have to purchase the “Pearl” which God offers unto all mankind (Matt. 13:45-46). Or am I already “sold” on the Devil’s philosophy of “play now and pay later” (II Tim. 3:1-5).

Thou mayest be rich: Jesus’ offers to make “spiritual millionaires” of all mankind is indeed marvelous (Matt. 11:28-30). To be “rich toward God” in the day of judgment will be desired by all, but unobtainable by the wicked. Jesus has given us time “on this side of death” to save ourselves from this crooked generation (Acts 2:40). It is a Christian who has the life “profitable unto all things” (I Tim. 4:8). He enjoys the rich full life here on earth, and has the promise of eternal life. Thou mayest be rich also. If you will obey God’s word you can “purify your soul from sin” (I Pet. 1:22). When the Jews on Pentecost were convicted of their sins, and believed Jesus to be God’s Son they asked the question “What shall we do”. The apostle Peter spoke by inspiration and said (Acts 2:38) “repent and be baptized” everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”. They did so and became rich (v. 41, 47).

Clothed with white raiment: (v.18) – The glorious attire, of the Christian is described in Rev. 19:7-8. The fine linen, which the Christian is to be clothed, is the “righteous acts of the saints”. This new man erected after God in righteousness and true holiness is described in (Eph. 4:24). White is the symbol of “purity” (Is. 1:18). In a return to the Old Testament (Ex. 28:40-43) we see that God gave detailed instructions as to the priests’ attire. Only these priestly garments were to be worn by the Jewish priests when offering service unto God. Since every Christian is a priest under Christ (I Pet. 2:5, 9), he is commanded by God to “wear only those priestly garments” and clothing which will glorify God (I Cor. 10:31-33). Those garments are described as (Eph. 2:10) the good works of God as given in His law (Col. 3:17). A Christian is only clothed with “white raiment” when he abides in the teaching of Christ (II John 9). If any portion of the uniform a Christian must wear is missing (Eph. 6:10-18), then portions of that Christians “spiritual man” is exposed unto the “wiles of the Devil”. As the manna which fell from the sky

which God gave to Israel to eat in the wilderness was white (Ex. 16:31) so also is God's manna from heaven the purest spiritual food upon this earth (John 6:32-33). He alone hath the words of eternal life (John 6:68). When we apply these pure commands to our lives we literally begin to clothe ourselves with "white raiment" of obedience.

Spiritual nakedness shamefully shows: The God of heaven is "shamefully ridiculed" by His followers who refuse to clothe themselves with humble submission to every word of the Lord. The world roundabout witnesses this despicable conduct on the part of a disobedient child of God, and in turn the world blasphemes God. You cannot disobey God and at the same time worship Him and pay homage to Him. The world gets a "bad taste in its mouth" for God and spiritual matters when they behold a hypocrite. Shame and blasphemy result as fruit from the unfaithful child of God. He needs to know and realize the awesome truth found in (Mark 8:38). Spiritual nakedness shames God and the Christian. A spiritual naked Christian needs to be contrite and penitent toward God (Rev. 3:19) and stop his slothful neglect (Jas. 4:17). He needs to start walking circumspectly (Eph. 5:15-17). He needs to be ready unto every good work (Tit. 3:1). The influence "for good" of a spiritually naked Christian is found wanting! He is worthless to the world leading them unto the pit of darkness where he is headed (Matt. 15:14). He is "know by his fruits" (Matt. 7:15-20). Please be sure that the Devil makes the most out of every act of transgression against God. He magnifies many-fold, the lewd and ungodly behavior of Christians who rebel. When Satan viewed these brethren in Laodicea he laughed at them knowing that as long as they continued in their "nauseating" conduct they would shame God their Master, and exalt Satan.

Anoint thine eyes with eye salve: There was a factory in the area of Laodicea which was well-known for its soothing medicinal preparation for the eyes. Jesus wasn't talking about their physical eyes however. He was referring to the curing of their "spiritual eyes of understanding" (Eph. 1:17-18). They needed to overcome their spiritual blindness. They had through blindness (II Pet. 1:9) "forgotten they were purged from their old sins". They had not "set their affections on things above, but rather on things of the earth". It is folly for any to do this (Col. 3:1-3). In John 9:6-7 we see Jesus preparing a "spittal" and anointed the eyes of a blind man. When this man had done as Jesus asked him, he washed his eyes in the waters of Siloam and was healed. It was true that these people in Laodicea also needed ointment from Christ to heal their spiritual blindness. Jesus is, as the Bible states (John 8:12) the "light of the world". The word of God says in Ps. 119:130 that entrance of the word of God into the mind of man "giveth light". Again the awesome power of the heavenly optometrist is seen in Ps. 119:18. God's word was the only "eye-salve" to cure the total seeing deformity, which Laodicea had. The same is true today for all mankind. Man does not walk by human insight. These Laodiceans had done this and failed miserably before God. But Christians who are enlightened walk by faith (II Cor. 5:7). They have authority from Christ for all that they do and say (Col. 3:17). The kind of "eye problems" that Christians in Laodicea had is described in Matt. 6:22-24. They had a distorted mental picture that they could serve "two" masters as the same time. But no man can do this. But millions of Christians live today with this same mental illusion. "Study to show thyself approved unto God" (II Tim. 2:15).

The proof of genuine love is chastening: (v. 19) God shows His genuine affection for His “children” (I John 3:1-3) by correcting them in kindness and love when they stray from God’s laws (Heb. 12:5-11). These few verses teach us that God cannot stand by idly and watch us ruin ourselves and be unconcerned. Instead God acts through His word to “rebuke and chasten us” so that we be “not condemned with the world” (I Cor. 11:32). We know God hath said that “blessed is the men whom – God chastens and teaches out of His law” (Ps. 94:12). Truly God’s word is profitable for “correction” (II Tim. 3:16-17). God is not willing to give His children “over to death” (Ps. 118:17-18). Therefore whatever correction and reproof is necessary for every Christian, “God abundantly furnishes daily by divine providence through His holy will”. God knows that we can by reading and obeying His law (Dan. 10:12) make corrections in our lives as needed. Every Christian should strive for self-chastening. God teaches in Prov. 3:11-15 the proper attitude all Christians should have towards God’s correction and the great value of implanting correction in your life. God teaches that an “unloved” child goes undisciplined on its way to destruction (Prov. 29:15). God proves His love always.

Be zealous therefore and repent: (v.19) Christ is “exhorting” His church in Laodicea to seek after the “unsearchable riches” (Eph. 3:8) of God’s forgiveness by turning away from their neglect and “luke-warmness”. Zeal should replace the inactivity, that filled the lives of these Christians. Repentance is itself an act of Zeal and prompted by a convicted heart of love. He wants them to change their way of living or He will “spew them out of His mouth” (v. 16). How many Christians reading this publication need to zealously repent of their laziness? Does your life bring “nausea” unto God as He observes your activities and monitors the thoughts your heart entertains. Repentance is not easy for anyone, but so necessary to inherit eternal life. If repentance is not part of your daily sacrifice unto God you are living your life “in vain” and your spiritual service is empty of meaning as far as eternity is concerned (I John 1:7-9). Never let a second of time elapse in your life without being saddened over your sins and penitent of them unto God. For Jesus so stated that “if you die in your sins, where I am you ‘cannot’ come” (John 8:21). Fall in love with God (Matt. 22:37) and rendering service unto him ZEALOUSLY will become a joy for you. A reminder is necessary here and that is to couple your zeal to correct knowledge of God’s word (Rom. 10:1-3). This combination is unbeatable. One “without” the other, spells “disaster”.

Behold Jesus Christ: The great glory of Jesus Christ is something to behold (Matt. 17:1-5). This glory is described in Heb. 1:2-3. Since Christ is glorious, His word reflects this glory of Christ also (II Cor. 4:4). The great glory of Christ is to be seen in “condescension” from being God to become “like His beloved human creation”: (Phil 2:5-7, Heb. 2:14-16). “Though he was rich, yet for man’s sake he became poor, that through his poverty might become rich” (II Cor. 8:9). John said “behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). A true child of God will, daily, through the pages of inspiration behold Christ and His great glory through the apostles’ doctrine.

Jesus stands at the door of your heart: Perhaps this picture of Jesus standing shows His “deep concern” (Acts 7:55-56) which the Lord feels for all His children. It could also manifest His readiness and anxiety to help us (Matt. 11:28-30). In any event Jesus expressed His “love and concern for these Laodiceans” by this statement. The “knob on the door of man’s heart” is on the “inside”. Men must voluntarily open his mind to be taught by Jesus. For Jesus teaches through His word (Heb. 1:1). God gave man ability and privilege to decide for himself whether he wants to obey God or Satan. God respects this autonomy and will not force Himself nor His will upon any man. If any man goes to “hell” it will be because he has willed to go there. Those who go to heaven will do so because they willed to “open their heart to hear and do the will of the Father” (Matt. 7:21-23). Jesus is always “knocking” at the door of every man’s heart through His gospel. This also shows the very gentle and meek manner in which Christ approaches man, for it is only polite to knock. Unlike a wrought salesman who will leave in disgust at an “unopened door” God continually knocks on the door of every man’s heart until death.

“If” is conditional: (v.20) – This big “little word” can be found in God’s word over (1500) times. Each time God sets forth His term of obedience, which man must meet to be reconciled unto God. Notice the powerful implications to obey required in I Cor. 15:1-4. Paul declared by the Spirit of God that “ye are saved if you keep in memory the doctrine of Christ which the apostles taught (Acts 2:42). In Col. 1:21-23 Paul says by inspiration that a Christian will only receive the rewards of Christ “if” he continues in the faith! Jesus also says in Matt. 6:15 that “if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive you your trespasses!” In Rom. 8:17 God teaches that glorification with Christ will only come to those who suffer with Christ. He says “if so be that we suffer with him, that also we may be glorified with him.” Here in our text (Rev. 3:20) Jesus says that “I will come in and sup with him” if any man will open the door of his understanding unto Christ’s words. Jesus said in I John 1:7 that “if” we walk in the light of His word we have fellowship with God. Certainly it is plain and easy to see that this same passage teaches that “if” we do not “walk in the light of God’s word” that we have no fellowship with God. But in case this passage is difficult for any to understand try II John 9. It is not true that “once saved always saved”! For Christ himself says “we are saved if...”.

God’s universal invitation: The apostle Peter declared these words in Acts 10:34-35. “God is no respecter of persons”. “But that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh God’s righteousness is accepted with Him”.

Jesus said that His gospel is to be preached to “every creature in the world” (Mark 16:15-16). He said in Matt. 28:19 to “go and teach all nations,” baptizing them to make them disciples. Since every man falls short of God’s glory and sins, every man needs “forgiveness of his sins” that he might not die and go to hell. It can be seen that God’s invitation for man to be saved from his sins is universal in scope by reading (I Tim. 2:3-4). Jesus indeed shed His blood for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:1-2). This universal appeal is summed up in Rev. 22:17 when Jesus says “whosoever will let him come and drink of the water of life freely”. Man does not accept Christ as his “personal” Saviour, but rather God accepts man as a Christian “if” he obeys Christ’s commandments to become a Christian (Rom. 10:9-10, Acts 2:38). Read Acts 2:47 and

notice that God added to the church daily those who were “pricked in their hearts” and were after repenting of their sins, BAPTIZED “for the remission of their sins” (Acts 2:38). Who will deny this to be true? Jesus only saves men from their sins when they show their humility and obey His laws. Then Christ accepts them as His children. A foolish and false doctrine indeed is that of claiming that God has forgiven men of their sins, before they are “baptized into Christ” (Gal. 3:27) where they put on salvation (II Tim. 2:10, Acts 4:12). Many will go to their eternal doom believing they were saved “before they were baptized”. Read I Pet. 3:21 very carefully without twisting it or perverting it. Be honest too.

Supping with God: (v.20) This expression pictures spiritually the fellowship God has with the child of God who overcomes all. Can you think of a greater honor than to dine with the Lord. We have that privilege as Christians to continually “eat of that bread of life” which came down out of heaven from God (John 6:32-33). And to drink of the “spiritual waters of life” (John 4:14).

Victorious Faith of the Overcomer: Jesus begins His “exceeding great and precious promises” (II Pet. 1:3-4) by saying, “blessed is he that readeth, heareth, and keepeth the words of this book”. In Rev. 1:3 we read these words, which are still binding today. Let us notice very carefully the use of the word “overcome”, as it is used throughout the New Testament. This will show us the conditions of God’s salvation in Christ JESUS.

Luke 11:22 --- This passage teaches of the overcoming of Christ as He defeated the Devil and divided His “spoils with him” (Note Is. 53:12). Read also Heb. 2:14-16.

John 16:33 --- Jesus overcame the world because He is the Son of God. We realize victory over the world through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:24-25). This victory comes through our endurance of temptations (Jas. 1:12).

Romans 3:4 --- God always overcomes in judgment by His powerful word. None can withstand God’s words at the final judgement scene of Christ (John 12:48-49, II Cor. 5:10).

Romans 12:21 --- He that doeth God’s good works of righteousness is seen to be victorious over evil “every time”.

I John 2:13 --- The one pictured here as victorious is the one who “walks in the light of God’s word” (I John 1:7-9). It requires constant penitence of our sins, and daily submission unto the will of God. We cannot receive daily forgiveness of sins without these things (I John 3:22).

Notice in I John 4:4 that God says that His power is greater by far than Satan’s power. Let us be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10). Yes truly the victorious battle will be fought by those who “fight the good fight of faith” (I Tim. 6:12) and those who are faithful

unto death (Rev. 2:10) shall receive the crown of life. This is he that overcometh the world. A glorious tribute to this is found in I John 5:4-5.

Throughout the book of Revelation, Jesus declares blessings only to the overcomer. He shall “eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of God’s paradise” (Rev. 2:7). This is further explained in Rev. 22:14 as those who keep the commandments of Christ. God also promises the overcomer that he will not be “hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11) which is “lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14-15). Let us strive to “seek the way of escape from every temptation” that God provides (I Cor. 12:13). Let us be “always” obedient children.

Chapter Four

MAIN THEME: GOD SITS ON THE UNIVERSAL THRONE OF POWER...NOT CAESAR – NOR ROME!

(Verse 1-2) “After John sees the vision of Christ walking in the midst of the “7 golden lampstands”, John is called up hither into a ”door” opened in heaven, and the authoritative voice of God (trumpet) declares that He will show John “things which must be hereafter”! John sees God’s throne “set” (permanently established) as sovereign ruler of the Universe and all things therein. (Note Neh. 9:6). Only God’s throne is “permanent” – Caesar’s would die and Rome would perish. Notice in connection with this (Dan. 4:32-37) and (Jer. 18:7-10).

(Verse 3-6) Glorious and beautiful description of God and His majestic THRONE.

V.3 God is described as: Jasper stone and a sardine stone!

- A. Sardine stone – deep “reddish” colored stone (very valuable) Ps. 47:8. Surely symbolic of God’s perfect righteousness and true holiness.
- B. Jasper stone – Very beautiful green tinted stone of great value! This may be symbolic of the fact that God is “alive and everlasting”. Surely He is the “ever-lasting one” (Rev. 1:8).
- C. Rainbow “round about the throne” – Probably denotes “covenant keeping God” (Deut. 7:9; Gen 9:11-17). Also may be a symbol of God’s divine mercy! Paul says in (Tit. 3:5) that God by His mercy saves us! This “rainbow” being ROUND seems to symbolize that “God is love” (I John 4:8). This infinite “love and mercy” of God makes Him “long-suffering”! Note (II Pet. 3:15) and (v.9) also.

V.4 Four and twenty Elders round about the throne!

- A. Twenty-four seats probably symbolize the fact that there is plenty of room and space in heaven for the “redeemed of all ages”. Since these seats are ROUND about God’s throne this seems to symbolize that only those who “love God supremely and serve Him faithfully” will be saved (Matt. 22:37; John 14:15).
- B. Twenty-four Elders sitting on the seats probably symbolize the complete number of all the redeemed of the ages. Those who lived under both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The fact that they are pictured as Elders may symbolize that they are enjoying eternal life as a reward of “maturity exemplified as a Christian” (Rev. 22:14).
- C. Clothed in white raiment – This seems to symbolize “purity” (Matt. 5:8). Note also in (Rev. 19:8) this white raiment is the “righteous acts of the saints”! Note also (Eph. 4:24). Note also (Tit. 2:10).

- D. Elders had on their head “crowns of gold” – Surely this symbolizes the “Victory crown of eternal life” (II Tim. 4:6-8) – Crown of righteousness bestowed upon the saints by God! (Gold) – Valuable – Precious – Pure

(Verse 5) Throne of Authority controlling the Universe (Nature) and “Spiritual” creation

- A. Lightnings and Thunderings proceeded from the throne: This probably is symbolic of God’s control over the natural realm by laws and nature (Job 37: 1-5). Since God controls “nature” He can use “natural phenomenon” as judgments!
- B. Voices proceed from the throne: (Voice of love – Voice of Mercy – Voice of Warning – Voice of Comfort) All authority emanates from the THRONE of God (Rom. 13:1-6).
- C. Seven lamps of fire before the Throne (7) Spirits of God-Symbolizes the Holy Spirit of His “perfection and completeness”! His “7” fold work is referred to here! Creation – Inspiration – Revelation – Confirmation – Conviction – Conversion – Sanctification! (II Thess. 2:13-14) and (Gen. 1:1-3) and (I Cor. 2:9-13) and (II Tim. 3:16-17) and (Heb. 2:3-4).

(Verse 6) Before the throne of God a sea of glass like unto “crystal” (transparency)

(Verse 8) A. Note (Ps. 89:14) Foundations of God’s Throne mentioned here as being:

1. Justice 2. Judgment 3. Mercy 4. Truth (all go before God’s face)

God is separated from His “created universe” by His “HOLINESS” Ps. 111:9 and this expanse around God’s throne manifests that “none can approach” (I Tim. 6:15-16), until such time as God grants them privilege!

Note: Since Jesus was perfect and “never committed sin” He ascended into heaven and “went right up to the throne” (passing through this sea around God’s throne) as if it wasn’t there! He was a fore-runner for all the redeemed (Heb. 6:20). Note: (Heb. 1:8-9).

- D. Four living creatures around God’s throne: These four angelic beings were created by God to “symbolize” God’s supremacy over all His creatures.

References: (Ezek. 1:5-25, and Ezek 10:3-22) Here these “four living creatures” are described in detail.

1. Full of “eyes” before and behind (Fore-sight and hind-sight). This is symbolic of the “inherit intelligence” God put within His creation.

2. First beast like unto a lion – Symbolic of Great strength and power (Jesus referred to as Lion of the tribe of Judah) (Rev. 5:5). Consider the Ant
3. Second creature like calf – Probably symbol of “meekness or gentleness”! One of God’s great characteristics is (Gal. 5:22-23) - Humility
4. Third creature – had face as a man (God’s crowning achievement in His creation)! Note (Ps. 8:4-6). Man dominant over all God’s creation according to (Gen. 1:26).
5. Fourth creature like “eagle” – This may symbolize God’s superior power to control and conquer every adversary (great bird of prey) swift and sure.
6. These creatures capable of moving with “lightning speed” (Ezek. 1:14). This is why they are pictured with “wings”! Angels are “spirited beings” (Heb. 1:14). They are NOT beings with literal eyes and wings, etc.

(Verse 9-11) CREATURE WORSHIPS CREATOR:

- A. Four living creatures, (V.8) worship God continually (rest not day and night) saying “Holy, Holy, Holy” LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, which was, and is, and is to come! Note (Is. 6:1-5) for another passage that manifests the worship of these living creatures!

Conclusion: If angels (who are greater in might and dominion) see the constant need of worshipping and serving God forever, how much more should “weak and puny man” offer worship and service and praise unto God. Note (II Pet. 2:10-12) for evidence of these truths.

- B. Four and twenty Elders cast their crowns before God and worship Him forever! This seems to be a “preview” of what the righteous in heaven will do for all eternity! Casting their crowns before the Lord is symbol that they give unto God all the glory and credit for their “eternal salvation”. They pay tribute unto God here and honor and glory as their King and Redeemer. In humility they fall down before the THRONE and worship God saying: Thou art worthy (v.11).

Conclusion: If people are unhappy worshipping God here on earth, and fail to assemble regularly with the saints and enjoy every aspect of worshipping God both in the assembly and in private life, they will not be “found in heaven”! For this is the Creature serving and worshipping his Creator.

C. God's divine will and purpose exalted: The Bible teaches that "God's will" is the preeminence beyond all "creation"! (Note Eph. 1:3-10). Father's eternal purpose in Christ includes both (Creation John 1:1-3) and (Salvation Eph. 3:10-11).

Note (Matt. 8:27) The winds and they waves obey His "will".

Also remember God's teaching in (Matt. 7:21-23)! Only those who do the "will" of the Father in heaven will be saved. Whosoever will may come and do God's will.

Truly all GLORY – HONOR – POWER should be ascribed to our glorious CREATOR.

Chapter Five

MAIN THEME: “WORTHY IS THE LAMB OF GOD, TO OPEN THE BOOK OF “7” SEALS AND REVEAL ITS MEANING”!

- (V. 1) John sees vision of the Father holding in His right hand the “scroll” of His “ETERNAL PURPOSE” which is revealed to all mankind through Christ Jesus. Note for study of this passage (Eph. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:3-11). None is able to open this “book” for it is “perfectly and completely” sealed! Since it is written both “within and on the back-slide”, this symbolizes God’s eternal purpose from the moment of its beginning to the conclusion.
- (V. 2) John saw a strong (mighty) angel proclaiming with authoritative voice this great question? “Who is worthy to OPEN THE BOOK and to LOOSE THE SEALS THEREOF”?

Certainly NONE of the angels were worthy to “open this great book” and to reveal God’s eternal purpose! Note for study of this passage (Heb. 1:5-6; Heb. 1:13-14).

- (V. 3) No man on earth, or in heaven, or under the earth, was “able” to open this book neither to “look” thereon. This would take “eternal life and eternal vision” to perform this task! ONLY the CHRIST was suited for this objective. Angels were created beings as inspiration verifies (Ps. 104:1-4; Ps. 103:19-22). Mankind was created by DEITY according to the scriptures (Gen. 1:26-29; Gen. 2:7).
- (V. 4) John weeps “much” because NO MAN was “found worthy” to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. (Note) Jesus Christ was “tried and proven” to be worthy by His perfect and sinless life and atoning sacrifice (Heb. 5:8-9).
- (V. 5) One of the Elders speaks to John something that is very “encouraging” indeed. He declares to John to “dry his tears” (Weep not), because JESUS CHRIST was worthy to “open and reveal” God’s eternal purpose unto mankind.

Behold – This is an “attention getting word” – Note for reference such passages as these (John 1:29; Rev. 3:20-21)!

Lion of the tribe of Judah – JESUS CHRIST was conceived of the Holy Spirit and came down out of heaven from God (Matt. 1:18-23). But from an earthly point of view He was from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14). Both of His parents (Joseph and Mary) were of the lineage of Judah (Matt. 1:1-18 - Joseph) and (Luke 3:23-28). Also take note of the prophecy of Jacob as he was dying in regard to Christ (Gen. 49:8-10).

The root of David – Notice in Rev. 22:16 Jesus Christ identifies Himself in this manner! Notice also for other reference (II Sam. 7:12-13), (Act 2:29-33), and also (Is. 11:1-2) which declares that Jesus Christ was a “shoot out of the stock of Jesse” (David’s father).

Prevailed – At the time of these Revelations to John, Jesus Christ had already “arisen from the dead” and thereby destroying him that had the power of death.

Out of the way and nailed it to His cross (Col. 2:14-16). He already descended up on high and led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men (Eph. 4:8). At this time “angels and authorities and principalities and powers” had been made SUBJECT unto JESUS CHRIST (I Pet. 3:22). He truly had prevailed! He “alone” is worthy to reveal the contents of this marvelous book!

(V. 6) John now is privileged to look and see “in the midst of the throne” the lamb of God who is Jesus Christ (I Pet. 1:18-20). He is the CENTRAL figure in this vision! He dwarfs in “importance” the (four) living creatures and the “24” Elders. We even see the Holy Spirit being in subjection to JESUS CHRIST! Note also this reference (Acts 2:33), and (John 15:26-27) for further evidence.

(V.7) JESUS CHRIST takes the “book out of the right hand” of him that sits on the Throne (Father)! David pictured this happening (in Ps. 110:1-2) and it is also pictured in Dan. 7:13-14! This is simply to say that JESUS CHRIST is the one who executes and brings to pass all of the events in God’s eternal purpose.

All history CENTERS around Jesus Christ the Son of God according to God’s divine word (Eph. 1:10). God summed up all things in Christ Jesus.

(V. 8) John sees the “living creatures” and the “24” Elders fall down before the Lamb in worship and adoration and praise! Each one has “golden vials of odors” that contain “prayers of the saints” (preciousness and value of prayer) God reveals the value of prayer in His word (Jas. 5:16, I John 3:22).

(V. 9) Singing Redemption’s Song – These angels and 24 Elders sung a “New Song” and the words of this song “EXALTED JESUS CHRIST” as their “SAVIOUR and REDEEMER”. God the Father was worshipped and adored in Chapter 4 and now the worship of His Son is being offered. He was “slain” and His blood purchased and “redeemed”.

The church to include SAVED PEOPLE from every nation and tribe and kindred and tongue (Is. 2:1-2). Both Jew and Gentile can be SAVED in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26-29).

(V.10) All who are “Christians” and a member of the “church” of Christ are serving God

as “priests” (I Pet. 2:5,9). And all of the members of the body of Christ surely are “kings” under the King of Kings as long as they “walk in the light of His word and His rule” (I John 1:7-9). God said this also of Israel (Ex. 19:5-6).

(V.11-14) Creature worships and serves the Creator: Here we see God’s innumerable host of angelic beings (heavenly army) giving praise to the slain lamb of God. God has in “sheer numbers” many more servants than does His Adversary. There isn’t any way to number God’s angels for their multitudes! (Even if God did not have even 1 angel to serve Him and do His will), He would be sufficiently strong enough to conquer all of His adversaries because He is DEITY.

- A. God pictures to John an innumerable host of angels (multitudes) Heb. 12:22-23
- B. God pictures to John what eternity holds in store for the faithful of all ages.
- C. All creation is pictured (as if) they are paying homage to their Creator.
- D. Worthy is the lamb that was slain for the sins of the world! Worthy to receive.

- (V.12)
- 1. Power – (Ps. 2:9-12) – He is ruler of all nations of men and head of church
 - 2. Riches – (Eph. 1:14) – The only riches Christ obtained was the “church”
 - 3. Wisdom – (Col. 2:3, 9) and (I Cor. 2:9-13) – Revealed God’s will unto men
 - 4. Strength – (Rev. 12:10-11) – His authority was permanently established
 - 5. Honor – (I Tim. 6:15-16) – Adoration of “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”!
 - 6. Glory – (Eph. 3:21, and Col. 3:17) – All must be done through Him – HIS NAME.
 - 7. Blessing – By virtue of His being CREATOR, SUSTAINER, DELIVERER, MEDIATOR. (Rom. 1:25, Col. 1:15-17, I Cor. 15:24-28, I Tim. 2:5).

- (V.13)
- All creation ascribes to their CREATOR
 - A. Blessing – Every blessing both “spiritual and physical” comes from Lord
 - B. Honor – Note for reference (Heb. 3:1-6) Builder of the Universe
 - C. Glory – Note for reference (Ps. 19:1-3; I Cor. 11:7) also (II Cor. 4:4-5)
 - D. Power – Note for reference (Rom. 1:20) Eternal power and God-head

- (V.14)
- Four living creatures and 24 Elders worship and pay homage to JESUS CHRIST as DEITY or God as in (Chapter 4:9-11).

Conclusion: Please read (Hebrews Chapter Two) which sort of sums up the message of this entire chapter.

Chapter Six

MAIN THEME: THOSE WHO FOLLOW AFTER CHRIST MUST EXPECT TO HAVE THEIR FAITH TESTED:

(Verse 1) John sees "when" the lamb opened the 1st seal of the Book (scroll) of "7" Seals, one of the LIVING CREATURES with a "thundering voice" saying COME AND SEE! This is similar to the invitation of Rev. 4:1-2. Under the control of the Holy Spirit John is witnessing these visions and hearing the voices.

(Verse 2) Revelation of 1st Seal - White Horse and rider: This is a picture of the TRIUMPHANT CHRIST as He rides forth preaching and teaching His marvelous WORD. With the "gospel of Christ" which is the sword of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:17) Christ and His followers will conquer all adversaries, meet every challenge, and win the final victory over Satan. Please notice the passage that best describes this scene later in this book (Rev. 19:11-15). The "KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS" rides forth conquering His enemies and His army (righteous) follow after Him, also obtaining VICTORY. The idea of the "bow" is that Christ is a GREAT WARRIOR with the strength and skill and knowledge and wisdom to defeat His foes. (Ps. 45:1-7) Prophecy - Messiah - God's arrows were sharp fiery arrows with the ability to penetrate the internal parts of the heart of men with TRUTH (Ps. 120:4, Ps. 38:2).

(Verse 3) Revelation of 2nd Seal - Red horse and his rider: The 2nd LIVING CREATURES declares unto John to "Come and see"! John sees ANOTHER HORSE that was red (color or blood)! Power WAS GIVEN unto him to take PEACE from the earth. And there was given unto him a GREAT SWORD that they should kill each other. This is indicative of the fact that "Gospel preaching and teaching" brings suffering and blood-shed upon those who follow Christ. Satan will here in this context USE government (Roman empire) to persecute and martyr Christ and those who are His disciples.

Examples: Notice that God teaches that HUMAN GOVERNMENTS bear not the SWORD in vain (Rom. 13:1-6) Rome is willing to be used as a "puppet" by the Devil to persecute and kill God's people. True also of the Jews!

A. Acts 2:22-24: The Jews through the Roman Empire crucified Christ!

B. Acts 7:51-60: The "hierarchy" of the Jewish nation stoned Stephen.

C. Acts 12:1-2: Herod killed James the apostle with the Sword.

D. Rev. 2:13: Antipas was killed by soldiers of the Emperor!

ALL WHO LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS SHALL SUFFER PERSECUTION: II Tim. 3:12, Acts 26:9-11

SPECIAL NOTE: God's providence so well designed and perfectly planned that SEVERE PERSECUTION would not "stamp out" the church of Christ, but rather would and did cause it to SPREAD (Acts 8:1-4).

(Verse 5-6) Revelation of 3rd Seal - Black horse and his rider: This is surely symbolic of the conditions that Christians would find themselves LIVING IN, as a result of the persecution and affliction they would suffer as a Christian. Since this rider has a "balance" in his HAND weighing out "wheat and barley" we can be sure that this deals with the ECONOMIC "conditions" that would prevail after the "rider of the red horse" would spread his devastation. Notice if you will a view of this condition in the book (Rev. 13:11-18). Here we see that those who would not "worship the beast and his image" should be killed (v.15). And furthermore those who worshipped the LORD JESUS CHRIST and would not "worship the beast and his image" were DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. Pressures were brought to bear on them that "prohibited them from buying and selling"! This would of course mean that the Christian could not PROVIDE the necessities of LIFE for his family. Perhaps they caused Christians to lose their "jobs" or simply refused to "exchange with them on the market system". But also "money" was PRINTED AND USED by the Roman Empire and worldly ungodly men, which, if the Christian "would earn and use" this barter of exchange, would mean IDOLATRY. Therefore "food" as well as other basics of life would be SCARCE.

This also has a secondary meaning, which is as follows: After WAR and BLOOD comes "famine and peril and economic shortages" for the NATION that suffers destruction at the hands of another. ULTIMATELY the Roman Empire would come under this judgment of God, for their spiritual sodomy and ungodliness. We shall see this come to pass in (Chapter 18) when BABYLON (Rome or any other ungodly NATION or FORCE) seeks to destroy Christ and His "church". They shall fall by the same means as they seek to conquer according to God's word (Rev. 13:10, Matt. 26:52).

(Verse 7-8) Revelation of 4th Seal - Pale horse and its rider: Many Christians would be killed by this GREAT TRIBULATION that was to come upon the face of the whole earth (Rev. 3:10, Rev. 2:10). But these "judgments of God would serve as righteous retribution" to the realm of the ungodly that perished in all this WAR, BLOOD, FAMINE, and DEATH (II Thess. 1:3-9). But these things mentioned above in this last sentence would serve only to UNITE the Christian with his MASTER (Rom. 8:35-39). Even if they died for Christ they would be "More than Conquerors".

Notice that HADES followed with this PALE HORSE. This truly teaches that as soon as men would perish from the earth, that the HADEAN world swallows

them up. According to Luke 16:19-23 this is IMMEDIATE for both the "righteous and the unrighteous". Christ will call all of the "dead from their graves" when He RETURNS (John 5:28-29), both the EVIL-GOOD! And notice if you will, that ALL will be judged by CHRIST JESUS on that JUDGMENT DAY (Rev. 20:11-15). The EVIL when they die will remain in "TARTARUS" (II Pet. 2:4) until the JUDGMENT DAY. And the GOOD when they die remain in "ABRAHAM'S BOSOM" (Paradise) until that DAY. The righteous are those who "overcome Satan and Sin and their enemies" by their faithful obedience unto God's commands (Rev. 2:7 - Rev. 22:14).

Note: Many Christians died violent deaths in the Roman coliseums at the hand of wild beasts while the Romans and others observing laughed and mocked.

Examples: Read the account of God's faithful who died in Heb. 11:32-40! God delivered Daniel from the "lion's mouth", but some Christians died that very way. Still others were tortured immeasurably or burned to death.

(Verse 9-11) Revelation of 5th Seal - Martyrs under the altar of sacrifice:

Here John is privileged to view those who had been killed for Christ! Those who "overcame" their enemies by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony, and THEY "loved not their own lives" EVEN UNTO DEATH (Rev. 12:11). Here they are seen "under the altar" which is symbolic of their giving themselves a living sacrifice unto God (Rom. 12:1-2).

John hears them cry out for "righteous judgment and retribution" unto those who dwelled on the earth! This would be the ungodly who killed and persecuted them UNTO death. They ask God a GREAT QUESTION? How LONG would he allow this slaughter of Christians and persecution of the "church" to continue. HOWEVER this is God's eternal purpose being fulfilled in Christ? How STRONG would we be, or COULD we be, if GOD had not pictured for us these Christians dying mercilessly at the hands of Satan and his allies. Let us be thankful for these precious VISIONS of God's people standing UPRIGHT for the Lord during the worst adversity. Surely this lends us ENCOURAGEMENT to "fight the good fight of faith"!

White robes were given unto them which symbolizes the CROWN of RIGHTEOUSNESS which the Lord the "righteous judge" shall give to those who are faithful UNTO death and UNTIL death (II Tim. 4:6-8, Jas. 1:12). These shall REST from their labor and work, which they rendered to Christ on earth. No more shall they be tormented and persecuted (Rev. 14:13). This is the HONOR bestowed upon those who stand the test and purify their FAITH and receive the Salvation of their soul as a reward (I Pet. 1:3-9).

God answers to these "martyrs" that it would be yet a "little season" before he would begin to meet out "righteous judgments upon the wicked". These martyrs need not fear, that God the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE would fail to punish those who had slain His BELOVED SONS IN CHRIST JESUS. But according to God's eternal purpose the time had not arrived as of yet. These SAINTS should be patient and allow God to work all things after the eternal counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:9).

(Verse 12-17) Revelation of 6th Seal - John is privileged to a "preview" of what shall be the ULTIMATE downfall of the Roman Empire and of any NATION or FORCE that goes to war with the FATHER and the LAMB. Pictured in this imagery is a great "earthquake", which is symbolic of "upheaval of nations of the world", the imagery of the "sun turning black", the moon became as blood, and stars of heaven fell to earth, is symbolic of the fact that this "governmental upheaval" would be felt in the highest realms of government and the nation to the lowest servant. This would be a "complete and total destruction" of a Nation and its "power". The "emperor of Rome" and his Ministers of state, (represent SUN-BLACK) - Important Merchants and Business men, (represent moon) and lowest class of Roman citizen (servants and comparable), represent the stars of Heaven falling! Notice for example: (Is. 13:1-Fall of Babylon). In (Is. 14:12-17) God mentions how Babylon had lifted itself in PRIDE against God, and that God would destroy the NATION. This destruction is pictured in this account in (Is. 14:9-13) as "heavenly destruction"!

Please note that (Verses 15-17) picture to the readers of this book the great HOPE INSTILLING VISION that "Caesar and Rome, and all of the NATIONS of the world and their rulers" bow down to GOD and His SON. This shows the "power of God" and JESUS CHRIST to be greater than that of "earthly Kingdoms and earthly rulers". This pictures CAESAR in "fear" before the WRATH of the FATHER and the LAMB.

In prophecy God foretold this would happen (Ps. 2:12) and JESUS CHRIST declares that He is "ruler of the Kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5).

As those early Christians who lived for Christ and dies faithful in Christ, let us follow their example and serve the Lord with REVERENCE and GODLY FEAR (Heb. 12:28). The KINGDOM of GOD cannot be shaken but is established by TRUTH and preserved by GOD'S POWER.

God is "shortly" going to pour out His WRATH upon the wicked of the earth. This is HOW God answers the prayers of these "martyrs". We shall see a "greater picture of this answer to their prayer" in Rev. 8:3-5.

Chapter Seven

MAIN THEME: GOD PROVIDES SECURITY AND PROTECTION FOR HIS SAINTS ENABLING THEM TO COME THROUGH THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND TO OVERCOME THE EVIL ONE.

(Verse 1) Revelation of 6th Seal (continued): There seems to be an “interlude” between (Chapter Six and Chapter Seven). This would mean that the judgments pictured in Chapter 6:12-17 that God would measure out of His Wrath on the PERSECUTORS of Christ and the Saints of God would be “postponed” (only take place according to God’s eternal purpose) until God’s people were MARKED IN THEIR FOREHEADS (SEALED)! This would protect and preserve them. Some would come out of the GREAT TRIBULATION (Roman persecution) in great style while living faithful unto Christ on earth! Others would be martyred for the CAUSE of Christ, and the word of their testimony which they held!

- A. Four angels – God has sufficient number of angels to do His bidding in the world of men!
- B. Four corners – Of course God who created the earth knew that it was round, but this refers to “world-wide” judgments soon to take place! Note for reference (Rom. 10:17-18).
- C. Four winds – These winds represent (judgments) that God would bring upon the UNGODLY! These judgments would serve as punishment upon the wicked, and a source of “trials of the faith” of God’s church on earth at that time. GOD wants and expects of us MORE that just “untried innocence”!

For more information about these winds of JUDGMENTS of GOD please read some of the following passages: (Jer. 25:32 – Tempest throughout earth) (Jer. 49:34-36 – Scattering winds) – (Jer. 51:1 Destroying winds) and in conclusion notice carefully Dan. 7:1-3! Notice that these WINDS symbolized “rising and falling of many nations through war and blood-shed and death”. Social upheavals in society of men on earth, and political turmoil would result.

SPECIAL NOTE: In these Old Testament passages God brings these winds of judgment upon His adversaries, and in Rev. 7:1-3 God holds back these winds of His WRATH. This shows beyond doubt that “Jehovah ruleth in the Kingdoms of men” (Dan. 4:17)!

(Verse 2-3) John sees another angel ascending from the “East” or sunrising having the “seal” of the LIVING GOD. This angel cried unto the ‘4’ angels at the four corners of the earth who held back the ‘4’ winds of JUDGMENT! “Hurt not the earth and sea, nor the trees, till we have SEALED the servants of God in their fore-heads”!

Certainly this proves that God cares and is concerned over the righteous “church” during the time this great tribulation and winds of judgment would be meted out upon the realm of the wicked and evil! This shows the Christian that God controls “human government” by His PROVIDENCE for the good of the child of God (Rom. 13:1-6).

God’s concern for the care and keeping of His Saints during these “Winds of judgment” is clearly taught in these verses. Notice the help that God gives saints in times of trials and temptations (I Cor. 10:12-13) and also (Jas. 1:2-4, 12-15).

Sealing of God’s people in preparation for these coming JUDGMENTS!

A. Notice an Old Testament prophets words concerning this: Ezek. 9:1-8:

This refers to the Babylonians coming destruction of Jerusalem because they had left God and worshipped Idols and became wicked! God tells His angels to set a “mark upon the foreheads” of the men who mourned the sinful state of Judah! The faithful would be spared from destruction (remnant) and would go into Captivity! Everyone else would be utterly destroyed (Ezek. 9:6).

B. Seal of living God in their foreheads – This is simply another way of saying that “God knows those that are His” (II Timothy 2:19-22). They will depart from ”iniquity” and follow after “righteousness”.

Those who hear the gospel of Christ (Word of the truth) and obey it by faith and repentance and baptism into Christ are SEALED by God (Eph. 1:13-14). Notice also another passage if you will (II Cor. 1:20-24)! God said that He would “write His laws upon their hearts and minds” (foreheads). These who obey God’s words from the heart are sealed by the Holy Spirit (of or by) promise of God!

Notice again in I John 2:1-5, I John 5:1-4 is further evidence that this “sealing of God’s people” simply means GOD ALWAYS KNOWS AT ALL TIMES who is “faithful and obedient unto Him” of all of the people upon the earth.

Judgment must begin at the house of God according to God’s word (I Pet. 4:17-18) which means that some who had obeyed the gospel of Christ would not be SAVED because they left the truth and faithful obedience unto Christ and His WORD. They would be “hurt” in these judgments.

(Verse 4-8) John hears the number of the SEALING 144,000 of each tribe of Israel:

This is symbolic of the “complete number of the redeemed” on the earth at this time! Would also be true of TODAY also. Since this great tribulation (God’s judgments) were about to come upon the wicked, He prepares (SEALS) His “church” to withstand the test and trials of such.

This “Spiritual Israel” or “church” on earth serving God! This is God’s holy NATION (I Pet. 2:9-12) and these are TRUE Jews (Rom. 2:28-29).

Examine these passages that we present for evidence of this conclusion!

A. Notice in Rev. 14:1-5 that this same group (144,000) are standing with the LAMB on Mt. Zion and they have the Father’s NAME written in their foreheads!

1. These redeemed from the earth (V.3) Eph. 1:3-7
2. Not defiled with women (purity and holiness) Eph 4:24 (V.4)
3. Follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth (V.4) Luke 9:23
4. First-fruits unto God (V.4) Jas. 1:18-19
5. And in their mouth was no guile (V.5) Jas. 1:25-27

Contrary to what the “Watchtower people” teach this 144,000 does not represent a literal number of those who shall be saved in “heaven”! But this is a symbolic number representing the “whole complete church on earth” at the time John sees this vision that shall endure this great tribulation of “Winds of Judgment” that God is about to bring upon the “whole world of EVIL MEN”. This will serve as God’s divine retribution to those who fight against the Lamb and His followers and persecute them and put them to death. ULTIMATELY by these winds of destruction (judgments) God destroys the ROMAN empire and he will also destroy any NATION today or FORCE today that seeks to destroy Christ and His people. God judges NATIONS in “time” by bringing up NATIONS against them to destroy them.

B. Further proof that this is not referring to the “twelve literal tribes” of Israel is that EPHRAIM and DAN are not mentioned here. But they were among the “original tribes of Israel” who received an inheritance in the land of Canaan (Josh. 11:23, Josh 16:5, Josh 19:40). Why were these tribes not mentioned here in our Revelation text? We offer this explanation unto you for your consideration! It was the tribe of Ephraim that led God’s people into Idolatry through Jeroboam (I Kings 11:26, I Kings 12:25-29). Dan had left his original inheritance (Josh 19:40-47) and there they embraced the official IDOLATRY of Jeroboam. Because these two tribes were associated with “cause and condolence” of IDOLATRY perhaps God left their name out of our text here in Rev. 7:4-8. We cannot be sure if this is not the reason!

(Verse 9-17) GREAT MULTITUDE WHICH NO MAN COULD NUMBER SEEN PRAISING GOD:

Many of these members of the church on earth (144,000) would be called upon to die for the cause of Christ (martyred). This seems to be a picture of the great and wonderful blessings that the “martyred saints” would enjoy after dying faithful in Christ Jesus. Notice that this “picture” is also described again in the latter chapters of this book of Revelation! Chapter 21-22! Notice especially Rev. 21:1-7 as this seems to be the same as Rev. 7:15-17.

Therefore it seems that God is picturing to John that the Christian who is killed in this GREAT TRIBULATION truly wins the victory in Christ and shall go to be in His presence (Phil. 1:20-23, II Cor. 5:1-10, I Thess. 3:13 and I Thess. 4:13-18). These Christians “saints” are not in their FINAL STATE OF GLORY but they do seem to be in the presence of Christ. The word “hades” simply means the “unseen world of the dead”. When the evil die their spirits go to a place unseen and are in torment while they await the judgment of God (Luke 16:19-23, II Pet. 2:4). When the righteous die in Christ Jesus they also (their spirits) do go are taken into the unseen world to be in “paradise” (Rev. 2:7) which again is called Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:23). The righteous in Christ at death, have their spirits “heavenly escorted” by the angels to this place of bliss and joy in the presence of Christ.

QUESTION???? If the righteous do not go to be in the presence of Christ when they die, please explain the meaning of the passage in I Thess. 4:13-18. Christ will bring with him THOSE that have fallen asleep in Jesus! This is when He “descends from heaven with a SHOUT, and with the voice of the “arch-angel”, and with the trump of GOD.

If they are not with Him (Christ) when He descends from heaven, then HOW will He bring them with Him when He comes to judge all MANKIND according to their deeds.

If you have Biblical proof that this is wrong or in error, please bring it to my attention!

CONCLUDING REMARKS: Let us be sure that if we are martyred for the cause of Christ, or if we die “in the Lord” we have our greater blessings to look forward to on the other side of death!

This great multitude is praising God for their REDEMPTION through His SON the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

They will “hunger and thirst” no more is simply symbolic language describing that “spiritual eternal life” with God sustaining them for all eternity as they find nourishment in the eternal land of bliss where the tree of life blooms (Rev. 22:1-5).

Chapter Eight

MAIN THEME: God respects and answers the prayers of His saints!

(Verse 1) Silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour as Christ opens the 7th Seal. What is the meaning of this “silence” in this context: For an explanation of this “silence in heaven let us notice passage in prophecy”.

Hab. 2:20 – Jehovah is in His “Holy Temple” – let all the earth keep silence before Him. Here is the CALM BEFORE THE STORM! Jehovah is about to mete out punishment and judgment upon Judah through the Chaldeans (Babylon). A great drama is about to unfold itself as the Lamb opens this 7th seal. An event so “awesome and earth-shaking” that the whole earth shall be affected by its consequences. This silence seems to be a short period of time that "utter quietness" reigns and this silence builds inherent suspense to a climax!

Earlier we read of the rejoicing and new song being sung and the mirth in heaven taking place (Rev. 4:9-11, Rev. 5:8-14, Rev. 7:9-12). But now SILENCE!

God is “about to begin His destruction and judgment” upon the wicked men of the earth that have put Christ to death, and His saints also, and who persecute them on earth at that time. (Roman empire as puppet of Satan). Note also Zech. 2:13 for another reference to this “silence” before God.

(Verse 2) Seven angels of God’s presence with “7” Trumpets that were given unto them.

- A. What is the meaning “angels which stood before God”? Luke 1:19 Gabriel was described as the “angel that stands in the presence of God”! Simply special angels that God would dispatch on special missions! Dan. 8:16, Dan. 9:21. Notice also Is. 63:9. Michael also one of these angels as seen in Dan. 10:13 and Dan. 12:1.
- B. Evidently these were chosen angels of God’s presence who were about to blow these ‘7’ trumpets! Perhaps included by Gabriel and Michael (I Thess. 4:16). God here pictures the “final trumpet blowing” as Christ descends from heaven in the final judgment scene!

Meaning and use of trumpets in Bible times: Numbers 10:1-10

1. Call solemn assembly together! Example Joel 2:15
2. Alarm and warning of war and danger. Example Joel 2:1
3. Journeying of the Camps. Example Numbers 10:2

4. Blow with trumpets over their burnt offerings and sacrifices!

It is “evident” here that God is using these Trumpets to sound warnings to the wicked to “repent” of their wickedness and turn from the error of their way. Note for example Joel 2:11-15. God is also using these ‘7’ trumpets as a “calling of God’s people” in Christ together unto a “solemn assembly” or to “encourage and assist each other” in Lord to remain faithful during these judgements upon the realm of the wicked that also would affect saints!

(Verse 3-5) God’s awareness and respect of the prayer of the saints!

God tells in His word that the “effectual fervent prayer” of a righteous man avails much (Jas. 5:16). Here we are going to witness and behold God as He received the prayers of all the saints (Rev. 6:9-11). As well as those alive on earth that are being persecuted for the cause of Christ, and the prayers of those who have been martyred for the Lord and His testimony.

A. Prayers of the saints in “golden censer” – Shows the value and worth of prayer!

B. Angel was given much “incense” to offer with the prayers of the saints also.

1. What was this incense offered with the prayers of the saints? Notice two passages that explain what this “incense” is: Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:26-27
 - a. The intercessory of Jesus Christ through whom we offer up all of our spiritual sacrifices unto God (I Pet. 2:5; Heb. 13:15). We only have ‘1’ Mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5) who is Christ Jesus.
 - b. The Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ (Spiritual Blessing) makes intercessions for us with groanings that cannot be uttered!

Without these ingredients being added to the prayers of saints “no prayer” would come up before the throne of God on the golden altar of incense!

C. Jesus refers to the same situation in Matt. 24:22 and God said that He would shorten those days of destruction for the “elects” sake!

D. God would be moved by the continual “coming” of the prayers of His saints! Note for example Luke 18:1-8 – God is “perfect and just judge” and He will avenge His elect speedily, even though He bear long with them.

E. This is why Paul stated in I Thess. 5:17 to “pray without ceasing” also he says in Phil. 4:6 – Don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything!

Conclusion: So before the winds of God’s judgment and destruction are unleashed upon the wicked and those who kill and persecute Christians, God shows that He hears and

answers the prayers of the saints for deliverance and rescue, but acts in “his own good appointed time”!

Notice: Following the sequence of events this is what we see: Christ established His church and His saints carry on His work after His ascension into heaven. The Devil uses the first Jewish nation to persecute the church, and next the nation of Rome. As the saints are being martyred and slaughtered on earth for the cause of Christ, we see also the prayers of the saints go up before the throne of God asking for rightful justice on their persecutors. God hears the plea and cries of His people and when the “appointed” time in God’s eternal plan arrives He answers those prayers “pouring out vengeance upon the earth”!

(Verse 5-6) This is what (v.5) is actually saying and manifesting! God’s wrath and anger seen in symbolic terms as “thunder-lightning-earthquakes-voices”! At this moment the ‘7’ trumpets began to blow! Each angel’s prepares to sound his trumpet of warning to the wicked to “repent” and obey God’s voice.

The angel that throws fire from the altar on the earth symbolizes retaliation!

God always gives adequate warnings before He brings judgment upon anyone.

A. Fire and hail mingled with blood – Ex. 9:19-24 (v.25) destroyed cattle, trees and all left out in the fields unprotected! God knows if you want to “humble” a nation just hit them in their “bread basket” – destroy crops, drought, etc. If farmers don’t have good crops the whole nation suffers! God also knows that if you go to war against someone the best way to conquer them is to “cut off their supply lines”. This is what this plague is designed to do.

God is able to use “earthquakes and tornadoes, hurricanes and typhoons, and also droughts and floods” as His means of humbling mankind, and getting him to see the brevity of life, and move him to repent and serve God, which is, of course, the purpose of these “trumpets of warning”. Just think how God can slow man down with a terrific snow blizzard and freezing winds and rain. Usually many people perish in these calamities. God controls “nature” and did then and still does according to His will use them to bring judgments upon the wicked. (Roman empire had scores of those kinds of judgments).

(Verse 8-9) B. Great mountain burning was cast into the sea: “Partial judgment” in the realm of nature that would affect the “commerce and industry” of a nation or power.

2nd Trumpet How many times have great hurricanes come through an area and completely or partially destroy industry and commercial buildings and ships in and around the

harbors and left this area at a huge property loss. Imagine the damage done by great “tidal waves” and typhoons and like tragedies. History records many of these events during the years of the Roman empire and which help to bring about its eventual fall. Any nation would be crippled severely by such.

It seems to me that God is first going to destroy their “food supply” and next would attack their “industry and commerce” which Rome depended upon very heavily as a great shipping port of the world. In. Rev. 18:11-19 depicts a similar scene in the fall of “Babylon the harlot” which symbolizes Rome!

(Verse 10-11) Star falls from heaven named “Wormwood”!

This particular word “wormwood” is very significant in scriptures!

Attitude
Toward
Idolatry
And
and their
Hatred God

- A. Deut. 29:18 – Connected with the worshipping of idols – Idolatry!
- B. Prov. 5:4 – Connected to the results of succumbing to lips strange woman!
- C. Jer. 9:13-16 – Result of Israel’s disobedience unto God and sin abounded!
- D. Jer. 23:15 – God filled false prophets with wormwood for being profane!
- E. Lam. 3:13, 19 – Symbolic of part of God’s punishment upon Jerusalem
- F. Amos 5:7 – Israel turned judgment into wormwood – rejecting God’s righteousness.

Since it is clear that the Roman empire was filled with every kind of wickedness from Idolatry unto Murder and Sorcery (Rev. 9:20-21) that this is a “judgment” brought upon the persecutors of the church, that would affect the very “attitude” of the citizen regarding his government. The attitude of “bitterness-insurrection-rebellion, discontent”, seemed to permeate the Roman empire! A transgressor of God’s law always makes his own “wormwood” (Acts 8:21-23) as with Simon the sorcerer.

Perhaps this “bitterness stemmed” from the wicked and the attitude that they had about these prior trumpets of judgments and warnings. They perhaps were saying and accusing God unjustly! “I don’t understand how God could allow such a terrible thing to happen and kill so many people or injure thousands”! Instead of these events bringing them to the point of repentance and worship and serve God and humble themselves before Him, perhaps they turned bitter and hateful unto God which lead to their downfall (Rom. 1:28-32).

Perhaps it was their idolatry and “love of the world and things that are in it” that did engulf them and destroy them partially here. Idolatry promotes bitterness toward God, and leads to men hating and being hateful unto each other, and ultimately destroying each other. Notice the truth of these facts (Tit. 3:3).

Notice that it is “necessary” to turn from Idols to serve the living God (I Thess. 1:9) in order to please God! It is evident that these wicked and ungodly Romans would not (Rev. 9:20-21). Here in our context many men died from these great plagues mentioned here.

(Verse 12-13) Partial judgment that destroys the wicked and evil reaching from the Royal family of Caesar and heads of state, all the way unto the lowly servants in the Roman Empire (Rom. 6:14-16). Symbolize weakening of the empire’s government “over-all”.

Rome has been hit by “famines, etc. that affect her food supplies (belly).
Rome has been hit by great natural disasters in her industry and commerce!
Rome has been hit by rebellion and bitterness from her leaders on down lowly.

Would not this weaken any nation and tend to destroy the size and control of government!

One eagle “flies through the midst of heaven” (bird of prey) declaring ‘3’ woes yet to come upon the wicked as judgments from God for their assault upon Christ and His church. There are “yet three trumpets” about to sound to herald the partial judgments upon Rome!

Chapter Nine

MAIN THEME: The transgressor who will not repent brings destruction upon himself as well, as he shall feel the wrath of almighty God! (Prov. 11:3, 5, 6, 17, 19, 21, 23,27,29, 31). Should I really envy the prosperity of wicked? Should I fret because it seems like the wicked have the fat of the earth?

Continuance of the theme of (Chapter 8) – God respects and answers the prayers of Saints!

(Verse 1-11) This 5th Trumpet sounds warning that shall unleash Devilish and Hadean forces that shall torment those who have not the Seal of the living God in their foreheads (Saints). This great judgments was meant for the Evil-doer and the wicked as punishment for their heinous sins and crimes against God and His people!

PLEASE NOTE: Rev. 9:20-21 manifests that the object of these warnings and judgments was to bring the evil to “repentance”! They (Roman citizens) in general were notoriously famous for IDOLATRY (worship of gods of gold and silver and brass and stone)! See any similarity in the average citizen of the U.S.?

Also it is evident that “murder” (cruel death of Saints, etc.) and sorcery (illegal use of drugs commit sin) and fornication (high divorce rate in Rome led to its downfall) and thefts (big business men robbing the consumer, and vice versa).
DEGRADATION OF EVERY SORT AND KIND.

I Tim. 6:9-10 points out that “love of money” is the **ROOT** of all kinds of **EVIL!** Many Christians have committed spiritual suicide desiring fruits!

When Satan fell from power in spiritual realms (I Tim. 3:6) he had (was allowed to keep) great power as a “Deceiver” (Rev. 12:7-9) of the whole world! He had all things under his control. Forces (demons and demonic doctrines) according to Matt. 12:24-26, which roamed the world in the times of the control of the Roman empire and tormented and vexed many.

Of course, when “spiritual gifts ceased” (along with this cessation, the power to cast out demons) then “demons” went back to the abyss (bottomless pit) from whence they had been released (Matt. 8:29, II Pet. 2:4). These fallen angels however left behind them their doctrines (I Tim. 4:1-3).

Notice again Jas. 3:14-16 and it will be easy to see that earthly, sensual, and devilish wisdom promotes only- Envy and strife and confusion and every evil work! Such is the picture of these “vicious locusts of judgments” God brings upon the Roman empire for the “empire” was absolutely “full of abomination and filthy with fornication” (Rev. 17:4).

Here is this judgment we see the “sun” darkened by this plague of evil! Probably means that Emperor of Rome himself completely given over to evil and ungodliness, and certainly it is sure that those who would be under his leadership and follow his damnable government concepts and policies would turn corrupt also. Such is true of the Emperors of Rome such as “Nero” and Domitian for sure. The “air” was darkened also which probably teaches that “evil and wickedness” permeated the atmosphere of the Roman empire (Eph. 2:1-3). Satan is the “PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR”! Darkness resulted by reason of the smoke that came from the pit “plagues of evil” (Eph. 4:17-18-19). Note also Rom. 1:21-32 the terrible consequences of those who “refuse to have God in their knowledge” (V.26). They were actually filled (rotten through and through) with every kind of evil and corruption of Satan.

(V.3) Sin has a very vicious sting (Venereal disease – fornication) Murdered by a jealous husband or perhaps shot in the back and paralyzed for life. Think about the torment of husband and wife relationships because of ‘liquor’. And just think about the terrible cases of child abuse because of evil-tempered parents high on liquor or other drugs! Think about the thousands of people running around hacking and coughing themselves to death by tobacco, etc. And think about how many families go hungry because Dad is a gambler or Mom also. Think about the horrible circumstances created by those who have embezzled great sums of money, they are caught and imprisoned or killed by accomplices.

AND OF COURSE THE WORST PUNISHMENT OF ALL TO END UP IN THE LAKE OF FIRE – BRIMSTONE (Rev. 21:8)

Isn't it easy to see that people getting caught up in this onslaught of evil many times do personally prefer “death unto living in corruption” as the world talks “hell on earth”. God said that these locusts would sting the wicked and ungodly and men would seek death and not find it! Certainly if you could ever talk to a young person who was “high” on drugs and jumped off buildings, or put their nose to a burner on the stove thinking it was a beautiful flower, you would understand more fully these truths. Have you ever before heard of “drug addicts” after the trip was over having recurring “nightmares” involving spiders and bugs crawling all over them. Think it is impossible that these would indeed rather die than live! Perhaps enough said at this time on “wages of sin” (Rom. 6:23).

(V.7) Shows the power of sin to conquer and destroy its victim and that this plague would be perpetrated by man himself as he allowed Satan to use him as a puppet to do his will (II Tim. 2:24-26).

(V. 8) This seems to indicate the attractiveness of sin to allure its victim, but the vicious venomous bite of the Devil and his temptations and the “sickness of the soul” that will result from his bite! Note for example Gal. 5:15.

(V. 9) Satan is fully prepared for warfare with what seems to be impenetrable armor, but the righteous escape this onslaught by God's power and provisions (I Cor. 10:13, II Pet. 2:9). Let every Christian prepare himself fully for war against the Devil (Eph. 6:10-18).

Seemingly the "voices" of evil doers are everywhere screaming louder and louder trying to drown out the sounds of the righteous to "repent" of your sins! Note for example (T.V. majority movies represent "sex-violence-drugs-divorce-robbery), etc. This is Satan trying to "speak louder than God's people speaking truth"!

Back in the days of Rome the "Emperors were demanding that Roman citizens worship and serve Rome and Caesar as God! They would and did allow many religions to flourish that all exalted themselves against the knowledge of God and His church (II Cor. 10:3-5).

(V.10-11) Life of a locust was about (5) months! They had no king over them (Prov. 30:27).

These locusts had a King over them: First Satan the Devil (Destroyer, and Abaddon, and Apollyon) who was a "murderer and liar" from beginning (John 8:44).

Jas. 1:13-15 All of these locusts represent "evil lashing out and destroying it's own"! And of course this is just what Satan does. He lures his victims by sensual temptations to commit sin by succumbing to lust and pride, but turns around and torments his victims with the sting of sin and its terrible consequences.

(V. 13) Another "Woe" is about to come upon the realm of the ungodly which seems to affect the wicked in a partial judgment (1/3 to be destroyed, v.8).

The sixth angel sounds his trumpet and a "voice" from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God said "Loose the four angels which are bound in the great River" (Euphrates).

We read in the Old Testament (Ex. 27:1-8) that the altar of burnt offerings had 'four horns' in the corners of it. In Ex. 29:12 God required that the blood of bullock be put on the horns of the altar with finger represent the sanctifying of Aaron and his Sons in office of High Priest and priest.

But in (Old Testament) in Ex. 30:1-10 Aaron and his Sons were worshipping God, Aaron would "once a year" make an atonement upon the horns of the altar of burnt incense, with the blood of the "sin-offering" for himself and the people (Heb. 9:6-7). In honor of the "sin-offering of Christ" (Eph. 5:1-2) as sweet incense for the ones who would follow the Lord, and in honor of the saints who

died for the Lamb (Rev. 12:11; Rev. 6:9-11), God answers with yet another serious and devastating judgments of warning to the wicked!

Four angels bound in the great river Euphrates: Euphrates was the great river that Babylon was located on and it ran through the city of Babylon.

Dan. 5:30-31 When the Medes and Persians came up against Babylon, they dried up the river (damned it up) and then came right up through the riverbed into the city and invaded it. Hence this language is symbolic of God bringing the enemy from the North or Northeast to conquer Babylon.

This is another way of saying that God was going to cause Rome to just completely be captured and enslaved by the evil and corruption from within, as well as, allowing the Parthians to make raids upon the Empire and slowly but surely bring them down to destruction (fierce warriors on horses). However in (Old Testament) Jer. 46:10 it is said that Egypt as a sacrifice was prepared for Vengeance by God using the Babylonians as His tool of destruction.

Note also Jer. 51:63-64 prophecy of Babylon falling and its connection to sinking in the Euphrates! So also was Rome about to be bound in its captivity to the Devil and its own corruption, and God was also going to bring destruction upon Rome through heathen forces (perhaps Parthians and others) also from many civil wars and insurrections throughout the Roman empire.

Note also (Rev. 16:12-16) that the 6th Vial of wrath poured out by the angel of God is poured out upon the “great river of Euphrates”. Hence in symbolic language showing that it would be dried up, and Rome ripe for complete and total invasion from one end of the empire to the other (Rev. 7:1-3). Hence it seems that here is a picture that portrays Rome as being about to be fully and completely captured by the armies of Satan (every demonic doctrine and practice) in the arsenal of Satan. This great army would be able to damage and destroy with their mouth by speaking great swelling words of vanity (II Pet. 2:18-19) but would end up both themselves and those that follow them the captured and captivity of the Devil. This seems to be the loosing of all of Satan’s forces ravaging and tearing and destroying themselves! The number of this great army is symbolic of the great number of people in the Empire who were deeply embedded in sin and promoting it everywhere.

(V. 19) This is certainly symbolic of the “false religion” also that permeated the Roman empire. This is spoken of again in Rev. 13:11-18. The beast that comes up out of the earth, having two horns like a “LAMB” but spoke as a Dragon who is the Devil seeking to imitate Christ. Using some truth with some lies.

Rome was engulfed in “Emperor worship” from one end of the Roman empire to the other. Those citizens who would not bow down to Rome and Caesar as GOD were punished by torture, imprisonment, or death or discriminated against (jobs, etc.). This is evidenced in Rev. 13:10-18.

(V. 20-21) None of these trumpets of judgments and warnings were heeded and heard and discerned by the earth-dwellers (wicked and ungodly). They refused to give any “repentance” for their sins and crimes against God and His church, but rather like Pharaoh became hardened in their hearts and blasphemed more according to Rev. 16:9!

Conclusion: Today our country is heading down the same road to destruction as Roman empire. We are (1) of the perhaps (2) great world empires as far as power and influence is concerned. Usually whatever the U.S. does affects the world as did also Rome (Rev. 17:3-6). Today we are having an epidemic of “false religions” – every sort of crime – homes falling apart through divorce – building great armaments when our real enemy is ”within” our own corruption (Prov. 12:34).

This country is becoming “sports-crazy” as did Rome as they laughed and jeered as human-beings were torn apart by wild animals in stadiums (Coliseums – Rome).

Great numbers on welfare rolls, promoting higher taxation of the people and ultimate financial collapse perhaps coming in the future! (Rev. 18:9-18).

Notice the horrible judgments that have come upon us in the way of storms and hurricanes and tornadoes and cold freezing winters destroying crops. Notice the droughts and the disasters on the land, in the seas, and our economic setbacks. Notice how when a “great star fell” (President Nixon) example: the bitterness and caution filled the minds of the citizens of this country toward the government. Notice how some of the lessers fall “Bert Lance” other like him (stars) falling from prominent government positions just because of shady dealings, etc. Here again evil breeding more evil (Tit. 3:3) and also (II Tim. 3:13).

Great hurricane through Panama City and Ft. Walton – Could this be God’s way of telling us that he abhors the Nigh clubs and lasciviousness going on for example in the summertime around here. The extravagant living of the wealthy and their drinking and reveling, etc. More tourist attractions to make money is what the Chamber of Commerce wants.

Great earthquake (California in 1971) did 5 Billion dollars worth of damage. Was this a warning (trumpet) of God telling us that Hollywood and Los Angeles better repent of the “evil movie production and lasciviousness and wickedness”.

I don't know which disasters are from God for judgments and which are not. But let these things serve as "warnings to the wicked to repent" and to all the brevity of life, and call the people of God to a holy convocation and stand together against Satan and his evil forces and allies and stand with Jesus Christ. Who shall indeed have "TOTAL AND COMPLETE VICTORY" over all his enemies according to (Rev. 19:11-16).

Chapter Ten

MAIN THEME: THE "SWEETNESS AND BITTERNESS" OF DECLARING THE GOSPEL OF GOD!

- (V.1) Mighty angel whose face was "as it were the sun"! (bearer of God's glory)
- A. Clothed with a cloud which indicates the "judgment of God" - Is. 19:1
 - B. Rainbow was upon his head, which indicates God's mercy to those who repent!
 - C. His feet as "pillars of fire" which indicate His ability to devour enemy!
- (V.2) Little "open" book:
- A. This is a "book revealing God's judgments" that God wants John to reveal!
 - B. This book is "open" which means God wants these things revealed and not concealed as God instructed Daniel to do about his "visions" (Dan. 12:4, 9).
 - C. Contains judgments that are going to affect "world in general" (worldwide). The impacts and effects of these judgments will be felt from one corner of the Roman empire to the other!
 - 1. This is indicated by the "mighty angel" that has right foot on the sea and his left foot upon the land (earth).
- (V.3) 2. This angel "roars" (cried with a loud voice)! This is symbolic of the fact that God has chosen His prey, and has conquered His enemy! Note for example the prophet's description of a similar circumstance (Amos 3:1-8).
- a. (V.4) Lion roars in forest when he has his prey
 - b. (V.8) Lion's roar strikes terror into ears of those nearby!
 - c. (V.8) Lion's roar is compared to the "prophecy for and of God"
- (V. 4) 1. When angel "cried" the SEVEN THUNDERS uttered their voices!
- a. John heard what the "7" thunders said!
 - b. He was about to write the messages down but Spirit stopped him.
 - c. The content of the message not to be revealed by John.

Probably these "7" thunders uttered other "judgments" not revealed by God which He would mete out on the "evil-doer" as He poured out His wrath on the realm of the ungodly and slowly but surely destroyed the Roman empire! We can't be dogmatic about this either!

Observation: God left "nothing" to chance as far as the INSPIRATION of the Bible is concerned. God tells John "what to write", ALSO "when to write", ALSO "what not to write"! This passage (Rev. 10:4) beautifully demonstrates these truths.

(V.5-6) This angel swears by “GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH” that ‘time should be no longer’.

A. God did the same in His promise to Abraham in Heb. 6:13-14!

B. This angel states by an oath that “God” declares that time is gone!

1. All these earlier judgments have led to the final “fall” of Rome!
2. The ‘7th’ angel is about to send which means that his ‘trumpet’ of warning and judgment will “finish the mystery of GOD that He declared to His servants and prophets”. (Note: V.7)
3. The RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH that brought ROME to power in the first place is about to "bring this empire to its end". Throughout Biblical history God used GOVERNMENTS which He raised up, to destroy and bring judgments upon other nations of His "vengeance"! Then GOD would turn around and punish the "NATION" or "EMPIRE" which He has used as an instrument of His judgment, because of the wickedness of that nation!

Illustration: Is. 10:5-7, and 12 ! "Principles of God's providence" !

(V. 7) The MYSTERY OF GOD should be finished when He revealed to His prophets! Destruction

A. The prophets foretold of the "destruction of Jerusalem" by Romans! Also Rome

1. This is found in Dan. 9:24-27 - abomination that maketh desolate!
2. The "one that maketh desolate" shall also be punished afterward (v.27).
 - a. Dan. 12:1-9 shows that the "visions and prophecies" that God revealed to His prophets concerning ROME (Dan. 7:7-11) were going to be the "end" of these prophecies! The "mystery" would be completed when "end" came.
 - b. No "prophecy of scripture" in the Old Test. Looks beyond the "destruction of Jerusalem" and ultimately the "fall of the 4th beast of Daniel".
 - c. Dan. 2:36-44 declares that the KINGDOM OF GOD would consume all of the other Kingdoms in the dream of King of Babylon. The image represented:
 1. King of Babylon - He was head of gold (Dan. 2:37-38)
 2. Kings of Medes and Persians - Beast and arms of silver (Dan. 5:28)
 3. Kings of Greece - Belly of Brass and his thighs (Dan. 8:20-21)

4. Kings of Rome - Feet - Mixed iron and iron and clay
(Dan. 2:44) Kingdom of the King JESUS)

Notice especially Dan. 2:31-34 which declare that the church would destroy Kingdom of Rome.

(V. 8-11) God instructs John to take the "little OPEN book" from the angel standing on the earth and the sea. John went to the angel and said "Give me the little book"! (Since angel greater in might and dominion than man, John most politely asks for the little book).

The angel tells John to "take it and eat it up"!

A. This would symbolize the truth that God wants His messengers to completely saturate themselves with the word of God as they teach others. Study as much as you can and seek to have "deep" understanding of God's laws and concepts. Great responsibility riding upon the shoulders of one who preaches and teaches God's word.

B. It would be "in his mouth" sweet as honey!

C. It would be very bitter to his belly!

One of God's prophets in the Old Testament had a similar experience as that of John!

A. Ezek. 2:1-10 and Ezek. 3:1-14 reveal that God told him to 'Eat the Scroll'!

1. It was written within and without (front side and back side) complete and full of God's word to warn Israel to return unto God or they would suffer God's wrath once again.

2. He was told to "fill his bowels" with the roll (I Tim. 4:11-16). Study and meditate upon and read. Paul told Timothy - give thyself "wholly" to these things!

3. It was in his mouth as "sweetness of honey"!

4. It was "bitter" to his belly (V.14) of Chapter 3

Just what does all this symbolize? What is the real meaning of these experiences?

A. God's word is precious and tastes so good to the hungry soul (Matt. 5:6)

1. Reference to the word of God tasting "good" is Heb. 6:4-6, Ps. 19:7-10

2. It is the "sweet germ" of life (Matt. 4:4).

Ezekiel rejoiced to hear the word of the Lord and counted it is so very precious and extremely valuable! It was "sweet water" coming from the purest fountain of the universe!

B. God's word is like a "fire that burns" when it is digested - Note: Jer. 5:14

1. There will be times when you stand alone in proclamation of the truth!

2. There will be times when your closest friends part company with you!

3. There will be times when you must tell people they are 'impudent and also rebellious'.
4. There will be times that to 'reprove and rebuke and exhort' will be very difficult.

This seems to be the meaning of the "roll" being bitter to his belly! Same with John.

- (V.11) John is being "prepared" to preach again to many peoples and nations and tongues and Kings!
- A. It appears that John is going to be "preaching and teaching" the VISIONS of Chapter 12-22 to these nations. He is going to be the messenger of God to 'reveal' these great truths to the "world about to be destroyed".

What a truly great blessing is bestowed upon John to be bearer of this great news.

What an awesome responsibility it is also to 'preach the truth of God' and face the adversity of those who would fight against God's Son.

What a true joy feels the soul when those who hear God's word express unto you their love and respect for being God's messenger!

Chapter Eleven

MAIN THEME: COMPLETE AND TOTAL VICTORY OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH OVER THEIR ADVERSARIES!

a. Specific fulfillments of God's judgments on Rome and Roman empire!

- (V. 1-2) Measure of Temple of God (church) and the altar and the worshippers therein.
A. Leave the outer court alone and measure it not.
B. It is given unto the Gentiles to trod down for 42 months (3 1/2 years)

Meaning of these verses: Probably God is telling John that by using the "Word of God" which is God's measuring rod (Phil. 3:13-16) John will be able to tell who is really being faithful unto God and who is not. God wants John to see that even though it appears that the Gentiles (Roman empire and its persecution of saints) are destroying the church by killing and casting Christians into prison, that they are not "really hurting" the "True church" of Christ. According to (Matt. 10:28) they could kill the body, but they could never touch the soul. This persecution would never cause God's "unshakeable" KINGDOM (Heb. 12:28) to fall. INNER LIGHT!

Outward persecution and slaughter of Christians by the Gentiles was not in any way bringing the Kingdom of God and the preaching and teaching of Christ to a halt, only restraining the progress of it a little. The "inner man" of all of these Christians was "winning the TOTAL and COMPLETE VICTORY in CHRIST JESUS! We may lose a few battles fighting against Satan and end up being scarred abundantly by sin and its curse, but IF we are faithful to the LORD unto the point of death, we have a home in heaven to be given us in that last day (II Tim. 4:6-8).

This "42 months" is the same as 3 1/2 years which signifies an "incomplete period of time". Rome would not have enough time to "wipe out the church of our Lord". God would and did stop this slaughter of His saints, by destroying Rome ultimately and its power and influence.

- (V. 3) God's witnesses shall "prophecy" during this time 1260 days (42 months) of the ultimate destruction of the Gentiles (Roman empire) and the VICTORY of the "LORD OF LORDS and KING OF KINGS", and those who follow Him in the army of heaven (Rev. 19:11-16).
- (V. 4) These two witnesses are the "two olive trees" (one witness) and the "two candlesticks" standing before the God of the earth. It is my conviction that these two witnesses do not represent "two specific witnesses", but rather the strength and power of the followers of the LAMB. Note for example (Luke 10:1, Acts 13:2). The number "two" is symbolic of "strength"!

These "two witnesses" do have a certain symbolic meaning, probably they represent the LORD JESUS CHRIST and His established evidence of DIETY (Rev. 1:5) for he is God's TRUE AND FAITHFUL WITNESS. Also probably represents the HOLY SPIRIT and the APOSTLES (Acts 5:32) as they manifested the strength and power of God as they delivered and wrote the NEW TESTAMENT. Note: They are able to "finish their testimony" (v.7) before the beast makes war upon them and overcomes them and kills them. God does not allow His APOSTLES to be destroyed until they had completed writing the NEW TESTAMENT and confirming it by MIRACLES of the HOLY SPIRIT. These great truths are taught in (Mark 16: 14-20).

(V. 5) Fire proceeds out of the mouth of God's witnesses and devours their enemies!

A. Jer. 23:29 - God's word is said to be "like as a fire"! (Burns and consumes)

B. Jer. 5:14 - God's word in the mouth of His prophets burns up people as wood!

Meaning of this verse: When the WORD OF GOD was spoken by Christ and His apostles through the Holy Spirit, that their words were TRUE and POWERFUL and DEVASTATING to their enemy. The TRUTH "burns" when it enters the hearts of evil-doers because they know they stand condemned by their sins. Some will respond favorably to God's word and REPENT, while others refuse to turn away from sins.

Jesus said in (Matt. 26:52) that "all they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword". These CONSUMING WORDS OF TRUTH are seen in their fulfillment when God destroys Rome. Carnal warfare can never destroy Christ and His church. But those who engage and war after the flesh (II Cor. 10:3-5) shall surely perish that way. ERROR will fall when matched with TRUTH.

Our God is a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29) and His TRUTH shall last as His enemies burn. The SWORD of the HOLY SPIRIT is the "word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Christians who preach and teach this WORD will always conquer their enemies and strike down their foes.

(V.6) God makes reference to the days of Elijah His great prophet and his power to shut the windows of heaven and cause rain to cease. He makes reference unto the power of Moses His prophet who delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage. No power that Pharaoh possessed was stronger than the "power of God's word" in the mouth of Moses (Ex. 4:10-16). God's word came true and Pharaoh met defeat and God's people were released from bondage by God's power. Elijah's testimony of God's WORD and POWER came to pass as God sent down fire from heaven and devoured the sacrifice on the altar and they killed the prophets of BAAL (I Kings 18:21-40).

These witnesses of God during NEW TESTAMENT dispensation would be punished and killed for serving CHRIST, but they overcome their enemy that very way (Rev. 12:10-11).

(V. 7-11) Probably these verses contain a synopsis of the "apostolic period" of prophecy.

- A. Jesus assured His apostles that they would be persecuted and killed for His cause (Matt. 10:16-24).
- B. Even though the apostles were killed for the Lord by the allies of the Devil, their testimony lives on in the "apostles doctrine" (Acts 2:42).
- C. The bodies of these witnesses for the Lord shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt and Jerusalem.
 1. This great city is representative of the "combined evil of Roman world".
 2. Egypt is symbolic of "city of bondage unto Sin".
 3. Sodom is symbolic of the corruption and ungodliness of the empire.
 4. Jerusalem is symbolic of "apostate religion" that helped crucify Christ.

All of these forces under the power and control of Satan seek to "stamp out" the cause of Christ and His church, by killing the APOSTLES and other NEW TESTAMENT followers of Christ. Even though it appears that they have "won the contest of strength" by killing the APOSTLES and their LORD JESUS CHRIST, they soon find out they will lose the WAR.

(V.9-10) The evil world (city of Evil symbol of Roman empire) will not allow their "bodies" to be put in graves, but instead they want all to see how they conquered "God's people". They seem to be gloating over their triumph as they make merry and send gifts one to another congratulating themselves over their "seeming" victory.

Note: (V.11) After 3 1/2 days (imperfect period of persecution and slaughter) God's witnesses shall be raised from their grave in the streets of the evil city.

- A. The Jews by the hands of Romans crucified the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and God raised him up from the grave (Acts 2:22-24).
- B. Even though the apostles were killed as other Christians also were, the testimony (Doctrine of Christ) they lived and died for "lives on".
- C. The faithfulness of God's people to carry on the cause of Christ and follow the 'apostle's doctrine' has tremendous influence for good. Even today is flourishing "more and more" as the church grows and all nations flow into it (Is. 2:2-4).
- D. The effect of "fear" comes upon those who behold this "resurrection" of the 'Witnesses of God'. (Note for example Acts 2:43, Acts 5:11).

Note: (V.12) Here is symbolic language of the great reward and exaltation given unto those who "follow the LAMB whither so ever he goeth! God shall reward faithful service in this life (Mark 10:29-30) even though we are bound to be persecuted for the Lord's NAME. But the eternal reward of everlasting life, makes all suffering seem but for a moment (II Cor. 4:14-16).

Heaven's power and resources are behind the "cause of Christ" and back up the testimony of Christ and His apostles.

(V. 13-14) Same hour an earthquake of great magnitude befall the city (Roman empire) and 1/10 of the city is destroyed and seven thousand men killed. This is just symbolic language of the "magnitude of the second woe" and its "effect" on the Roman empire.

This is not the 'final judgment' and the world comes to an end here as taught in (II Pet.3: 10-14), but rather "a" final judgment that brings about the fall of the Roman empire for its attempt to bring the "church of Christ" to naught.

When Rome falls the "rest of the world" that has depended on Rome and traded with Rome is staggered with awe and fear, at the power of God to bring Rome to its destruction (V.13).

(V. 15-18) Seventh (7) angel sounds his trumpet and it is all over with (Rome has fallen)

Observation: This seems to be a picture likened unto the "end of time" in some senses. For example, in I Thess.4:13-15 God shows that when the "arch-angel sounds his trump" Jesus will be descending from heaven with His mighty angels (II Thess. 1:7-9). It also is true that "in that hour" according to John 5:28-29 the righteous will arise unto everlasting life from their graves, and at the same time the wicked shall arise unto eternal damnation.

(Special Note):In (V.12) God pictures the enemies (evil-doers that persecuted and killed these witnesses of God) watching God's witnesses as they went into heaven. So it seems that it shall be in the "last day". When the dead in Christ arise from the graves (I Thess. 4:16) then the Lord's people who are living on the earth that have not tasted of death, shall together with the risen saints, be caught up together to meet the LORD in the air. It is my conviction that the "wicked shall see the righteous arise to meet the LORD in the air, before they are cast into "hell" for all eternity. Surely this will make torment for eternity much more horrible. And at the same time the righteous shall not view the wicked being cast into hell, which would perhaps bring them sorrow, thinking of loved ones who have never obeyed the gospel of Christ.

(V. 15) The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Christ:

The news that Rome and all her power and influence and beauty and abomination is now destroyed by the OMNIPOTENT Christ and His followers is being taught here. He that is Ruler of the Kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5-7) has brought Rome to her doom and fall. It was so stated in prophecy (Ps. 2:5-12) that JESUS CHRIST had that power and authority. If any "King or Prince" would not "KISS THE SON", that is seek to do the will of God as a government should, they would be destroyed by CHRIST as he ruled through His divine "providence".

(V. 16-17) The '24' Elders fall on their faces and worshipped God saying "Thanks"!

Certainly throughout eternity all of the righteous of all ages shall be praising God and giving Him praise and adoration for their salvation provided by His power and through His SON.

They declared that "God hath taken His great power and hast reigned". This is another way of saying that God had heard the prayers and cries of His saints who had been martyred and were being persecuted and avenged their blood on those who had sought to stamp out and destroy Christ and His Kingdom. Note again for reference (Rev. 6:9-11, Rev.8:3-5).

(V. 18) The nations were angry as they tried to keep God from establishing His Kingdom (Ps. 2:1-4). But they failed and fell in the wrath of God as He brought Roman persecution to an end by destroying the Roman empire. Even before this (final fall of Rome) God destroyed the Jewish nation who sought to prevent Christ from building His church (Matt. 16:18-19) by causing Him to be "crucified".

Ps. 4:4-5 shows that God would simply "laugh at them" as they tried with their puny swords and spears and soldiers without number to thwart the cause of God. And furthermore this passage shows that God would "speak unto them in His anger and wrath", and "vex them" in His sore displeasure. This all came to pass as the prophets had so stated, and as Christ and His apostles said that it would.

Closing Remarks: Please notice Rev. 14:1-8 and how it pictures the VICTORY of the Lamb and those that follow Him, over their adversary "Babylon the Harlot" that symbolizes (Rome and her evil influence) V.8.

*** BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION ***

Chapters 1-11

Introduction: This is a book of 'signs and symbols' that unveil and reveal the glory of Jesus Christ. RULER of His church, and the kingdoms of men through His "providence". These visions that are seen by John through the Spirit are prophecies of the VOCTORY that Christ and His church will realize against Satan and his forces. Satan enlists the assistance of the Roman Empire to try to destroy Christ and His followers. They persecute and afflict these Christians, but in the end the "martyrs for Christ" (Rev. 6:9-11) are seen as being 'triumphant' over their enemies (Rev. 20:4-6). Also the Christians on earth serving Christ *Rev. 14:1-5) as represented in the 144,000 followers of the 'Lamb' are also "winners" of this great conflict and they by their faith and fidelity to the LORD bring the Roman Empire to their destruction. God fights for His people (church) and through many judgments and events bring about the fall of the Roman Empire for their assault upon Christ and His followers! Those who seek to hinder or destroy Christ and His body (Col. 1:18) will always meet defeat at the 'strength and hand of the LORD'. Truly the "Kingdom of God" (Col.1:13-14) cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28). But Christ and His saints will 'grind into powder' (destroy) all other enemies including "nations or forces or vices" that Satan may use against them.

Observation: The proof of these truths are seen in that Christ and His "church" are alive and well on Planet Earth, but the Roman Empire is long since "vanished"!

*** "Synopsis" of Chapter One ***

MAIN THEME: Establish the "omnipotent authority" of the SON OF GOD!

In this chapter Jesus Christ is set forth in His glory, and His divine credentials prove His "worthiness" to be heard and obeyed by His people, the "church" and all peoples upon the earth. These visions present events that are about to "come to pass" shortly! In (V.3) God says that those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep the words thereof shall be blessed! In (V.4) God says that those words are "written" by John and sent in a "book" to the "7" churches of Asia. This is symbolic of the fact that this message is for the "Lord's church" in general as even today we profit from studying these great truths! In (V5-7) Jesus Christ is presented in the "fullness of the scope of His ministry". In (V.8) Jesus Christ affirms His DIETY as being "everlasting and eternal"! He is the only ("potentate") one who is the ALMIGHTY! In (V.9-11) John identifies himself as the writer of this book and recipient of the "signs and symbols" of this prophecy. John affirms that he is in the isle of Patmos for the word of the Lord and his testimony. He identifies himself to

the '7' golden candlesticks (churches of Asia) as being their brother in the Kingdom and in the tribulation. He is receiving these visions of prophecy on the Lord's day (V.10). In (V.12-17) John reveals the "majestic description" of the CHRIST in all His radiant glory. In (V.17-18) the Lord Christ Jesus is revealed as He that "died and arose from the dead". He conquered Satan through death (Heb. 2:9-15) and He now has the "keys of death and Hades"! It is His VOICE that shall have power to call all the "dead" from their tombs on judgment day according to scripture (John 5:28-29). When He comes again (I Cor. 15:24-28) to deliver the Kingdom to God, He will have completely conquered all of His enemies including Satan and death. In (V.20) Jesus Christ is shown as he "walks in the midst of the '7' golden candlesticks" (church). He controls the DESTINY of His church and His saints and knows all that is going on "in the church" at all times.

*** "Synopsis" of Chapter Two and Three ***

MAIN THEME: Beyond doubt JESUS CHRIST does "rule and reign" in His church!

Specifically John is to send this prophecy in a book to the '7' churches of Asia. There were at this time "more" than seven churches of Christ in Asia-minor. For example, there were churches in Hieropolis and Colossae as well (Col. 4:13). But God singles out Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyratira, Philadelphia, Sardis, and Laodicea also. He compliments the church where commendation is due, and chastens and rebukes the church where such is due. In every church Jesus Christ is "fully aware" of what they have done that is good and right. He is also cognizant of their "error" and their neglect! He knows their works and their labor and their patience in obedience. He is also aware that "sin" is in the camp of the body and hastens to warn them to "repent". He also makes them aware of the "great tribulation" that is about to come upon them to try them. But He exhorts them to be "faithful even to the point of death". He promises them blessings and happiness in this life (Mark 30:29-30) and in the life to come "everlasting reward" in heaven. In "essence" this is also true per each local church of Christ today. Christ "will remove the candlestick" from a church that does not follow his "leadership" through the GOSPEL of CHRIST (Rev. 2:5; II John 9).

*** "Synopsis" of Chapter Four ***

MAIN THEME: GOD rules on His throne over the entire Universe He created!

Specifically at this time when Christians were being persecuted and slaughtered by the Roman government, the SAINTS OF GOD needed to see that God is on the THRONE of His great created universe, and not the Roman Empire, nor Caesar. They needed to know that it was God that "Controlled" Caesar, and not Caesar that controlled "GOD"! John is provided an opportunity to behold the "majesty and greatness" of God as He reigns and rules over "all". He

is privileged to see the grandeur of the THRONE ROOM if you please. He beholds a picture of the “angels of God” worshipping and serving Him and doing His will. He simply says that God is “indescribable” (V.3-6). His “beauty of holiness and righteousness” are beyond human description. God is not going to “allow” Caesar or Rome to bring more persecution or death upon His “children” that is not in harmony with His “over-all will”.

*** “Synopsis” of Chapter Five ***

MAIN THEME: Only the “lamb of God” is worthy to reveal God’s eternal purpose unto man!

John sees God holding the book of ‘7’ souls in his right hand, which is the book of God’s eternal purpose (Eph. 3:3-11). An angel declares unto John and the world a great challenge! “Who is worthy to open the book and reveal the message within?” John saw that no man in heaven, not on earth was WORTHY to do so, and he cried. One of the ‘24’ elders said unto John that “the lion of the tribe of Judah was worthy”! He had prevailed (over God’s enemy and man’s) and was worthy to “open the book” of ‘7’ seals, and reveal its contents. When the “lamb in the midst of the throne of God” takes the book from the right hand of God, the ‘4’ living creatures and ‘24’ elders all fall down before the “lamb” and worship and praise Him that had shed His blood for the sins of the world. They sang the “deliverance song” of Jesus Christ and His establishment of the Kingdom of God. In the concluding verses of this chapter (V.11-14) the whole of heaven and earth are seen as praising the “lamb”. This symbolizes His “universal dominion of heaven and earth” (I Pet. 3:22). Jesus Christ is “worthy” by virtue of the fact that He did ESTABLISH His “church” and the gates of Hades would not prevail against His “Church” nor Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18-19).

*** “Synopsis” of Chapter Six and Seven ***

MAIN THEME: Christ will conquer His enemies, but His “followers” will be severely tested!

When the “lamb” begins to open the book of ‘7’ seals John hears noise similar to thunder! One of the ‘4’ living creatures says to John “Come and see”. John sees this:

Seal # 1 (V.2) - Riding upon His purity and holiness Jesus Christ conquers with the GOSPEL.

Seal # 2 (V.3-4) - Persecution and bloodshed and war shall pursue the preaching and teaching of the “gospel of Christ”. God’s children will be tested as His SON was also tested.

- Seal #3 (V.5-6) - Discrimination and famine and privation shall be the lot of God's people as they seek to remain faithful unto the "lamb" by their obedience to His gospel (Rev. 13:15-18). Some lost their jobs and were not permitted to "buy and sell" so as to provide necessities for their family.
- Seal #4 (V.7-8) - Those "evil-doers" that perished in God's judgments, as well as Christians would be ushered into the realm of "Hades" as they died in these events! The wicked would go to "torment" (Luke 16:19-23) and the righteous unto the "Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).
- Seal #5 (V.9-11) - God pictures for John the "martyrs" of the saints that die for the word of the Lord (Rev. 12:11). They cry out for rightful justice upon their persecutors. God clothes them in "white raiment" and gives them rest (Rev. 14:13). Their cause will yet see victory among the saints on earth.
- Seal #6 (V.12-Rev. 7:17) – These verses picture the enemies of the "lamb" crying out for mercy as they are defeated and destroyed by the "wrath" of God. This scene actually is depicting "Caesar and Rome" falling before the power of God and acknowledging His supremacy in the Kingdom of men (V.12-17). Chapter '7' shows that God is aware of every faithful child of God on earth, and will protect him from his enemy. This is the message of the 144,000 being sealed (V.1-8). In the latter part of this chapter (V.9-17) we are shown that the greater blessings for the Christian lie on the "other side" of death.

*** "Synopsis" of Chapter Eight and Nine***

MAIN THEME: God does hear and answer the prayers of His saints according to His will!

When the "lamb of God" opens the 7th seal, there was silence which indicates that a "great dramatic event" is about to unfold. God is "raised up out of His holy habitation" (Heb. 2:20). He is about to destroy Rome for persecuting the church. John sees an angel with a golden censer in his hand "full of the prayers of the saints". This angel offers these prayers unto God mixed with the "intercessory" of Christ (Heb. 7:25). God received these prayers as they come up before Him on the golden altar. He manifests His "love for His saints" and orders "retaliation" on His enemy (V.5). The angels take "fire from the altar" and casts it upon the earth. This is symbolic of God bringing judgments upon the realm of the wicked and evil. This is His answer to the prayers of the saints (Rev. 6:9-11). This is His answer to the many saints on earth going through the great tribulation and persecution.

Seven angels with "7" trumpets prepared to sound "warnings" to the evil to repent.

- 1st Trumpet - Symbolized God bringing a judgment upon Rome through nature. Probably He caused great famines to come upon the realm of the whole earth. Destroyed partially their food supply (hit them in their bread-basket) Acts 11:27-30.
- 2nd Trumpet - Symbolized God bringing a judgment upon Rome through nature. Probably through great sea disasters, etc. God weakened the economy and wealth of Rome. He did destroy their industry and commerce trade (Rev. 18:9-18).
- 3rd Trumpet - Symbolized God bringing judgment upon the “leadership” of the empire! It is sure that great Emperors such as “Nero and Domician” did fall from power. It is true also that the effect of their fall had great devastating influence to the power of Rome. The average Roman citizen began to hate their own government and “wormwood resulted”. Insurrection and blatant rebellion existed.
- 4th Trumpet - All of these previous judgments led to an “over-all” weakening of the Empire and the strength of the government itself. The Empire became “weak economically and politically” for sure.

(Chapter Nine)

- 5th Trumpet - Sin and evil of every kind abounded within the confines of the Roman world, and the consequences of their sins “stung” every citizen until they desired death in preference unto life.
- 6th Trumpet - John sees Rome so “captured and captivated” by their sins (Prov. 5:22) that they now are rotten through and through (Rev. 9:20-21). Also it shows here the ultimate destruction of the wicked that rebel against God (Rev.21:8). Those who died as a result of their own sins were surely lost forever and could only look forward to an eternity of torment with “fire and brimstone”.

*** “Synopsis” of Chapter Ten ***

MAIN THEME: The “sweetness” of hearing God’s word, and the “bitterness” of preaching it.

John sees another mighty angel with a “little book” that is OPEN (events to be revealed). This book probably is the whole of the visions of (Chapter 12-22) the later “half” of this book. This book contains the judgments of God that John is charged to reveal (V.11). This angel is standing upon the earth and the sea, which symbolizes “world-wide” effects of this message and these judgments. This angel swears by God that created the heavens and the earth, that when the ‘7’ trumpet sounds, “time should be no longer”. That the “mystery of God should be finished” also (V.7). This mystery which the prophets foretold included the fall of Jerusalem (Dan.9:24-27) and the fall of the one who brought desolation upon Jerusalem (Dan. 7:7-11). A voice from heaven instructs John to take the “little

book” out of the angels’ band. John does so and the angel tells John to “take it”, and “eat it up”. This symbolizes the fact that God’s messenger should saturate himself with the message of God before he goes out to speak for God. This book was sweet to his mouth, which means that God’s word is “rich food” for the mind of men. But the preaching of God’s words brings the truth upon you, and sometimes even your closest brethren forsake God’s message and refuse to make proper application. They sometimes persecute you for your willingness to preach the truth. Sometimes you even have to “stand alone” as you proclaim God’s word.

*** “Synopsis” of Chapter Eleven ***

MAIN THEME: The SAINTS come through the great tribulation VICTORIOUS in Jesus Christ!

Also: God brings the Roman Empire to “destruction” and still reigns in Nations!

This great chapter shows that “outward persecution” cannot affect harm or destroy the Temple of God (church) as shown in (V.1-2). The “apostolic period” is covered in (V.3-12). The Devil through envy of the Jews puppets and Roman Empire to crucify Christ. He also makes war against His “apostles and followers” (Matt. 10:16-24). But just as Christ was raised from the dead, and His cause marched “on” through the preaching and teaching of the Apostles and New Testament Christians, so also the “apostles doctrine” (Acts 2:42) lives on after their death. Satan seeks to destroy Christ and the church through “death” of the saints, but even this cannot prevail against God and His Son (Rom. 8:35-39). In (V.7) we see that the Devil through Roman persecution is not permitted to take the life of the apostles, till they have finished their testimony (revealed and miracle confirmed the New Testament). And the scriptures bear this out to be true (Mark 16:14-19-20). But when their “testimony” is finished the beast kills the apostles of Christ, as they did their Lord. They gloat over their seeming victory for a while (V.8-10) but God still causes the church to grow and multiply and fill the whole earth. Heaven’s tribute to the apostles and their “fidelity through adversity” is seen in (V.11-12). In the remainder of this chapter (V.13-18) God pictures the final fall of Rome and the “ruling and reigning Christ” as the conqueror of Rome. When Rome falls (V.13) many remaining nations of the world attributed their fall to the power of God (they were afraid and gave glory to God).

Conclusion: Rome was the “evil nation” that was destroying the earth (V.18) and God has destroyed the Roman Empire for their “cup of abomination was full” (Rev. 17:1-5). Now that Rome was gone it was abundantly clear that “the Kingdom’s of this world are become the Kingdom’s of our Christ” (V.15) and he shall reign forever and forever. This means that Russia or Japan or China or any other nation will ever be strong enough to destroy Christ and his “church”! Truly we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty” (V.17).

Chapter 12

MAIN THEME: Spiritual Conflict (Warfare) that took place between Christ and Satan! Christ established His church and preserves and protects her from evil!

Short Synopsis: Through the lineage of the Jewish nation came the Lord Jesus Christ! He was of the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14). This was of course the faithful remnant of the Jewish nation spoken of by Paul (Rom. 11:4-5). The “great red dragon” that stood before the woman to devour her child as soon as it was born was Satan the Devil. Throughout the life of Christ Jesus, Satan sought to devour Jesus, but he failed “miserably” to defeat the Lord, and thwart God’s eternal purpose in Jesus Christ from being accomplished. This purpose was to shed His blood for the sins of the world, and purchase the church thereby (John 1:29, Acts 20:28). This male child described as one who was to “rule the nations with a rod of iron” is of course Jesus Christ, God’s Son (Ps. 2:9-12). After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) where He received “universal dominion” over all of God’s creation (Dan. 7:13-14, I Pet. 3:22). He was “ruler” of the kings of the earth from that time until now and until the end of the world. This “woman” now changes identity from “Physical Israel” through whom Christ did come, to the “Holy Nation” of Spiritual Israel or Zion which is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:22-23). From the day that the “church” was established everyone who has ever served the Lord and taught His message to sinful men has been persecuted (II Tim. 3:12). The church is the “heavenly Jerusalem”, the Mother of us all (Gal. 4:26). The Devil now makes war against the woman (church) and the followers of Christ Jesus (v.13). Just as God preserved Israel in the Wilderness (I Cor. 10:1-4) in the Old Testament. God shall feed and clothe and protect the church of our Lord Jesus Christ in the desert of “sorrow and sin” (Heb. 13:5-6). Psalms 23 sets forth the Divine Shepherd and His care over His flock. Christians are provided all food and nourishment necessary in God’s word to defeat the Devil in their lives. When Christ Jesus ascended into heaven “war” took place in the “heavenlies or the heavenly places” (v.7-9). Notice that Satan was cast down and his angels with him. He tastes defeat at the hand of angels who are now commanded by Jesus Christ as Michael the Arch-angel directs the battle. When the Accuser is cast down from his position of “power” in the “spiritual realms” he is angry and seeks to persecute and destroy those who follow after Christ. Satan seeks to drown the “church” with his lies and false doctrines (v.15-17) but the earth opens up her mouth and swallows these lies. Satan martyrs many saints (v.11), but this only serves to strengthen God’s people and bring the defeat of the Devil to light by the gospel of Christ.

(V. 1-2) This woman clothed with the “sun and moon and stars” in the “nation of Israel” (faithful remnant) through whom Christ comes. Note in the Old Testament (Gen. 37:9-11) that this represented Jacob and his sons and his wife that bowed down unto Joseph. God makes illusion to the glory of “faithful Israel” in prophecy (Is. 46:13). This salvation from God came through Jesus Christ who was born of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5, Is. 11:1-2). But notice that this “woman” brings forth a

man-child before her “travail”, pain and persecution comes. Note an Old Testament prophecy that pictures this great event (Is. 66:7-14). Before Israel’s “travail” comes she brings forth a man-child who is Jesus Christ (Is. 9:6-7). Notice another passage that does teach this great lesson (Rom. 11:26-27).

- (V. 3-5) This great “Red” Dragon is symbolic of Satan the Devil (v.9). He is red which suggests that he is a “murderer” (John 8:44) and he is responsible for the bloodshed of God’s prophets and followers of all ages that seek to remain true unto God. He is the Father of “liars” and “lies” that have caused many of God’s follower to defect from God and become traitors to God’s cause. He was responsible for having Christ crucified on the cross, and walks about even today as a roaring lion seeking whom he may “devour” (I Pet. 5:8).
- (V.6) God prepared a place for the church in this “present evil world” (Gal. 1:4). Even though we ‘live in this world’ we (Christians) are not “of” this world (I John 2:15-17, John 17: 15-16). But just as God provided Israel nourishment through manna and quail (John 6:31, Ps. 105:40-41) as they journeyed through the wilderness, God also provides the “church” consisting of every individual baptized believer spiritual nourishment through His divine word (gospel of Christ) according to scripture (John 6:63; II Tim. 3:16-17). In this world of sin and ungodliness, God has granted unto us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (II Pet. 1:3-11). God provides this protection for His saints by sealing them (Rev. 7:1-4) with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13-14). Through their deep love and devotion to God and holding fast unto God’s faithful word “faithfully” they weather this storm of persecution that Satan brings upon them and by the blood of Christ and their godly living they overcome the Devil (v.11). This period of time of 1260 days is symbolic of the same period of time as is mentioned in (v.14) which is time, times, and half a time. This is the period of Gentile persecution (Rev. 11:3) of the church, which was about to come to pass shortly. This was the Roman persecution of the saints of our Lord. In a deeper sense this also applies to the “whole period” of the Lord’s church on earth as Christians will always be persecuted for righteousness sake (Matt. 5:10-12).
- (V. 7-9) This symbolic passage speaks of “war” or conflict between Satan and God. Ever since his transgression against God in the beginning (I John 3:8), God and Satan have opposed one another. Of course God is the “stronger” of the two and controls Satan on a leash, as we would a dog. He (Devil) can only do that which God allows him to do (I Cor. 10:12-13). When Christ was crucified Satan felt he had won the victory over God and His plan to redeem man from sin (I Cor. 2:8). But instead of defeating God and His “anointed”, Satan was defeated by Jesus Christ. Since He has never committed sin (II Cor. 5:21) Satan had no power to keep Jesus in the realm of death (I Cor. 15:55-57), and Christ Jesus arose from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 1:4). All authority and power were now

His and He controls Satan having bound the “strong man” (Matt. 12:29) and spoiling his goods (Is. 53:12). This spiritual was between Satan and Christ is more fully described in the book of Ephesians as we shall notice now!

- A. God set Christ at His own right hand in the “heavenly places” (Eph. 1:20).
- B. Through the Lord Jesus Christ all spiritual blessings are found in the “heavenly places” (Eph. 1:3).
- C. Every Christian is also exalted by God to “sit together with Christ” in the “heavenly places” (Eph. 2:5).
- D. Through Jesus Christ and the establishment of His church, God made known to the principalities and powers in the “heavenly places” His manifold wisdom (Eph. 3:10-11).
- E. Christ Jesus and His saints “wrestle” not against flesh and blood, but against “principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world”, and against spiritual wickedness in the “heavenly places”!

Conclusion: Satan wanted Christ to worship him (Matt. 4:5-10) but He resisted the clever temptations of the Devil and remained true unto His Father. The Devil never succeeded in causing Christ to sin against God although he did continue to try all the way unto the death of Christ Jesus! Since he could not deceive Jesus, he in anger is trying to deceive His body (Col. 1:18) which is the church of Christ. God showed His superior wisdom to Satan and his angels, and sinful man by building His church. In Christ Jesus, and in His church, we have also power to rule in “spiritual realms” (Jas. 4:6-10). We can resist the Devil by “being strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10-18). It is certain that those who are found faithful in the camp of the saints (Rev. 20:9-10) will see the final and complete defeat of the Devil and his Kingdom.

Notice again another passage that sums this thought up (Col. 2:14-16). Jesus Christ triumphed over the “principalities and powers” by His crucifixion on the cross and subsequent resurrection from the dead. And He “openly” exposed the Devil and his allies for the venomous beast that he is (John 3:16-21). Truly Jesus Christ did “abolish death” and brought “life and immortality” to light through the gospel of Christ (II Tim. 1:10).

Every time that Jesus Christ cast out demons or His followers by His authority, they were bringing about the fall of the Devil (Luke 10:17-18).

- (V. 10-12) The authority of God’s Christ (anointed one) is now established by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4) and ascension into heaven! Peter confirms this in (Acts 2:30-36), where He refers to the Son of God as being made both “Lord” and “Christ” (v.36)! Satan has no more power in the ‘spiritual realms,’ therefore he has been cast out into the earth! He is the “god of this world” who blinds and deceives those who refuse to obey the gospel of Christ (II Cor. 4:4). Satan was an accuser in “spiritual realms”, (v.10) but he no longer has that right,

since the blood of Christ has been shed that washed away all the sins of the faithful in the Old Testament, from Adam unto Pentecost, and also the sins of the few who do and will obey the gospel of Christ also (Acts 2:38; Rom. 5:8-10). Furthermore each Christian can have ‘continual’ forgiveness and cleansing from sins through the blood of Christ (I John 1:7-9) as long as they “continue” to walk in the light of His word! The blood of bulls and goats could never make the comer thereunto “continually perfect” (Heb. 10:1-4) but the blood of Christ can and does.

When the church was established “forgiveness and remission of sins” was first preached in the name of Christ from Jerusalem, by the apostles, as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:45-49). But no “angel” in heaven including Michael was able to “rebuke the Devil” for his wrongs, but rather only Jesus Christ could and did by His sinless life, resurrection from the dead, and shed blood for the sins of sinful men (Jude 9). Because of the blood of Christ that was shed Satan had no claim over “Moses” nor any other faithful obedient person who lived before the cross (Heb. 11:40; Heb. 12:23).

First century Christians and all those who lived during the Roman persecution on into the 3rd and 4th Centuries were in need of Christ and His blood and His gospel! Because of their faith in Christ, and obedient life, and the blood that did wash their sins away daily, they overcame the Devil even though many died as martyrs (Rev. 6:9-11). These early Christians loved Christ and His body more than they loved their own lives (Luke 14:26).

Those that have obeyed the gospel of Christ and are obedient unto the Lord by continual obedience unto the gospel of Christ can “now” rejoice! Why so??? They live and abide in Jesus Christ and in His church where God blesses them with every spiritual blessing, and gives them protection from the Devil and his enemies! In Christ we have a “way of escape” from temptation (I Cor. 10:12-13).

Woe to those who inhabit the earth and sea! This is symbolic language for the realm of the ungodly or the world full of sinners and specifically here speaking of the realm of the “wicked Roman world”! The Devil is taking out his anger and wrath upon the wicked people of the earth who serve him by their own will. Satan does not “deserve to be served”! He is vicious and cruel and destroys those who serve him as payment for their loyalty unto him. Ultimately he will see all those who refuse to obey the gospel of Christ cast into “hell fire” with him and his angels! He knows that he hath a short time only to do his dirty work! I believe that is referring to the short period of time that the church was so severely persecuted and afflicted by the evil Romans!

- (V. 13-17) Satan's great persecution of the Lord's church by Roman authority! This chapter also depicts the harm that shall be done to the body of Christ until the world comes unto an end! Satan still persecutes the church through various ways and means!
- (V. 14) The symbolic language here of the woman flying on the wings of a great eagle is taken from the Old Testament (Ex. 19:3-6). God compares His delivering of Israel from the bondage of Egypt to "bearing them on eagles wings"! Thus as God delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt through Moses, God delivers His people from the bondage of sin through Jesus Christ (Col. 1:13-14). Just as Moses continued to lead God's people through the wilderness unto the "promised land" of Canaan, just so Christ is leading His church, by His law (Rom. 1:16-17) to the Father in heaven above (John 14:6). While here on this earth as "pilgrims and sojourners" (Eph. 2:18-23) we are safe and secure in Christ Jesus our Lord from the onslaught of the Devil. Security in Christ Jesus comes through our "being steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). By being steadfast in the doctrine of Christ, we resist the Devil (I Pet. 5:8-9). The eagle is a great bird of prey that soars so high, that her enemies cannot reach her. This is symbolic of the fact that Christians are to be "sober, righteous, and godly", in this present world. And in so doing they will be denying "ungodliness and worldly lusts" (Tit. 2:11-12). The church is nourished for a "time, times, and half a time" from the face of the servant. Again for an explanation of this, we might refer to Paul speaking by the Spirit (Rom. 8:35-39; Heb. 5:12-14). In this desert and wilderness of evil and sin, in Christ Jesus can be found "rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38; John 4:14). This period of time is referring to the preservation of the church, during the Roman persecution as well as for all time too.
- (V.15) The Devil opens his mouth and a flood of water comes forth by which he seeks to drown the church! This is symbolic of the "lies and false doctrine" that Satan would have the 'elect' to believe to lead them away from security in the Son of God (Eph. 4:14; I Tim. 4:1-3). God said that some would not endure "sound doctrine" but would heap to themselves teachers having "itching ears" and would turn aside from the truth unto fables (II Tim. 4:1-5). Satan has his ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15) doing his planting of evil deceit. Even from among Elders have come "perverse doctrines" that have led many astray (Acts 20:28-32). The Lord's true blue Saints will not drink this poison from the Devil, but will prove all things by God's word (Eph. 5:5-10).
- (V.16) The earth helped the woman by opening up her mouth and swallowing these waters, is symbolic of the earth being deceived by the Devil by believing these lies and counterfeit doctrines of men (Matt. 15:8-9). The world is deceived by Satan (V.9) through the "philosophies, and vain traditions, and rudiments of the

world” (Col. 2:8). The world of evil men does not question the damnable doctrines of the Devil, but rather allow themselves to be seduced by the doctrines of devils (I Tim. 4:1-3). This is seen in clarity later on in this book (Rev. 16:10-11).

Chapter 13

INTRODUCTION AND MAIN THEME: Satan now enlists the help of the Roman Empire to help him in his “persecution” of Christ’s church, but this “beast” is only partially successful in this endeavor (v.7, 18)!

(V. 1-2) John now sees through the Spirit this vision of a great beast with “7” heads and “10” horns, and “10” crowns upon his horns and upon his heads the “name” of blasphemy! This picture language is taken from the Old Testament prophet of Daniel (Dan. 7:1-11)! Daniel saw arising from the “great sea of society” (world’s populous) four great beasts. Of course, these represented different empires, which would arise and control the world! In order they were the “Babylonian Empire, and the Medes and Persians Empire, and the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire! At the time of John’s vision here, the first three “Empires” had already arose and already perished! This leaves only ‘1’ possible interpretation of this huge beast that John sees! He sees the Roman Empire arising from the sea of “society” and conquer the known world! Notice that Rev. 13:2 is a composite description of the 4th beast that Daniel saw in his visions (Dan. 7:7-11). Satan “uses” this beast to carry out his onslaught against the “saints” (Rev. 13:7) and many saints were killed for the cause of Christ! At the moment that John is seeing and recording these “visions” of Revelation he is “exiled” on the isle of Patmos, for the Lord and the word of his testimony (Rev. 1:9)!

A. Symbolic description of this beast has much significance!

1. ‘7’ heads – Completeness of the “rulers” of the Roman Empire and their power through military might and genuine to control!
2. ‘10’ horns – This manifests the “destructive might and power” of the Roman Empire as they steadily gained control of the nations of the world!
3. ‘10’ crowns – These crowns upon the horns surely show that the Roman Empire would seize control of the nations by military might and power and be successful in conquering the world!
4. ‘Name of blasphemy’ – Certainly the Roman Emperors sought to “dethrone” the God of heaven and claim “glory” for themselves even to the point of “speaking against God and His saints” by persecuting them! Some emperors demanded to be called “God”!
5. ‘Leopard-like’ – This symbolic of its “cat-like quickness” to conquer the world and speed of conquest (Dan. 7:6)! This figure depicts the conquering might and power of the Grecian army!
6. ‘Feet like a bear’ – This shows its awesome power in trampling its enemy and destroying the enemy (Dan. 7:5)! The Medes and Persians were certainly some of the most terrible and fierce warriors of all as they attacked and annihilated their enemy!

7. 'Mouth like a lion' – This manifests the ability of the Roman Empire to conquer its' enemy as a lion would devour its prey! Notice (Dan. 7:4)! This describes the Babylonian Kingdom!

- (V. 3) John sees the beast with '7' heads and '10' horns from the sea (Roman Empire) receive a deadly wound "as it were"! One of the "heads" of the beast is wounded, but the beast recovers and the world wonders after the beast! Just what this means we are not absolutely sure. We present this explanation for your consideration. In Rev. 17:8-14 the "harlot" is pictured in symbolism for our study! Note v.9 refers to the '7' heads as being "seven mountains" on which the harlot sits, and of course it is true that Rome is the city that was built on '7' hills! But it is more probable that these '7' heads stand for the "emperors" of Rome in their "completeness"! One the these "emperors" that persecuted the Lord's church "Nero" was murdered, and for awhile the persecution of the saints slacked off, and Rome became more of a 'peaceful' world dictator, instead of exalting "Tyranny"! However after Nero's death, another Emperor Domitian arose and gained control of the Empire and he was wicked and unfit for 'peaceful rule' and sought to destroy and persecute the Lord's body (church) once again. This persecution literally reached from one end of the Roman Empire to the other. This tribulation of the saints reached over into Asia-minor where even the '7' churches of Asia were located (Rev. 2:3). Notice in Rev. 17:10 that John says that '5' Kings are fallen at the time of these visions, and that "one" IS (now rules and reigns on the throne as Emperor)! He would be number '6' and probably represents Domitian (Rev. 13:17-18). Certainly during his reign as "Emperor" of Rome, he demanded to be called "God" and persecuted Christians relentlessly, and even had pressures brought to bear upon them to stop them from working at gainful employment, and keep them from being able to "buy and sell" to provide good for their families (Rev. 13:17). Therefore this writer concludes that (v.3) the head wounded "as it were" with a blow and recovered is symbolic of "Nero's death and Rome's loss of power" temporarily, until Domitian took the throne and went on the "war-path" against the church! The 'concilia' that tried to bind "emperor worship" on the Christian also was head quartered in Pergamos where Satan's seat is (Rev. 2:12-13).
- (V.4) Through the influence of the Roman Empire with her wickedness and ungodliness the whole world was "worshipping the Devil" (Rev. 17:1-5). The Devil gave all of his power of "deceit" (Rev. 12:9) to the beast, which he used to deceive the world thereby. None could match the might and power of Rome, or had the economic influence in world affairs as did Rome! In the eyes of the world "Rome" was the 'utopia' of that age!
- (V. 5-6) Here indeed is a "picture" of the words of Daniel once again (Dan. 7:19-26)! Roman Emperors would arise "claiming to be DEITIES and demand that people

worship them and pay homage unto them through “idol worship”! They would not at all have any respect for the True God of heaven but would hold Him in contempt in their hearts and blaspheme Him with their mouths! This ‘beast’ had power given unto him to continue this blasphemy and persecution of God’s saints for ‘42’ months (Refer to Rev. 11:2; and Rev. 12:14)!

- (V.7) Through the providence of God (Christ’s allowance) this beast was given by the Devil the power to “make war with the saints” and to “overcome” them. This again is pictured in the Old Testament (Dan. 7:21). This great persecution was of such magnitude that Christians by great numbers were slaughtered for their faith in Christ, and many others tortured and imprisoned (Rev. 6:9-11; Rev. 8:35-39; Rev. 2:13; II Cor. 11:23-28)!
- (V. 8) Everyone therefore that was upon the earth that was not worshipping and serving Jesus Christ as a “Christian” and therefore “suffering as a Christian” (I Pet. 4:16) was a “captive” of the Devil and were serving him (Matt. 6:24)! Note also John 8:44 which depicts those living after the desires of the flesh and of the mind (Eph. 2:1-3). Those who have their names written in the book of Life were members of the “church” of Christ who were faithful “unto” death (Rev. 2:10; Heb. 12:22-23). Everyone was worshipping the Devil except for Christians!
- (V. 9-10) The Holy Spirit exhorts “attentive listening” to what he is about to say unto John, and so let us also be attentive to what is about to follow! He that ‘leadeth into captivity’ shall go into captivity! This simply means that the Roman Empire who had captured the “known world” was going to be captured by the overwhelming power of Christ as He ruled in “providence”! This great nation of Rome, which lived by the sword was to perish also by the sword (Matt. 26:52)! But this nation would be killed by the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17). This nation would be destroyed by the “Spirit” coming out of the mouth of Christ (II Thess. 2:8). Again this nation would perish by the sword of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:11-16). The sword which Christ would smite and rule the nations is His “word” of righteousness and judgment (Rom. 1:16-17; John 12:48-49). Again this nation would perish due to the fact that they would reject obedience to the gospel of Christ, and be ‘captured’ by their own wickedness (Prov. 5:22) and held captive by the devil b their own refusal to “repent of their wickedness” (Rev. 9:20-21)! When Christ ascended into heaven (Eph. 4:8) he “led captivity” CAPTIVE! Paul prefigures the power and ‘authority’ of Christ to defeat every enemy here in this verse! Certainly Christ defeated the Devil, and ultimately through His Saints and their faithful obedience (patience) he will completely overthrow the Devil and his army (I Pet. 5:8-9). The “patience and faith of the saints” is seen in their willingness to “die for Christ if need be, and their daily living for Him” (Luke 9:23).

(V. 11-18) This beast coming up out of the earth is symbolic of “power” arising from the ‘beast’ that comes up out of the sea, and is “now” on land and earth! So this seems to indicate that the “government” of Rome implemented a device, which they used to “deceive the citizens of the Roman Empire” and cause them to go into “idoltrous worship”! We are not sure regarding this symbol. But we offer this explanation unto you for your consideration. Domitian desired to be worshipped and served as a GOD, and implemented every device that he could muster to promote “self-worship” of HIMSELF by the citizens of the Roman Empire! He formed the ‘concilia’ which was a committee of Dignitaries and Soldiers that went throughout the length and breadth of the land putting all to death who did not worship the beast “nor his image” (Rev. 13:15). If Christians were not killed for their refusal to worship this “image” of Caesar, they were persecuted and deprived of “physical needs” for themselves and their families. Discrimination (Rev. 6:5-8) against the Christian for remaining loyal unto Christ! This “Emperor” had coins printed that bore the image of himself and words depicting himself as GOD. When Christians would use this “means of exchange” they would be guilty of idoltrous worship! Hence they would refuse to “buy or sell” so as not to betray the Lord Jesus Christ! So this “beast” would represent ‘false religion’ in the sense of “Idoltrous” (Rev. 9:20-21; Acts 19:27-28)! Domitian was guilty of blaspheming God by claiming to be GOD (Is. 14:12-16) the same as the Kings of Babylon did! God refers to such a beast that works “lying signs and wonders and miracles” in (II Thess. 2:9-12) and that because people would be deceived by these pseudo-wonders, they would believe a “lie” and be damned! When the truth is presented to a person and he rejects it, he chooses error, and this means that he has faith in his strong delusion! Those who choose to believe a “lie” have “pleasure in unrighteousness”! A citizen of Rome could worship “Domitian” as God and Emperor, and no restrictions be put upon him to be “morally upright and honest”! Rather people would have the lead-way to be as “evil and corrupt” as the GOD they served who was Satan in reality! Whenever a citizen did engage in “Emperor Worship” he was marked in the “head or forehead” so as to be distinguished as serving and declaring Caesar a God! The idea of the mark in the forehead surely symbolized that with their hands they would labor to “promote Caesar” and with their “heart” sanctify him as their DIETY! Hence they literally become “slaves” to Caesar to do his will, and his desires and purposes!

Those who did not have the “mark of the beast”, nor his NUMBER ‘666’ were not allowed to “buy or sell” nor carry on daily business affairs. Satan tried to cause the “saints” to betray Christ by depriving them of the “necessities of life”!

The Number ‘666’ symbolizes “falling short of perfection” or the perfect Number ‘7’! This simply shows that this great persecution of the saints by this “beast” from the land would fall short of it’s purpose of destroying Christ’s church! Instead

Domitian was killed and his purposes to destroy the “church” of the Lord perished with him. And all of the other Roman Emperors that followed him never did succeed in wiping out the “body of Christ” either (Rev. 17:10-11). Indeed this Number ‘666’ is the number of man whom we believe that evidence points to be Domitian! You may disagree with this conclusion! If you have a “better or another” explanation please share it with me!

Chapter 14

MAIN THEME: God “previews” the VICTORY of the church as they follow the Lamb! The whole Roman world that persecuted the “church” shall be destroyed (Dan. 7:7-28)! In prophetic utterance Daniel pictures the fall of the Roman Empire at the hands of the “Saints of the Most High God” (V.27).

(v.1-5) The 144,000 Victorious Saints here were already “pictured” for us in Rev. 7:1-8 as the “Militant church of Christ” following their “Captain” (Heb. 2:10-11) Jesus Christ! They have been “sealed” already (Eph. 1:23-14) by their obedience unto the gospel of Christ, and they continue to obey their Lord (I Cor. 15:58) proving their faithfulness! This perfect number of saints have their “Father’s NAME” written in their foreheads (Eph. 3:14-21)! Again God pictures “Christians” as those people who have the law of God “written in their hearts, and upon their minds” (Heb. 8:10). The Lord pictures Mt. Zion as being the “church” (Heb. 12:22-23)! Christ is standing on it portrays Christ being “head of the church” (Eph. 4:15) and directing and protecting His people (Heb. 13:5-6).

Also pictured here is the “jubilation” and tremendous joy the Victory of Christ and His church over their persecutors as if the “War” is already over and the saints are found “victorious” (I John 5:4). This glorious jubilee is described as an “authoritative voice” (V.2) and melodiously beautiful as would be “harpers that were harping on their harps”!

These saints with the Lamb on Mt. Zion are singing the “Redemption Song” (V.3)! No one else could “learn” that song except the “redeemed”! This is simply another way of saying that only Christians can appreciate and understand the “redemption” that they receive through the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:3-7) and hence only they would “sing” praises unto Christ the King and God the Father and the Holy Spirit for this redemption from Sin!

These saints are described as a throng of pure and godly people:

- A. Not defiled with women (not guilty of spiritual adultery (Jas. 4:4). Notice how Paul describes the purity of the church (II Cor. 11:1-3)!
- B. Follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth: Notice how inspiration describes the “followers of Christ” (Luke 14:26-27, Luke 9:23)! Some of these Christians followed the Lamb even unto death (Rev. 12:11).
- C. Redeemed from among men, and the “first fruits” unto God and the Lamb: This would be inclusive of all who had been “begotten by the word of God (Jas. 1:17-18, I Pet. 1:22-23). Those who had purified their souls through their obedience unto the “TRUTH” were Christians!

- D. In their mouth was found no guile: This would refer to the fact that they “taught and lived the truth” (III John 3-4) and were not false teachers (Matt. 7:15-20). They did not teach a “perverted gospel” (Gal. 1:6-9).
- E. They are without fault before the Throne of God day and night; This is simply a wonderful way to express God’s teaching in (I John 1:7-9).

(V.6-7) During these judgments that God is pouring out upon the wicked Empire of Rome, God still allows the gospel of Christ to be preached unto them so as to encourage repentance on their behalf (Rev. 9:20-21). This is also picturing the fact that God is a “covenant-keeping” God and will destroy the enemies of the Cross of His Son (Deut. 7:9) while blessing and preserving His Saints! The “gospel of Christ” is the one and only and final Revelation from God for all men to take heed to and obey for their Salvation (Rom. 1:16-17, Heb. 1:1-3).

This angel is announcing that “safety and security” is with Christ and His church (I Cor. 11:32), and that all who shall give glory to God must be in His Son and His Kingdom (Eph. 3:20-21). The “hour” of judgment has come and God is about to pour out His wrath upon the citizens of the evil Empire of Rome for their rampant ungodliness and persecution of Saints (V. 10-11). Here Rome is reminded that they are dealing with the God of the Universe and that His power is preeminent and superior to that of Rome (Neh. 9:6, Is. 40:22-26).

(V. 8) God prefigures the “fall of Rome” here as He also pictured the fall of Babylon (Is. 13-14)! The whole world had been induced by Roman influence to commit Sin and abominations of every kind (Rev. 17:5). Rome pictured as a “beautiful harlot” had seduced through her charms and attractions the nations of the earth and their rulers (Rev. 17:1-5). When Babylon controlled the world such was also true of Babylon (Is. 14:4-6). This harlot was drunken with the blood of the Saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Rev. 17:6). Surely this pictures the atrocious crimes of murder and torture which the Roman Empire heaped upon Christians (Rom. 8:35-39).

(V. 9-11) Here God pictures the Roman evil world as the worshipper of Satan, and the citizens of Rome who had succumbed to Emperor worship and ungodly Roman practices as being lost (Matt. 7:13-14). Paul pictures people who refuse to have God in their knowledge as being “worthy of death” (Rom. 1:28-32). Those who worshipped the beast (first Satan) and then (Rome and her emperors) had marks in their foreheads and their hands! This simply means that they entertained their minds with ungodly thoughts and their hands carried out their vicious and wicked imaginations and evil trends! God pictures the “final spiritual destruction” of those who perish in wickedness and ungodliness in these judgments that God brings upon Rome! Hell is surely the place where God’s wrath is poured out in its

fullest strength (Mark 9:43-48)! Just “pure and unpolluted” horrible torment for all eternity with every vile creature who ever lived (Rev. 21:8). This is eternal separation from God and the glory of His Power (II Thess. 1:7-9). God pictures the “judgment of Babylon” (Is. 13:19) as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah! But God pictures Sodom and Gomorrah as suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7)! So also with wicked Rome! Those who deny an “eternal burning HELL FIRE” must come to grips with (V.11). The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever. How could this be if there isn’t anything to burn? Some believe that people cast into hell will just be “burned up” (annihilated) and then gone and the punishment is over! But God’s word says “smoke forever” which implies “someone burning forever”! Those in torment will have no “rest” day or night but shall continually feel the wrath of God “unmixed”! Those who will be destroyed in God’s judgment of the Roman world will be hearers of the “beast and have his mark on their forehead and in their hand! Satan’s followers wear his NAME in their foreheads and are sealed by “disobedience unto God” and serve him with their hands (Rev. 9:20-21). Notice the 5th trumpet and the 6th trumpet in Chapter 9 pictured Sin running rampant throughout the Roman Empire, and even to the point that they were “captives of t Devil”, and holden by the chords of their own sins (Prov. 5:22)! Notice the final outcome of the evil and ungodly as a result of their sins and refusal to repent as pictured in (Rev. 9:17-19)! They would be destroyed and cast into the eternal torment of “fire and brimstone”!

(V. 12-13) God pictures in contrast to the suffering of the wicked, the great rest and bliss and happiness of those Christians who dies in the Lord (V.13). This would include those who “patiently” persisted in keeping God’s word and followed the Apostle’s doctrine (Acts 2:42). Surely those who keep God’s commandments have t “permission” of God by grace to enter the “realm of paradise” (Luke 16:22, Rev. 2:7) and ultimately the portals of glory where God dwells (Rev. 22:14). God shows the necessity of “patience” in receiving the crown of life (Heb. 10: 36-39). The Holy Spirit tells John to “write” (V.13) concerning those who die faithful in Christ Jesus, that they will receive the reward of everlasting life for enduring unto the end (II Tim. 4:6-8)! The godly life they lived in Christ, and the testimony they preached of God’s Son would continue to bear fruit and produce influence for the Lord! Even all of us in this class and study are encouraged by their lives and fidelity to the cause of Christ today! Their godly courage and zeal to do right in the face of the enemy gives us assurance and hope that we can also win the victory in Christ (Phil. 1:27-28).

(V. 14-20) God pictures Christ as giving reward to his servants and faithful followers for their faithful obedience (Rev. 2:10), and to those who follow the Lamb and His divine gospel! He “redeems them” by His blood and delivers them to their eternal reward (I Cor. 15:24). This is also a “preview” of what shall happen at the end of

time (I Thess. 4:13-18). This is also a “like-ness” of the parable of Christ (Matt. 13:36-43).

Observation: From our limited knowledge of the scriptures, we believe that before the wicked are cast into hell, Christ will “reap” His own “Saints” from the earth and deliver them to God the Father in heaven! Then the “angels” of God will gather the tares (every evil person) together and cast them into “eternal Hell”!

The “golden crown” of Christ befits Him as “Lord of Lords and King of Kings” (Rev. 19:11-16).

The sharp sickle pictured here in the hands of Christ is symbolic of the “keen” and perfect knowledge that Jesus Christ has as to “who are His people” and who are followers of Satan! Those who are left on the earth, are those who deserve the “wrath of God”! God shall give unto His angels “power and authority” to cast the ungodly and wicked into Hell! Here God pictures His destruction of the Roman Empire and her evil citizens as “grapes being crushed” by His power and under the feet of His Son and His array of Saints (Rom. 16:20).

Another angel comes with a sharp sickle and gathers the clusters of the ungodly together and casts them into the “wine-press” of God the Almighty! Time has arrived in God’s eternal purpose to “squash Rome and her empire for their wickedness and persecution of God’s people” (V.18).

This symbolic language is taken from the Old Testament prophets also (Is. 63:1-4) speaking of the judgment of Christ Jesus upon His enemies! His clothes “blood-red” with the stains of His enemies! God pictures His destruction of Jerusalem (Lam. 1:15) as squashing them in a “wine-press”! Christ does “tread” the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty (Rev. 19:15)!

In verse 19 God pictures an angel taking the “whole vine” inclusive of the whole realm of the ungodly Roman Empire and casting it into the “great wine-press” of the WRATH of God. This symbolizes the great judgment of God falling upon Rome until Rome falls!

In verse 20 God pictures the blood of the enemies of Christ as it (vine of wickedness) is cast into the “Wine vat”! As people would squash the grapes with their feet the juice from the grape would seep through the cracks in the bottom of the wine vat, and ultimately these vats would become so full of the juice of the grape, they would overflow. Those squashing the grapes would become stained with the juice of the grapes as they crushed them beneath their feet. So also with Christ. His garments became “red” with the blood of His enemies as He crushed them with His power (Rev. 19:11-16).

This literal picture of blood rising as high as horses bridles depicts the completeness and severity of the judgment that God brought upon the realm of the ungodly. As in “WAR” this would have validity in the physical realm, so also “symbolically this pictured the destruction of Christ’s enemies”!

Chapter 15

Main Theme: God's angels are about to execute the Wrath of Almighty God upon the wicked Roman Empire and those who have persecuted the Lord's church! The Saints stand and are praising God for His "deliverance" from the persecution of the Roman World and praise His excellent greatness!

(V.1) John is privileged to see (vision containing signs and symbols) the angels of God which shall pour out the "7" bowls of wrath upon the wicked Roman Empire. This is another way of saying that through His angels God executes His "judgments of vengeance and justice" upon His enemies! Note for example these passages in the Old Testament (II Kings 19:32-36; I Chron. 21:14-17). Note also this passage in the New Testament (Acts 12:21-23). The angels of the Lord obey His commandments (Ps. 103:17-22). God's "total and complete" WRATH was in these vials of "plagues"! Note the true meaning of God's complete wrath as seen in this illustration in Gen. 19:24-28 and Jude 7 concerning Sodom and Gomorrah! First they were actually burned (cremated) unto death by God with fire and brimstone from heaven. Then everyone who were tormented again even more until the judgment, and then after judgment suffer the vengeance of "eternal fire" in hell for all eternity. Crime against God does not "pay" (Rom. 6:23).

(V.2-4) The saints that gain the victory over the Roman persecuting government are seen here praising God and expressing joyful appreciation for their redemption in Christ Jesus (II Thess. 1:3-12). They are seen "standing on a sea of glass", mingled with fire. These are they that had gotten the VICTORY over the beast and his Image, and over his Mark, and over the number of his Name (reference back to chapter 13:15-18, chapter 6:9-11, chapter 12:11, chapter 20:4-6).

The picture here symbolizes those Christians who live a life of holiness and truth and godliness (standing on the sea of glass)! They are standing against the wiles of the Devil (Eph. 6:10-18) and following after the things mentioned in (I Tim. 6:11-12) diligently even to the point of death. But note in another passage (I Pet. 1:3-9) that these Christians surely did have their "faith" tried and tested as it were "gold that is tried by fire" before they were proven "obedient and faithful"! We should also realize that the "trials and temptations we face in this life in Christ" have a "cleansing purpose and a purging purpose" (Jas. 1:2-4; John 15:1-5). When John wrote this great book of God as He was guided by the Holy Spirit, Christians were actually being killed and slaughtered by the thousands. But before they died for the cause of Christ and met the "ultimate test" they were "tested and tried daily" through persecutions, afflictions, and pressures and ridicule, and reviling, etc. God does desire and want more of Christians than just "untried innocence" (Is. 28:16)! Christ was "tried and tested" (Heb. 4:15). The apostles were also tempted and persecuted beyond measure (II Cor. 11:23-28).

God promises the same to all who live righteously before Him (Matt. 5:10-12). But as these saints who did stand the testing and severity of Satan through the Roman Government, are pictured as praising God for Salvation in Christ, so also must we! The Lord's church exists to praise and glorify God (I Pet. 2:9-12)!

These saints are singing "Redemption's Sweet Song" and glorifying God for His "redemption" in Christ Jesus (I Pet. 1:18-20; Eph. 1:3-7), as the Israelites of old praised God for their deliverance from bondage from Egypt, through God's deliverer Moses (Ex. 15:1-21; I Cor. 15:24-28)!

Tribute they render to God consists of the following praises:

- A. Great and marvelous are thy works! (Read Ps. 136) Praise the Lord!
- B. Just and true are thy ways thou King of Saints! (Ps. 89:14)

Truly it is good for us to join in with these saints in singing these words (Ps. 89:7). "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about Him!"

(V. 5) John is now privileged to see in the Spirit a vision of Jehovah raising up out of His "Holy Habitation" (Zech 2:13)! God is about to charge His angels with the command to "pour out my judgments upon Rome" (Rev. 14:10-11)! John is witnessing the "anger and wrath" of God being exercised from heaven! God had already pictured the "7" trumpets of warning earlier in this book (chapters 8:6-11:15)! But these persecutors of the church and enemies of Christ surely would not and did not repent of their evil (Rev. 9:20-21)! Now they shall be sorely punished for seeking to destroy the church and work of God's Son! The temple of the tabernacle in heaven symbolized that God had spoken that these things were going to happen to the evil, and God's testimony is "sure and right" concerning all things He says (Ps. 119:113-120)! God spoke in the Old Testament saying the He would destroy Rome (Dan. 7:7-11)! God is now keeping His word and vindicating the mouth of His prophets (Deut. 18:20-22)!

. (V. 6) John now sees God's angels of "vengeance" come forth out of heaven to exercise God's wrath upon the realm of the ungodly and unrepentant who have had opportunity to change but refused (II Pet. 3:9)! These "7" plagues simply symbolize the "mighty judgments of God" which He is going to unleash upon Rome that will ultimately bring Rome down to destruction! This is to be compared with "all" of the plagues that God brought upon Egypt for persecuting God's people (Ex. 9:14). The ten plagues God sent upon Egypt did result in the ultimate destruction of Egypt and her power in the world, and also in the Victory of God's people over the Egyptians! Now in a similar fashion, God is through His angelic messengers of His Wrath, about to send the plagues of punishment

and judgment upon Rome for persecuting the church of Christ, and these judgments shall end up in the destruction of Rome, just as God destroyed Babylon of old (Is. 14:4-7)!

These angels are clothed in “pure and white linen” symbolizing that they are servants of the Most High God of “righteousness and holiness and truth”! And it symbolizes that they are pouring out this anger and wrath of God upon the wicked in “honor and remembrance” of the saints who have sacrificed their lives for Christ and who perished at the hands of Roman authority (Rev. 19:8; Rev. 7:13-17). God is now at long last answering the prayers of His saints (Rev. 6:9-11)! Also note again Rev. 8:3-5 and see God’s answer to the prayers of His saints!

(V.7) John sees one of the four living creatures (beasts) mentioned in the fourth chapter (V.6-8) give to these “7” angels seven golden bowls full of God’s wrath and anger! This simply suggests God giving charge to His angels to go to earth and destroy Rome! These judgments of God would be accomplished by God’s angels who are now subject unto Christ (I Pet. 3:22)! Christ shall bring Rome “down to perdition and destruction” through His RULING OVER THE NATIONS (Rev. 1:5; Ps. 2:9-12) which is inclusive of His PROVIDENCE! The God who liveth forever and forever is meting out this punishment (Rev.1:8) who is Jesus Christ! The golden vials are symbolic of the fact that God’s judgments and punishments are “always pure and righteous judgments”! God never will judge and punish anyone that does not so “righteously deserve such”! Notice Ps. 19:9 and marvel at God’s greatness and perfect control of every judgment He administers to the evil doer!

(V.8) We are familiar with the expression “hot under the collar” are we not? Such is very true of God here, but only to the multiplied degree that God’s anger as Deity, can exceed man’s anger as humanity! God is “absolutely” and totally angry, and His long-suffering is gone with the evil doers! His mercy is now giving over to His Wrath (Gen. 6:3,5 and Gen. 7:21-23)! God’s pleading for sinners to repent has now come to an end, and since they have rejected the Truth, now they face the consequences!

This great smoke that fills the Temple is symbolic of the fact that God is glorious and powerful and having full strength and power necessary to devour His enemies (Zeph. 1:14-18)! He is angry to the point of “boiling” and God’s fierce Wrath presents a scene as if “heaven” is filled with smoke, for our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:28-29).

Notice a parallel to this scene in the Old Testament (Is. 6:1-5)! Here God’s Temple is filled with smoke manifesting God’s glory and power! But God is also

angry with His people for their wickedness (Is. 1:4-6). He is so angry that “heaven” seems to be on fire with His jealous anger! And Isaiah says in chapter 6:5 – “Woe is me” and My people also for we are unclean! God shall indeed punish Israel for her transgressions and wickedness and the smoke in the temple here manifests to John that God is angry and woe be to those who have killed the Saints and shed their blood!

Nothing shall interrupt God’s retaliation upon Rome! God’s anger is taking charge and preeminence here over all the earth, until God destroys Rome. Indeed is pictured here the “terror of the Lord” (II Cor. 5:10-11). Here is pictured God bringing to pass the prophecy of deliverance to His church (Rom. 16:20)! God’s anger and judgments shall be so severe that no man can stand against them! But God has sealed His Saints (Rev. 7:1-4; Rev. 14:1-5) to give them protection from His judgments upon the evil and the ungodly people who have been persecuting and killing them!

Chapter 16

MAIN THEME: God's angelic messengers accomplish God's WRATH by pouring out the Judgments of God upon the "Evil-doer"! Rome falls by God's Power!

(V.1) From Him who saith that "Vengeance is mine and I will repay saith the Lord" (Heb. 10:30-31) comes the command to His angels to "Go your ways and pour out your Vials of Wrath of God upon the earth"! It is now time in God's eternal purpose to mete out true and righteous judgment upon those who have stood in opposition to Christ and His church and even sought to bring to naught the eternal purpose of God by killing and persecuting Christians (II Thess. 1:3-6)!

Observation: Here we have in this chapter to follow the description of the "7" last plagues or the Seven Bowls of Wrath of God's judgments upon the evil Roman Empire! In order to better understand these "plagues or judgments let us go back to the Old Testament and take note of the many plagues that God brought upon Egypt when He brought them down unto destruction for persecuting His people!

1. Turning the water into blood (Ex. 7:20-25)
2. The Plague of the frogs (Ex. 8:5-14)
3. The Plague of the Lice (Ex. 8:16-18)
4. The Plague of the loathsome flies (Ex. 8:20-24)
5. The Murrain on the cattle (Ex. 9:3-6)
6. The Boils and the blains (Ex. 9:8-11)
7. The Plague of the Thunders and the Hail burning (Ex. 9:22-26)
8. The dreaded locusts that devoured everything (Ex. 10:12-19)
9. The terrible darkness that could be felt (Ex. 10:21-23)
10. The slaying of the first-born (Ex. 12:29-30)

Many of these judgments and plagues are similar to those brought upon Rome in various ways! Both Nations were the most powerful in the world at the time that God destroyed them, and both Nations had persecuted and killed many of God's people also!

Observation: Next we set before you a preview of the “7” seals mentioned in Rev. 6-8!

1. Christ conquering with the gospels (Rev. 6:2)
2. Bloodshed and persecution that follows such (Rev. 6:4)
3. Discrimination upon the Christians by the world (Rev. 6:5-6)
4. All who perish are ushered into Hades: Paradise or Torment (Rev. 6:7-8)
5. Reward of the Martyred saints and their cry for justice (Rev. 6:9-11)
6. Symbolic description of the Roman Empire going down to destruction (Rev. 6:12-17), and the saints being sealed by God (Rev. 7:1-8) and the eternal blessings of happiness to those who die faithful to Christ (Rev. 7:9-17)!
7. Silence that precedes God’s “7” trumpets of Warnings to Rome to repent (Rev. 7:1-Rev.11:19)

Observation: Notice how these Seven trumpets of Impending judgment upon the evil Roman Empire bear resemblance to the final “7” Bowls of God’s Wrath in this Chapter! Let us review the Seven Trumpets of Warnings!

1. Judgment through Nature (Probably famines, etc.) He hit Rome in the “bread-basket” (Rev. 8:7)!
2. Judgment through Nature (Destroy them commercially and stop industry),(Rev. 8:8-9)!
3. Judgment upon the “leadership” of the Empire itself and the tragic consequences of the fall of great political figures (Rev. 8:10-11).
4. Judgment upon every soul from Emperor down to peasant in the Empire that weakened its structure drastically (Rev. 8:12-13).
5. Sins of the people multiply and everyone evil feels the sting of the evil consequences of ungodliness (Rev. 9:1-11).
6. Roman Empire becomes captured by the Devil through the multitudes of their iniquities and ultimate destination is “Hell” if they die in rebellion to God (Rev. 9:12-21).
7. God’s final Victory announcement and the anger of the Nations (Rev. 11:15-18)!

Observation: Now let us set forth the “7” Bowls of God’s Wrath below:

1. Grievous sores upon the realm of the wicked (Rev. 16:2)!
2. Sea became as “blood” of a dead man (Rev. 16:3)!
3. Rivers and fountains of Waters became blood (Rev. 16:3-6)!
4. Men were scorched with fire from the sun (Rev. 16:8-9)!
5. Kingdom of the beast is filled with darkness (Rev. 16:10-11)!

6. Euphrates is dried up and the way of invasion is cleared (Rev. 16:12-16)!
7. Complete saturation of the atmosphere of Satan's Kingdom of Rome with God's judgments (Rev. 16:17-21). Rome's power is gone and the evil world wide dominating influence of the Roman Empire!

Observation: Rome is squashed in the winepress of God (Rev. 16:19-21)! She has come to the point of being recompensed for her onslaught against the Lord and His church!

Now let us go back and discuss the meaning of these "7" Bowls of God's Wrath!

(V.2) This first angel pours out his Vial of God's anger on the earth! A noisome and grievous sore fell upon those who had worshipped the beast and his Image! We shall not be dogmatic about the meaning of any of these bowls of Wrath, but we offer the following explanations for your consideration! This is the possible meaning of this judgment!

A. This noisome and grievous sore represents all of the horrible consequences of the malady of sin that come upon the Roman Empire! Note an Old Testament example of this very judgment upon sinful Israel (Is. 1:4-6)! God said that they were so "sinful" that they were just one big sore from head to foot! The wounds they inflicted upon themselves through their sins were many and they were bleeding and oozing with poison and infections of sin! God pleads for Israel to repent of their wickedness (Is. 1:16-20) or else they will be judged severely by God for their rebellion! God gives a long list of their sins in the Old Testament (Is. 59:1-15)! It is so true that sin is a "reproach unto any people (nation) according to God's divine word (Prov. 14:34)! This is an "ulcerous and malignant sore" that keeps spreading in the Empire of Rome until they are devoured!

1. Also keep in mind that as God caused the boils and blains to break out on the Egyptians for their sins, so also through His divine providence can God allow plagues such as the "Bubonic plague" and others to consume wicked and sinful man! But since this plague affects only the wicked we conclude that this is the grievous and malignant sore of Sin upon society and the terrible tragedies created by a life of sin! A physical plague would affect also the righteous as well as the evil!

(V.3) The second angel poured out his Vial of Wrath upon the sea and it became as the blood of a dead man! What does this symbolize? Since the "sea" would represent "world populous" this seems to indicate that the entire Roman Empire was so involved with Evil of every kind that it was "stagnant and corrupt and

stunk” like the blood of a dead man that would coagulate and stink due to no movement through his body! This is another way of saying that this wicked and sinful nation had the grievous sores of sin did “stink” in God’s nostrils, and also in the eyes of the World in general! Ultimately Rome became so wicked and corrupt that the satellite nations under her control helped destroy and devour Rome (Rev. 17:16)! The odor of Rome’s sinfulness has reached unto heaven and God is meting out Vengeance! The populous of Rome is stagnant with Sin! Doesn’t this coincide with the Woes mentioned in (Rev. 9:1-21)! The end results will also bring about through their greed and covetousness and desire for earthly possessions a complete collapse of their economic and commercial status in the world!

(V4-7) The third angel pours out his “Bowls of God’s Wrath” upon the rivers and fountains of water, and they became blood! This judgment seems to indicate that God is remembering the blood of His slain saints, and is in return going to shed the blood of all who oppose Christ and murder His people! This is a symbolic way of saying that “every transgression and disobedience will receive a just recompense of reward” (Heb. 2:1-2). Everyone who had chosen to bow to the BEAST and worshipped his Image would and did have part in martyring the saints who withstood the pressures placed upon them by Satan and his forces! They shall now taste their own blood as they become so wicked and sinful that they turn on one another and bite and devour each other! God’s judgments will reach into the interior part of the Roman world where even the rivers and fountains are found! God’s judgments will affect “so to speak” the very waters that they drink and use for survival! They shall now be made to drink the blood of their own iniquities as wicked spiritual vampires that feed upon Evil and survive upon wickedness! These wicked people have shed the blood of the saints and are now being judged righteously by God for their atrocities! Note (Rom. 8:35-39) for reference to this judgment of God’s wrath! This again is in answer to the cries of the martyrs (Rev. 6:9-11)! God’s answer to their prayers (Rev. 8:3-5) is now being given as the righteous God of heaven shows no pity or mercy upon the realm of the Evil doers!

(V.8-9) The fourth angel poured out his Vial of God’s wrath upon the sun! The result is that men are scorched with fire but instead of manifesting repentance for their evil deeds, the blaspheme God and blame Him for their troubles! What does this great judgment represent? There are at least two explanations that are offered by this student of God’s word for your study. These are set forth below as follows:

A. The “sun” of the Roman Empire would be the Emperor or Rulers of the Empire! Those who worshipped the Beast and his Image did not give God praise and thanksgiving for their daily blessings (I Tim. 6:17-19) but

their God was Caesar and they worshipped him and received their daily blessings through his Providence! Since Caesar becomes so wicked and corrupt (Domitian and Nero and others) they treat the citizens of the Empire terribly and bring all kinds of daily hardships upon them! The people who follow the course of Evil (Eph. 2:1-3) are beset with troubles and trials of great magnitude which stem from the wicked rulers and what they allow and condone to be done by the citizens in the Empire! These people instead of blaming themselves for their own sins, allow these problems and trials to get them down and become miserable in mind and life! They blame God for their troubles and refuse to repent of their wickedness! Hence, they become burned by the tribulations and consequences of living a life of sin and evil! They blindly trudge on in their sins all the while being burned by the ensuing consequences to their ultimate destiny (Rom. 6:23)!

This is based upon the thoughts found in Matt. 13:5-6 where Jesus talks of the seed that fell among stony ground! Immediately it springs up, but when the sun arises it scorches the plant so that it withers and dies because it had no deepness of earth (roots)! In verse 20-21, Jesus compares the “sun that scorched the plant” to being the daily trials and persecutions that the Christian faces because of the Word! Hence, it seems to follow that the “sun that scorched the evil doers” was the daily troubles and afflictions they faced as a direct result of their sinful attitude and life!

Make note of the truth found in (Rev. 7:16)! Here the Truth describes the faithful Martyred saints as now being in a state of happiness and bliss, where the sun shall not light on them nor any heat! They do not have to face “anymore” the daily troubles and trials of life!

Of course, another explanation to this might be that of being scorched with the truth of God’s word each day, as the Truth is God’s fire to consume evil teaching and evil doers! Note in (Rev. 11:5) that God’s witnesses open their mouth, and fire (God’s word) devoured their adversaries! Perhaps this has some meaning here! Certainly this concept is true, but whether this judgment reflects that lesson or not is for you to decide by further study! May God help us learn more!

(V.10-11) The fifth angel poured out his bowl of wrath upon the Seat of the Beast and his Kingdom was filled with darkness that could be felt! The people gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven for their pains and sores and repented not of their evil! Reflect now upon the judgments back in Rev. 9 for the answer to this bowl of wrath! Through the seeds of Evil that blossomed in the hearts of the Roman Emperors, the people were led into living their lives sensually and maliciously to commit sin! From the throne itself emanated the Evil that ultimately spread and consumed the whole Empire! From the persecution and annihilation of Christians to the binding of Emperor worship

upon its citizens evil exalted itself. Naturally whatever the peoples' GOD thought and did was what the people themselves engaged in. The people became as corrupt and as Evil as the God they worshipped and served (Caesar). Hence, darkness resulted as a result of people ignoring God's truths as God's word so depicts (John 3:16-21)! Satan blinded the minds of the people through their unbelief in God's word (II Cor. 4:4). Being led by their Emperor the Empire plunged headlong into sin and all of its horrible tragedies and calamities! A nation will only be as strong as the "leader" that they allow to lead and direct their lives!

(V.12-16) The sixth angel poured out his bowl of wrath upon the great River Euphrates and the water was dried up and the way of the invasion was cleared! What does this great symbol of God's judgement mean?

Certainly it implies that God has now removed every barrier that Rome has erected for it's defense, and they are now helpless to defend themselves, but they make a last ditch effort to stave off God's judgements! Satan's allies now show themselves cunning as they move to deceive the people that Rome is alive and well and in no danger of falling by God's judgements!

Three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the Mouth of the Dragon and the Beast and the false prophet! What do these represent? Certainly there is no room for dogmatism here, but let us consider the following explanations! These are devices that Satan uses!

I John 2:15-17: Lust of the flesh: This would induce men to sin by means of the flesh: Adultery, fornication, etc.

Lust of the eyes: This would induce men to seek after great possessions and pretty nice "things" and would be promoted by greed and covetousness!

Pride of life: The desire to rule and reign and conquer that Rome was completely filled with! The attitude of being God unto yourself and forget the humble submission required to the True God of heaven!

The three unclean spirits may also stand for the following:

Rev. 12:15-16: The devil opened up his mouth and a "river of lies" proceeded from his mouth by which he deceived the Roman world (whole world)! Reference also to I Tim. 4:1-5 and note that his lies deceive many saints!

Rev. 13:5: The Beast (Roman Empire) opened his mouth and out come blasphemy against God that the people also engaged in!

Rev. 13: 11-18: The false prophet (earth-beast) opened his mouth and spoke as a dragon and demanded “idolatry” through Emperor worship under Domitian, an evil Ruler!

Observation: We submit these explanations for your study and consideration! If you have another one which harmonizes better with scriptures that this one please inform us so we may also better learn God’s word!

These three “Evil spirits” are the means by which Satan uses to deceive the nations and gather his forces against God in an all out assault to stop the fall of the Roman Empire! He gathers them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty! This spiritual battle takes place between Satan’s allies and God’s troops and power is called Battle of Harnageddon (Meggiddo) Place of God!

This battle mentioned here simply in symbolic language points to the fact that God will win the Victory over Satan, and all of God’s faithful will share and taste this Victory. In the Old Testament time and again God conquered His enemies in the valley of Meggiddo! Note for reference some of these battles that took place! (II Chronicles 35:22, Judges 5:19, II Kings 23:29, Zechariah 12:10-11). As is shown in this chapter (Rev. 16) God defeats and destroys Rome and hence the ally Satan has used is gone into perdition (destruction)! The forces of right will always win the spiritual war that takes place (Rev. 22:14-15).

(V. 17-21) The seventh angel pours out his bowl of God’s wrath into the air and the Victory Cry from heaven rings from the Voice of God saying “It is done”! What is the meaning of this final judgement? Let us consider these thoughts as we see the final destruction come upon Rome for her evil and iniquity have been remembered before God! This great and mighty power has tasted defeat at the hands of God’s Son!

This judgement symbolizes that “everyone who breathes” shall taste of God’s judgement and fury and wrath! Satan is represented as being the Prince of power of the air (Eph. 2:1-3)! Since this angel pours out his Vial into the air, everyone is affected and falls due God’s judgements! They fall helplessly captured by the Devil to do his will, and they refuse to repent so they might live spiritually! As many as died physically in these judgements of God did go to torment if they lived evil while on earth (II Peter 2:1-8)! As many righteous people that perished as a result of God’s warnings or judgements or through persecutions of the wicked, were carried into paradise!

In (Rev. 8:3-5) we see God hearing the prayers of the saints as they are being slaughtered and persecuted by the Evil workers of Satan, and in (V.5) God's angels begin their warnings to the Evil to cease! Now we have reached the point (Rev. 16:18-21) that God now completes His answer to the pleading saints for rightful justice upon their adversaries! There is a great cosmic explosion and demonstration of the power of God to rule in the Kingdoms of Men (Dan. 4:32-37)!

The greatest earthquake the earth has ever known now takes place and the evil Roman world is "divided" into three parts! The cities of the many nations fall and Babylon is remembered before God! This great nation that once ruled the world is just another common nation now and the nations of the world overrun her and absorb Rome into themselves! Such is the meaning of the 10 Kings that hate the harlot and make her desolate and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire (Rev. 17:16)!

This great earthquake symbolizes the shake-up on the earth among the nations of the world as they realize that Rome has fallen and they vie for power and supremacy!

The great city (Roman evil world Empire) was "divided" into three parts which perhaps symbolizes (Divine-Judgement)! Jesus said that a Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Matt. 12:25)! Rome has fallen because this great nation divided itself through its iniquity!

Rome has been squashed in the Wine-press of God and no longer exists as a reigning world power! The saints of God have followed their Lord to Victory over their adversaries (I Peter 5:8-9)!

This great hail that falls upon the people perhaps symbolizes the weight of the judgements of God upon the realm of the wicked, as they collapse beneath the load and burdens of sin (Matt. 11:28-30), as their sins and transgressions are brought before their face with God's divine words of truth and justice and judgement!

Truly God has repaid this "conquering and corrupting" World power for its' slaughter of God's people (Rev. 17:6). She has received just and true recompense for her actions!

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

INTRODUCTION

1. People are frightened out of their wits by false teachers dealing with the Battle of Armageddon who were not prepared to do so.
 1. No time more capitalized on more than today.
 2. Hal Lindsey's – “Late Great Planet Earth”
2. Capsule view of Armageddon in Lindsey's book.
 1. Lindsey says in our own generation a confederation of Arab nations will arise under the leadership of Egypt. It will arise and invade Israel.
 2. He then says Russia will hear of it and mobilize her forces and rush into Palestine and overthrow the Arab confederation.
 3. Then Russia will set up headquarters in Palestine on Mount Moriah and begin to rule from there.
 4. Meanwhile a confederation of ten European nations (European Common Market) under a dictator (reminiscent of Adolph Hitler) will begin to mobilize forces in that part of the world.
 5. Lindsey then says at this time the Chinese Communists, some 200 million strong will begin to mobilize forces in their part of the world.
 6. The confederation of European powers under the dictator, Lindsey says, is the ANTI-CHRIST of the Bible and they will move into Palestine and completely destroy the Russians.
 7. By that time the Red Chinese have moved nearer.
 8. In the northwest corner of Palestine on Plain of Megiddo, the European forces under the anti-Christ and the Red Chinese some 200 million strong will meet in this great conflict known in Revelation (claims Lindsey) as the Battle of Armageddon.
 9. He claims that it will be the world's greatest bloodbath.
 10. Blood to be as deep as the horse's bridle within a 200 mile radius of Jerusalem and the Megiddo area.
 11. As the conflict begins to spread out the great major cities of the world, Paris, London, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco will all be destroyed.
 12. This great nuclear battle would annihilate the entire human race, if it were not for the miraculous appearance of Christ, who will come upon the stage of action and establish His Millennial Kingdom and thus defeat all of these alien forces.
3. FALSE TEACHERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE THE SAME DOCTRINE (they may differ from point to point but are very similar).
4. ENTIRE ARMAGEDDON PHENOMENON IS BASED ON THE FALSE DOCTRINE OF PREMILLENIALISM.

5. IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS THE TRUTH OF ARMAGEDDON WE MUST LOOK AT THE WHOLE DOCTRINE AND COMPARE IT TO THE WORD OF GOD.

2.TEN SEQUENTIAL EVENTS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PREMILLENIAL POSITION.

1. At the first coming of Christ He arrived on this earth for the purpose of setting up His kingdom but was rejected by the Jews and, therefore, postponed the setting up or establishment of His kingdom.
2. Instead of establishing the kingdom, Christ established the church as sort of an emergency measure to occupy the interim in between the time He ascended back to heaven and the time He shall return again (THE GREAT PARENTHESIS: spare tire measure).
3. There is an interval between the time Christ went back to heaven and the time when He shall come again. This is known in Matthew 25 as the Bridegroom tarrying or THE INTERVAL PERIOD.
4. The Jews are to be re-gathered to Palestine where the Old Testament economy will be re-established, the temple will be rebuilt, the Law of Moses will once again be reinstated and the throne of David will be established in the city of Jerusalem (they say this actually began to come to pass in 1948 when David Ben-Gurion established Israel as a separate and independent nation). At this time God begins to fulfill His promises to Abraham which were never fulfilled in the Old Testament.
5. THE RAPTURE – One of these days, real soon, within our own generation probably, Christ is going to silently and invisibly come. He will raise only the righteous from the dead and all of the righteous who are alive will mysteriously disappear and be taken to Heaven.
6. Immediately following the Rapture will be the PERIOD OF TRIBULATION. The TRIBULATION period is alleged to last for seven years. The first 3½ years of this will be a period of unprecedented evangelism among the Jews. According to Revelation 7 there will be 144,000 Jewish preachers who will go out and convert many multitudes of Jews and Gentiles alike. Also during the first 3½ years the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem and the Mosaic system will be established. The last 3½ years of the tribulation period will be a time of bloody persecution with such horrors as the world has never seen before nor indeed will ever see again. AT THE END OF THIS SEVEN YEAR PERIOD OF TRIBULATION WILL BE THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON AT WHICH TIME CHRIST WILL APPEAR, FIGHT THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON, OVERTHROW ALL OF HIS ENEMIES AND THIS GREAT BLOODY CONFLICT STARTING FROM NORTHERN PALESTINE WILL BRANCH OUT INTO ALL THE WORLD WHEN CHRIST WINS THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON. THIS BRINGS TO A START CHRIST'S

MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.

7. CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL KINGDOM – Christ is to allegedly sit down on David's throne in the city of Jerusalem where He is to reign for a period of 1,000 literal years. During this time Satan will be bound. It will be a period of universal peace and righteousness. Literally the ox and the lion will eat together and all of these beasts who have been natural enemies will enjoy the companionship and fellowship with one another. At the end of this 1,000 year reign the Devil will be released from the pit where he has been cast.
8. Once again there will be A LITTLE SEASON OF PERSECUTION.
9. After this little season ETERNITY WILL BEGIN – all will be over.

3. LET US CONSIDER EACH OF THESE POINTS IN TURN AND COMPARE THEM WITH THE BIBLE

1. CHRIST'S REJECTION BY THE JEWS WAS A SURPRISE TO GOD.
 1. Says that God was unaware that the Jews were going to reject Christ.
 2. Implies that Christ came but was also surprised.
 1. Amounts to infidelity when compared to the scriptures.
 2. Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22 show that what happened is exactly what God intended to happen.
 3. In John 12:37-38, Jesus quotes Isaiah 53:1 and says He fulfills it.
 3. Says that Christ did not set up His kingdom.
 1. New Birth–John 3:3-5 – If a man is born of water and of the spirit he is in the kingdom.
 2. Mark 9:1 – Jesus said that some of those living then would still be alive physically when the kingdom was established.
 3. Colossians 1:13 – Paul says he and others “transferred into the kingdom”
 4. Revelation 1:6,9 – Partakers with them in kingdom of God.
2. THE CHURCH WAS AN ALTERNATE PLAN FOR THE KINGDOM.
 1. Ephesians 3:10-11 – The church according to God's eternal purpose.
3. NONE WOULD DENY THE INTERVAL – CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN.
4. PROMISES TO ABRAHAM NOT FULFILLED IN JEWS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.
 1. Joshua 21:43, 45 – “So the Lord gave Israel ALL the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.”
5. RAPTURE
 1. I Thessalonians 4 allegedly gives Biblical support to the doctrine of the RAPTURE.

1. Theory suggests that Christ will come invisibly and silently at the beginning of the TRIBULATION.
 2. The saints will just disappear into thin air to be with the Lord.
 2. I Thessalonians 4:16 – Does it teach this?
 1. *harpagesometha* is the Greek word “caught up” from which the Latin word is similar to our English word RAPTURE.
 3. The Lord Himself will personally appear in visible form. See II Thessalonians 1:7
 1. Noisiest verse in the Bible.
 - (1) WITH A SHOUT
 - (2) WITH THE VOICE OF AN ARCHANGEL
 - (3) WITH THE TRUMP OF GOD
 4. II Peter 3:10 – “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”
 5. I Thessalonians 4:17 – “Always with the Lord”. No passage ever taught that Christ would set foot literally on this earth again, especially when compared to John 18:36.
6. PERIOD OF TRIBULATION (Their authority is Matthew 24)
1. Matthew 24 is misunderstood today, even by many Christians.
 2. Matthew 24:15-21 – Premillennialists say has reference to period of TRIBULATION & ANTI-CHRIST.
 3. ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION in verse 15
 1. Not referring to one person (Anti-Christ).
 2. Refers to Roman army destroying Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - (1) How do we know this?
 - (2) Luke 21:20 – Jesus' own statement. NOT DICTATOR OR ANTI-CHRIST, BUT THE ROMAN ARMY WHICH CAME UPON JERUSALEM BECAUSE OF THE JEWS REJECTING JESUS AS MESSIAH.
 4. Does not common sense tell us that someone on the housetop to stay there and go from housetop to housetop to get out of the city is referring to a local situation of old times?
 5. Matthew 24:34 – DRAW A CIRCLE AROUND THIS VERSE IN YOUR BIBLE.
 1. Some of those living would not die before this scene would take place (Mark 9:1).
 2. Josephus, a non-Christian wrote concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, “Accordingly the multitude of those that therein perished exceeded all that either men or God had ever brought upon the world”.
 3. There has never been human catastrophe so horrible as the DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.
 - (1) Josephus says that during the final period (months) of the siege of Jerusalem's destruction including the overthrow of the city that there were 1,100,000 Jews killed brutally and unmercifully.
 - (2) At Hiroshima only 150,000 were killed and/or wounded. Nine times less severe than the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - (3) Don't be drawn away by people trying to capitalize on fear.

4. THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON (Revelation 16:12-21; 19:11-21)

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION MUST BE UNDERSTOOD.

1. Designed to encourage persecuted Christians of the first century.
2. Christians who saw their fellow Christians slaughtered, burned alive, crucified, sown up in animal skins and thrown to wild beasts.
3. It appeared to the early Christians as if the Christian system would go down the drain and be destroyed literally.
4. Revelation was written to show early Christians that they would be victorious and that the cause of Christ would triumph over every power of the earth and hell and that nothing would be able to squelch the cause of the Lord.
5. F.F. Bruce says, "The Book of Revelation, or as it may well be called, the Book of Triumph of Christ, was composed and sent to the Seven Churches of the Roman Province of Asia at some point between 69 and 96 A.D. to encourage them and their fellow Christians everywhere with the assurance that despite all the forces marshaled against them victory would be theirs IF they would remain loyal to Christ"
6. IF YOU WILL OVERCOME – YOU CAN COME OVER AND BE WITH GOD.
 1. 2:7 – Ephesus
 2. 2:11 – Smyrna
 3. 2:17 – Pergamum
 4. 2:25 – Thyatira
 5. 3:5 – Sardis
 6. 3:12 – Philadelphia
 7. 3:2 – Laodicea
7. Language of Revelation: SIGNS SYMBOLS PICTURES
 1. Show the infant church that they would have much persecution.
 2. The saints must persevere by faith, overcoming these trials.
 3. Christ would ultimately be victorious over all of His enemies.
 4. INTRODUCTION: SIGNIFIED — Why symbols?
 - (1) To REVEAL to the disciples
 - (2) To CONCEAL from spiritually dull (Matthew 13:10-15) – Parables
 5. TRUTHS would be grasped by disciples and yet the victory and overthrow of their persecutors was hidden from the heathen.
 - (1) Would not the heathen Romans have persecuted them worse if they had caught the Christians circulating a document predicting their downfall?

2. REVELATION 16:13-16

1. Verse 13 – "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs."
 1. "Coming" in KJV is not in original language – he saw them each at work.
 2. Out of the mouth of the:

- (1) Dragon had emitted a river of lies which swallowed the earth (12:15ff)
- (2) Beast — great pretenses and blasphemies (13:5)
- (3) False Prophet — Seductive propaganda, enticing the world to accept the practice of Caesar worship (13:14-17)

3. Frogs used in Exodus 8:1-14 of plague on Egypt; Psalms 78:45; 105:30 in association with plagues. Frogs are thought of as unclean, a nuisance and an aggravation. From such a source these three came.
2. Verse 14 – Three unclean spirits gather together the kings for battle
 1. In the context there is nothing of the battle taking place mentioned.
 2. It simply states the kings are gathered together for the battle. Gathered together and brought to Har-Magedon.
 3. The battle of that day is not described as being fought until the nineteenth chapter, even there the battle itself is not described, only the results are given (verses 19-21). “The Great Day of the Lord” is a day of judgment, but not the final judgment, for there will be no battle fought at that time — all will end.
3. Verse 15 – Like a thief. Not the end of time because of 1:1; 22:6 and 1:3; 22:10. Must always be prepared for His judgments upon mankind.
4. Verse 16 – HAR-MAGEDON (PLAIN OF MEGIDDO) – Many decisive battles fought here in Old Testament times.
 1. Deborah and Barak overthrew the forces of Sisera here (Judges 4,5).
 2. Josiah and Ahaziah were overthrown and slain (II Kings 9:27).
 3. Because of all of the famous battles fought at Megiddo in the Old Testament the name MEGIDDO became a synonym for a DECISIVE AND VICTORIOUS CONQUEST.
 4. A SYMBOL similar to HINNOM in the New Testament.
 - (1) Parallel to the Valley of Hinnom where the god Molech was worshipped in Old Testament days and many children had been sacrificed there — a place of crying and anguish.
 - (2) Later became the city dump where the trash of the city burned continually.
 - (3) Jesus used Hinnom as a synonym of HELL (Gehenna takes its rise from Hinnom).
 5. As Hinnom became a synonym for eternal suffering and fires of Hell, Megiddo, or Armageddon, became a synonym for VICTORY AND DECISIVE CONFLICT AND BECAME A SYMBOL OF CHRIST'S GREAT AND DECISIVE OVERCOMING OF ALL EVIL.
3. NOT A LITERAL BATTLE — fought with literal bombs, bullets and blood.
 1. Not literal language.
 2. Frogs not brought out literally by pre-millennialist — WHY NOT? — Because it is figurative language.
 3. Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet are symbolic of all who gather together against Christ and His forces.
 1. Satan Dragon
 2. Rome Beast
 3. False Teacher False Prophet
4. BATTLE FOUGHT (Revelation 19:11-21)
 1. NOTE: “Judge” and “Make war” are connected together to show that Armageddon and

judgment come hand in hand.

2. God's judgment against the forces of evil brings victory for the faithful.
3. 19:12-13 – Jesus pictured as leading this army (WORD – John 1:1-14)
4. 19:14 – White horses ever symbolic of VICTORY.
5. 19:15-16 – Sharp sword smote nations (WORD OF GOD – II Thessalonians 2:8).
6. The picture symbolizes a divine judgment and a spiritual war directed from Heaven, led by a Heavenly warrior-king. It is fought by a host of pure and faithful warriors, whose citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20) and whose names are written there (Luke 10:20). The faithful saints of God. (Hailey – page 385)

CONCLUSION

The BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON is not a literal carnal warfare but was the spiritual battle between Satan's forces and the forces of Christ and the decisive victory that Christ would have in the end.

Not any need to be frightened by men today proclaiming pre-millennialist doctrine. It is just not a Bible doctrine.

Chapter 17

MAIN THEME: Identification and prediction of the fall of the harlot (Rome & the Empire).

- (V. 1-5)** One of the seven angels which had the Seven Vials of Wrath comes and talks with John and invites him to “come see the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters”. God is now making certain that John knows for sure the meaning of this series of visions which he has been receiving.

The Kings of the earth have committed fornication with this great harlot and the “inhabitants” (citizens of the Empire) have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Sin is sensual pleasure which lasts only for a season (Hebrews 11:24-26) but Babylon had caused the entire world under her control to be seduced by sin and the practice of it (Jeremiah 51:1-11). This fornication would be, symbolically speaking, described in Revelation 9:20-21 of these things that provide sensual pleasure. For example, note in Daniel 3:1-6 that the King of Babylon set up his own image in the land for all to worship and all who refused would die. Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego would not worship this image, hence they were cast into fiery furnace, etc. This is similar to the image worship set up by Domitian in Rome for its citizens that they might uphold Caesar as God. False religion of every kind permeated the Roman World as is indicated in Acts 19:27 (worship of Diana).

The angel carries John away in the Spirit into the wilderness (world of sin and sorrow and shame) which is the unfruitful and barren world of corruption. This is the abiding place of the Beast and the Harlot. Note again Revelation 12:14 which depicts that God has prepared a place for the church also in this wilderness of sin and death. This woman that John sees is surely symbolic of the great city of Rome (verse 17) and the scarlet-colored BEAST that she rides on is the Roman Empire. This is similar to the idea that the city of Washington derives its glory, power, wealth, fame, and political strength and influence from the total resources of the United States and her people. This great Beast had names of blasphemy upon her seven heads, which is symbolic of the fact that the Roman Emperors conceived of themselves as Deity and did not “pledge allegiance” nor render obedience to the God of heaven. But they did all they could to stop his great Kingdom from spreading. Note for reference again Daniel 7:21,25. These ten horns would be ten kings, satellite nations, that would rise up, “hate the harlot”, fight against her, and destroy her (verse 16). Purple and scarlet were the colors of royalty (Matthew 27:28) and indicated riches, power, and honor. Of course Rome and the Empire she controlled was the most affluent city upon the earth at this time and the businessmen of Rome were also full of pomp and splendor.

Truly the “love of money” is the root of all kinds of evil (I Timothy 6:9-10) and this is the attitude of the wealthy leaders of Rome. The more riches they accumulated the more evil and sin they bought for themselves as they indulged their fleshly

appetites (Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 1:24-32). Everyone who did business with Rome and was affected by her politically was also “corrupted by her wickedness.”

The harlot has the name on her forehead “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the earth.” This great ugly description of wicked cities and nations is found throughout prophecy. Note for example these passages: Nahum 3:1-4 refers to Nineveh and also Ezekiel 16:2,31-38 which depict cities and nations as “harlots.”

Through God's Providence and Will he had raised Babylon up to be the agency by which he punished many nations for their iniquities, including Judah. When God was through with Babylon he turned around and punished her (Jeremiah 51:6-8,61-64). The same was true of Rome also. God had brought the Roman Empire to prominence among the nations of the world, and by his Providence the Kingdom of God was set up in the days of these Kings (Daniel 2:44, Luke 1:31-35, Colossians 1:13-14).

Her cup was full of abominations and filthiness and she was “ripe” for judgment and destruction as her purpose has now been served (Daniel 9:24-27, Revelation 18:20). God has “vindicated the mouth of his prophets and has brought to pass his Word.” Make a comparison of Revelation 18:21 with Jeremiah 51:61-64 and Jeremiah 51:25, for one speaks of Babylon and the other of Rome.

- (V. 6) This harlot is drunken with the blood of the saints and the blood of the “martyrs of Jesus”. Surely this points back to passages such as the death of Antipas (Revelation 2:13) and also Revelation 12:11, Romans 8:35-39, and Revelation 6:9-11. The Caesars had made war with the saints and had overcome some of them by killing and persecuting them (Revelation 11:7). This is in reference to Revelation 16:6 where God gives the evil blood to drink because they have shed the blood of the prophets and saints. Some of the Caesars had used the Christians for “torches” to light their gardens, and others mutilated and dismembered Christians while others just beat them unmercifully, etc. Many were cast into the arena with “wild beasts” where they were eaten and devoured. Many Christians were beheaded (Revelation 6:9, Revelation 20:4-6). John wondered with bewilderment as he saw this great vision. What did this symbol mean?
- (V. 7) The angel asks John why he marveled. Then he declares that he will declare to John the meaning of these visions, which he sees, and reveal the “mystery of the woman” and “mystery of the beast she rides”. This beast with seven heads and ten horns is identified as the Roman Empire (Daniel 7:7-11,19-21).
- (V. 8-11) These passages are very difficult to understand, and we shall not seek to be dogmatic here. We simply offer these thoughts for your consideration and further Bible study.

The Beast that John saw is described as the beast that “was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit”. He shall go into perdition, or destruction, also and they that are living in sin and have not their names in God’s Book of Life wondered when they beheld the Beast that “was” and is not, and yet is. What do these symbols mean here?

The Beast that was and is not is probably speaking of Nero. He is the first Roman Emperor to severely persecute Christians and in the local area surrounding Rome he literally sought to annihilate the saints. But he died viciously at the hands of his subjects and he personally was not on the throne at the time this book is being revealed to John and written by him. But from the pit of evil and corruption as a puppet of Satan, arose Domitian, he himself was a beast like Nero. Please note that Revelation 11:7 states that the Beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war against the saints, overcome them and kill them. This indeed was first Nero in all of his vicious ways, and after Nero arose another Emperor more vicious and evil whose name was Domitian. He did make war with the saints throughout the entire Domain of Rome and he was able for a little while to overcome the saints and to kill them. But he ultimately was killed by his own family.

The mind that has wisdom is also referred back to Revelation 13:15-18 in reference to the Emperor that bound image worship or emperor worship upon the citizens of the Roman Empire. Those who refused to so worship Caesar as God and offer incense to him as homage were killed and persecuted; many times both. We have already affirmed in the lesson concerning Chapter 13, that Domitian is the one being referred to as being the Man called “666”. But at that time we asserted the teaching that according to Revelation 17:8-11 that Domitian would be the one that “now is” after the five that have fallen. But it does not appear that this is correct. Instead, in this text, Domitian would be represented by the eighth king who is of the seven who preceded him.

The seven heads represented seven mountains on which the harlot sits and probably symbolizes Rome as the city built on seven hills. But also, and probably more certain, these seven heads stand for the Emperors of Rome. Of the total number of the Emperors which Rome had throughout her reign as supreme world power, it is said that five kings had already fallen. Who would these five kings represent? For your consideration we suggest that beginning with Augustus, who was the first actual Emperor of the vast Roman Empire in totality and who was Emperor when Christ was born (Luke 2:1-11), and proceeding until Nero we have the first five kings; those who have fallen. In chronological order this would be Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. These first five have fallen. And one is Emperor now. It appears that for purposes of correct identification of the Beasts, John, through the Spirit, projects himself back into the reign of Vespasian who was Emperor of Rome from AD 69-79. He was the first Emperor to restore order to the Empire after the death of Nero.

Between the reign of Nero and Vespasian there were three different Emperors who did not reign for any length of time at all. They were Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Between the three of them they reigned less than two years, so for all practical purposes they would not be considered in this list by the Holy Spirit as Kings who reigned. But after these three Kings vied for power, and all these three Emperors lost the throne, Vespasian took over Rome and ruled for almost ten years. In this list Vespasian is probably the King that now is. And the King that is to come (Number 7) is Titus because he remained in power only a very short period of time (2 years). But (verse 11) Domitian, who is so much like Nero in his “beast-like” character and who severely persecuted the saints, is the “beast that was and is not”, that ascends out of the pit (Revelation 11:7) and he is the eighth. He is also of the preceding seven and he shall go down to destruction. Domitian became Emperor of Rome about 81 A.D. and reigned until about 96 A.D. when he was viciously destroyed by his own kindred. Domitian was known to be homosexual and one who dreamed of many different and horrible kinds of torture to be rendered to his helpless prisoners and victims of his cruelty. He had many of his own statesmen and senators destroyed and he was the kind that desired full glory of himself and the worship of others. He was very suspicious of everyone around him and carried heavy armed guards wherever he went. Probably he was the most vicious and ungodly ruler who ever reigned in power in the history of this world. Indeed Domitian so possessed the “evil mind of Nero” that he is said to be the “beast that was and is not”, coming from depths of Satan’s evil environment.

- (V. 12-14) The ten horns that have not received power as yet surely were the lesser nations and governments all headed by Caesar. They gave their support and help to Rome in persecuting the saints and killing them. They temporarily reign with the “conquering Rome” for a little time. These Kings war against Christ and his church and they fall down to defeat at the hands of the Blessed and only Potentate (I Timothy 6:15-16). Those faithful saints that have been chosen to salvation and sanctification through their belief and obedience to the Truth also share in the victory of the Lamb of God (Revelation 12:10-11).
- (V. 15-17) The waters which the harlot sits upon symbolize the masses of the peoples that Rome dominated and controlled by their might (verses 1,15). Some of the very nations that Rome controlled rebelled against Rome and many insurrections were common throughout the mighty Roman world. Ultimately these ten Kingdoms and their leaders turned against the capital city and their Emperors and brought them down to destruction through the providential will of God (verse 17). Refer again to Revelation 10:7 and the finishing of the mystery of the Lord, which he gave to his servants the prophets, basically that of how God would use Rome to punish Jerusalem and Israel for their sins, and then he would destroy Rome afterwards for her wickedness and rebellion.

(V. 18) The mystery of the Harlot is revealed here in this verse as being that of Rome itself, the capital city of the Empire. She derives all of her wealth, power, and prestige from her citizens. Within the walls of this great city were to be found every kind and form of evil within Satan's arsenal of damnable tools and devices. Just as ancient Babylon was once the city that ruled the world, so also Rome has that much influence. From the Throne of Caesar came the "directions and laws" of the Empire to be bound upon every Roman citizen and satellite nation under their control. Caesar's WORD was final in all matters. God is going to describe the fall of this great city in detail in Chapter 18. Notice in Revelation 18:2 the description of the extent of the evil that could be found in Rome, surely at that time the most wicked city upon earth. Just as in the Old Testament "Babylon...the golden city ceased" (Isaiah 14:4) and also "Babylon the glory of Kingdoms" (Isaiah 13:19) so also has Rome met its Waterloo. This harlot has been repaid for her fornications and the multitudes of her iniquities such as idolatry and blasphemy. She has met Jehovah and could not stand under the weight of his judgments.

Chapter 18

Main Theme: Pictorial Description of the Fall of Rome (Great Harlot).

- (V. 1-3) John sees another angel come down from heaven whose power and glory emanate from the God he serves. This mighty angel cried and declared “Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen”. This is, of course, referring to the collapse of the capital city and the seat of government which Caesar occupied (Revelation 17:18).

The most wicked and evil city upon the earth at this time was Rome as it had become the “habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit”. As a result this was sort of a “sanctuary of Evil dwellers” for every kind of uncleanness and hatefulness did abound. Notice the result of people who refuse to have God in their knowledge (Romans 1:28). These Gentiles were filled with unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, back-biters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful. God says that those who do such things are “worthy of death”. These same people know and are aware of the Judgment of God upon evil doers, but they still persist in Evil and living in Sin. Since the book of Romans was written by Paul depicting the general lives of people within that area, we can understand that Rome was wicked from stem to stern. The exceptions to that were the faithful Christians living and working in Rome (Romans 16:16-18) . But even within the church were those who served not God, but their own bellies, and who minded earthly things, and whose end was destruction.

Since Rome itself was the most powerful, influential and wicked city upon the earth at that time, all who had contact with her through industry, commerce, or political ties were “infected” by the germ of sin. The wicked and the rich always “play up to and get chummy with” those who are politically rich and powerful for advantage and personal gain (Jude 15-16, II Peter 2:10-19). As a result, the life styles and philosophies that they follow are adopted by their associates and friends (I Corinthians 15:33). Those who traded with Rome commercially and had industrial ties with this wicked city prospered and flourished because of the insane greed and covetousness of the people seeking after money (I Timothy 6:10). This produces “all forms and kinds” of evil.

- (V. 4-5) It is evident that this Voice is the righteous call of God as he commands his followers to depart from evil and be not partaker of other men's sins (Ephesians 5:5-11, I Timothy 5:17-22). A similar call is found in the great message to Corinth from Paul as he spoke by God's Voice (II Corinthians 6:14-18). What wickedness and idolatry was found in this city of Corinth was found to a multiplied degree in Rome also. God's people are to “touch not, taste not, handle not” the things of world that would perish with the using (Col.2:18-23). Rather the overall

responsibility of Christians is taught clearly in II Corinthians 7:1.

Those who are foolish enough to become entangled with the affairs and pollutions of the Evil Roman world (II Peter 2:20-22) should be prepared to face the life of consequences of living in sin and the wages thereof (Romans 6:23, James 5:19-20). God's Judgments will destroy Rome and those who defect and end up as traitors will taste the wrath of God along with those who have never rendered obedience to God (I Peter 4: 17-18, II Peter 2:4-9). God has his "fill" of the iniquity and sins of Rome and now has retaliated through his many judgments in which many have perished and all of the rest are living corrupted lives that are twisted with the pain and sorrow of sin multiplied on every hand. What they have sowed is what they are now reaping. Their sins have surely "found them out" (Numbers 32:23). Indeed the proverb has been found true (Proverbs 16:7, Proverbs 14:34). Babylon has taken on as an adversary the Almighty God of Heaven and has lost the war. God is truly the victor of Har-Magedon (Revelation 16:12-16). Satan has loosed all of his forces and allies and devices against God's people and has still met failure when the smoke of the conflict is gone.

(V. 6) The omnipotent God who is superior in strength and power to all of the citizens of the earth (Revelation 6:15-17) is going to repay Rome "double" for all of her sins and iniquities. Sin has double payment and reward for her participants. First, on this earth they who live and abide in sin (Colossians 3:5-11) shall have heartbreak, sorrow, disappointment, and confusion because they bring upon themselves by their sins these tragedies (Proverbs 13:13-21). Those parents who do not live godly before their children need to expect their own children to despise them later on for their evil example. Their own children will end up having broken homes, broken lives, broken hearts, and blame their parents for their environment in which they were raised. Some children will end up murderers, thieves, and child abusers, etc. Yes, but the worst punishment of all is that of having to face hell for all eternity after living through "horror and nightmares" here on earth or as some say "hell on earth". Yes, it is true that the wicked shall taste "double reward" for their sins. How foolish indeed to cut yourself off from the most wonderful life on earth (Christian faithfully serving God) and then miss the glories of heaven for all eternity and suffer the agonies of "indescribable torment" for all eternity instead. Yes, a sinner is a "two-time" loser.

(V. 7-8) The reward of conceit and self-glory is to perish in your own corruption (II Peter 2:10-13). This wicked nation had fallen in love with herself to the degree that pleasing self was all that was important (II Timothy 3:1-5). God described the Chaldeans as a "bitter and hasty nation" whose "judgment and their dignity shall proceeded of themselves" (Habakkuk 1:6-7). This wicked and conceited nation was identical to Rome in so many ways. The dignity that proceeds from a mind and heart full of corruption and pollutions of all kinds of sins is not beautiful to behold but detestable to the eyes of God and the faithful. Those who are enemies

of the cross of Christ are described in Philippians 3:18-19.

There are only few references to the word “conceit” in all of God’s Word but they are worthy to note for none of them are complementary in nature. Note, for example, the following passages that picture people who “measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (II Corinthians 10:12, Proverbs 18:11-12, Proverbs 26:5,12,16, Proverbs 28:10-13, Romans 11:25, Romans 12:16). These passages point to and describe people who are “lovers of themselves” and are never wrong but always are right. They refuse to listen to reason but degrade and dishonor themselves and insult their creator who made them in his own image (Genesis 1:26-28). They profess themselves to be wise (Romans 1:20-27) and become fools instead. They think that “money is the key to happiness” and that life consists of “indulgence of the flesh to the hilt” (Ephesians 2:1-3). Improvement is for everyone else but NOT me (Matthew 7:3-5). They become so high and puffed up in their own deceit they cannot see their nauseous and filthy condition before God (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Look at the disastrous results that come when people become lovers of their own selves MORE than “lovers of God” (II Timothy 3:1-5). Rome glorified herself and lived “deliciously” before God and thereby became the putrefied mass that polluted the world she touched and controlled.

God said her plagues would come suddenly as if in one day and would include death, mourning, and famine. Indeed many perished at the hands of God’s judgments both through realms of nature (storms, earthquakes, etc.) as well as through wars and battles, as well as by Sin and the trail of casualties that Sin left behind itself. God describes the fall of Rome and her devastation as being “utterly burned” and consumed by fire that was brought upon her by the force of God’s judgments.

(V. 9-19) The bewailing cry of the Kings of the earth that had also shared Rome’s glory hour stood in awe and amazement as the glorious city of Evil was destroyed before their very eyes. They behold the smoke of her “burning” which is similar to the thought found in the Old Testament concerning “Lucifer” (King of Babylon) who also fell to God’s judgments (Isaiah 14:12-16). They separate their ties with Rome and help “burn her” (Revelation 17:16). They want no part of the destruction that Rome is now tasting, so they stand “afar off” and make statements about the great Harlot “burning”. Such a great nation that has been so long in building and prospering has been brought down by God’s power in “one hour” or a short period of time.

When Rome falls (this great international commodities and trade market) the business men of the nations of the world are affected and feel the loss of this outlet where they sold their goods to the rich and powerful elements of Rome. They “weep” because none buy their merchandise any longer. So when Rome falls, an economic collapse seizes the world to some extent, the same as should the U.S. fall (effect).

Particularly do verses 12-13 set forth the economical values of the productivity of commerce that Rome was engaged in. Everything from “precious stones” and minerals of every kind and sort, to the most beautiful fabrics of the day such as silk and scarlet. Things that were made of ivory, iron, brass, and precious woods. Every kind of fragrance and pleasant smelling perfume and also food commodities such as oil, wheat, flour, wines, etc. They dealt also with sheep, horses, cattle, and beasts that were used for purposes of working and killing. They manufactured, sold, and bought gorgeous chariots overlaid with gold and silver and precious stones and purchased slaves on the open market. They also engaged in the souls of men as people were forced against their will to serve Caesar, or die at the edge of a sword. Those people who engaged in these highly profitable business ventures were wicked and corrupt and ended up robbing the poor and having no mercy upon the helpless. For these and other crimes they have been destroyed by God’s power, as Rome is no longer fit for survival.

These goods mentioned above surely were consumed by people to satisfy the insatiable desires of the flesh and inordinate sensual pleasures of the Evil (verse 14). They had laid up treasures upon earth and the moths of corruption and sensual Evils had eaten and devoured them. Such is true with people today (Matthew 6:19-21) and also many nations have gone the way of Rome because of their desires to be rich and indulge in sin and its pleasures. Surely the word of God teaches the permanency of the treasures in heaven in contrast to the things of the earth (II Corinthians 4:16-18, II Peter 3:10-14). The earth and all the works that are therein shall be burned up (just like Rome).

The merchants shall weep for their fleeting riches are going up in smoke and they have to find another “money market” to rely upon. It is evident in verse 16 that money will not buy a nation nor a person out of trouble (usually increase their problems). It is almost as if these great ships of foreign merchants are coming towards Rome to unload their goods and they see from afar off out in the harbor that their beloved city of wealth and splendor has vanished in its importance and power and as a world-wide market for their products. When they see the great city “burning” (destroyed) they weep, not for her casualties, but for their own selfish reasons they mourn for this means loss of money, wealth, and power to them (verses 17-19). The Word of God comes to pass once again (Proverbs 11:3,6,9,11, and notice particularly verse 4 which teaches that, “Riches profit not in the day of wrath”). Rome with all of her military might, wealth, power, and influence cannot stop the providence of God and destruction of this great world-wide dominating Kingdom. Caesar’s providence has only brought about the desolation and sadness of the fall of Rome. This truly shows that the “way of man is not in himself” (Jeremiah 10:23). We find true the words in Revelation 13:10 that Rome has truly

been captured. Her citizens have gone into captivity to Satan and he has conquered their hearts, minds, and lives and they shall end up in hell.

(V. 20-24) The word of his Holy prophets (II Peter 1:20-21) and his Apostles (Acts 2:42, John 16:13) has been vindicated and come to pass. John sees a mighty angel pick a great millstone up and cast it into the sea and declared that thus with “violence” would Babylon (Rome) be overthrown . This relates back to the Old Testament passage referring to Babylon (Jeremiah 51:11, 24-25, 61-64). This imagery depicts the fall of the city of Rome and the Empire as that of a great stone that is cast to the bottom of the sea and that sinks out of sight never to emerge again on the sea of society or the populous of the world. Rome fell and was never revived or came back into power.

All of the great melodies and beautiful music that used to be characteristic of Rome, the city of Evil and Sin, could be heard no more. The sensual life and love of the people in worship of Satan was abruptly halted by the downfall of Rome. Satan had a crushing defeat at the hands of God and his Saints when Rome fell, for he was not able to deceive the nations for awhile after that (Revelation 20:7-8). The skilled craftsmen and workers had no market for their wares hence they faded away in importance. The noisy celebrations of the wicked at play could not be heard anymore and the light of Rome’s glory and majesty was extinguished by God’s power. This great and mighty nation had deceived the mighty nations of the entire world with her “sorceries” (witchcraft). This is the once mighty nation that had mercilessly shed the blood of the Saints of God who now were tasting the blood of their own transgressions (Revelation 16:4-7). Blood has always been precious in God’s eyes (Leviticus 17:11-14, Genesis 9:6). Certainly the blood of his Son Jesus Christ was precious to God (Acts 20:28). God would make all men pay that would have a part in his crucifixion that failed to repent (Hebrews 10: 28-31). And all of his precious saints that were martyred would also be avenged speedily by God. (Luke 18:1-10). This great nation that had shed the blood of saints was now bleeding and dying as a result of God’s divine judgments and her own evil that ate her like cancer.

Chapter 19

Main Theme: Victory of Christ and his saints over the persecuting Empire

(V. 1-2) God's people praise him that "sitteth and reigneth on the throne of the Universe" (Revelation 11:17-18, Revelation 6:15-17). He has led his followers to victory by his Son and through his Word (Ephesians 6:10-18). This great and marvelous word "Alleluia" has great import and meaning here.

This word is found only four times in God's Book (Bible) and all of these passages that use the word are found in this book. Notice here in this chapter (19) the word used in verses 1, 3, 4, and 6 and in each case God's people are praising God for his attributes of greatness.

A. Salvation – The concept and scheme of redeeming man from sin through Jesus Christ is of God (Isaiah 46:13; I Peter 1:18-20). God warns in his word (Hebrews 2:1-4) that there is no escape from his severe judgment if we neglect this "Great Salvation". It is seen in an earlier chapter (Revelation 12:10-11) that the victory over Satan was accomplished by Christ and that those who are subject to his will and authority will conquer the Devil also.

B. Glory of God – The physical, created cosmos calls our demanding attention to the "glory of God" (Psalms 19:1-3). Through unlimited and omnipotent knowledge, wisdom, and understanding God created the universe and all things therein whether "visible (or) invisible" (Colossians 1:15-17). The true glory of God is wrapped up in the expression of his Son (Hebrews 1:1-3, Matthew 17:5, I Peter 1:17-21). The glorious Saviour (Titus 2:13-14) and the "glorious church" (Ephesians 5:25-27) and the "glorious gospel of Christ" (II Corinthians 4:4-5) all manifest the glory of God to its ultimate manifestation which will be heaven itself, the home of the righteous (I Peter 1:3-4).

C. Honor of God – The word "honor" as descriptive of God pays tribute to him being victorious over his adversaries according to Exodus 14:17-18. Here, when God defeats Pharaoh and his army, he has "gotten ... honour". Also in the prophets (Daniel 4:37) the great King of Babylon (after his punishment at the hands of Jehovah God) declares that the King of heaven deserves all honor because his works are Truth, his ways are just (justice and judgment), and that he is able to "abase" those who walk in pride. The Caesar's of Rome withstood God and fell to his great Son and his Word and thus God deserved honor tributes here. The proud, sinful, and vicious nation of Rome has gone down to defeat at the hand of God's Son ruling through providence (Revelation 1:5-7, I Peter 3:22). God's saints share his honor and they share his defeat and triumph over his enemies (Psalm 149 manifests this lesson beautifully).

D. Power of God - When God strikes (pow) his enemies he packs the “wallop” of Victory in his hands. The prophet declares “Great is Jehovah our God and mighty in Power, whose understanding is infinite”(Psalms 147:5). He is called. the “Almighty” (Isaiah 9:6-7) which simply denotes that he is the source of all power and might, and without God such does not exist. Even the “powers that be” (Romans 13:1-7) are “ordained of God”. In this context God has used his Omnipotent Son (I Timothy 6:15-16) to manifest to Caesar and Rome just who is the “blessed and only Potentate”. Truly “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing” compared to Jehovah (Isaiah 40:22, Daniel 4:35, Isaiah 45:9). Truly by his majestic power (Romans 1:16-17) does God rule and reign in his Universe.

E. God’s Judgment of the Beast (Roman Empire) and the great Harlot that rode upon this beast (Rome) has been true and righteous divine judgments and justice (Psalms19:7-9). God has “weighed” Rome and her inhabitants in the balances of divine “understanding” and they have been found “wanting” (Daniel 5:24-31) just like Babylon of old. In every divine judgment God makes, he extends “mercy” as far as it will go, based upon people's obedience to the Truth (Psalms 89:14, I Peter 1:22-23). This Beast and the Harlot have shed the blood of God’s people for serving God’s Son faithfully, and now righteous retribution has been “dished out” from Jehovah (II Thessalonians 1:4-9). The cries and prayers of God’s saints as they have been slaughtered and persecuted have not been in “vain” (I Corinthians 15:58). But their “faithfulness” through this tribulation has been the downfall, of Rome (Revelation 14:8-13). When God deems the time to be right and “ripe” God renders vengeance to his enemies (Luke 21: 20-22, II Thessalonians 1:7-9) .

(V. 3-6) As the “smoke of the torment of Rome and the Empire” (Revelation 14:10-11) arose toward God in heaven the victorious saints cried. “Alleluia”! God is worthy to “be continually praised” (Revelation 4:11, Revelation 5:12-13). God has avenged his people of their adversaries and they praise God for his divine judgment and release from this onslaught of Rome. In the New Testament (Romans 8:35-39) Paul declares that God’s people are “more than conquerors” through Christ the source of their Salvation. Just as the smoke of the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah could be seen by Abraham (Genesis 19:28) the Victory of Christ and his church is now evident to the remaining faithful Christians on earth at this time.

The 24 elders with the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God on his throne also declaring “Alleluia” (praise God)! All of heaven “unanimously” declare and proclaim the majesty of God as it is now seen through his victory over Roman persecutors. Truly the Lord God Omnipotent reigns both then and now and always.

(V. 7-9) This marriage of the Lamb, and the marriage supper of the Lamb simply indicate that the church of the Lord has proven to God her fidelity and loyalty by coming through this great persecution by Rome. All those who have been martyred have

indelibly imprinted upon the sands of time that they loved not their own lives even to death (Revelation 12:11) and by faith and obedience have kept the faith (I Peter 1:5-9). They have gone through the fires of “purification” and are found to be adorned in the “righteousness of the gospel of Christ” (I John 5:1-3). They have overcome temptations (James 1:12-15) and are counted by God as being justified by his Son (Romans 3:23-26). In the days of the early church among the Jews there was a “proving time” for the bride to show her faithfulness to her husband to be. Before God’s people go home and live with him in heaven for all eternity, we must prove ourselves and show ourselves approved to God (II Timothy 2:15) before we shall receive the crown of life (II Timothy 4:6-8). These saints have been tried and tested through persecution of the Romans and the daily temptations of associating daily with evil Roman people and they have passed the test with flying colors! God now is manifesting his great reward and commendation to his people. As Christians we are married to Christ (Romans 7:1-4) and through the Truth we bring forth fruit to God by this marriage to Christ. But if we are not faithful even to the point of death, we shall be lost and thereby miss heaven and all of God’s future glory (Romans 2:4-11). Therefore in view of these teachings let us seek to “adorn the gospel’ of God our Saviour” (Titus 2:10) and by his grace receive “immortality” (II Timothy 1: 9-10). In Revelation 14:1-5 the description of God’s church manifests her purity and faithfulness to the leadership of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27).

- (V. 10) John is so overwhelmed with this message, that he fell to the feet of this angel to worship him, and the angel corrects John. He declares that only God is to be worshipped and held in reverence (Matthew 4:10, Colossians 2:18). Angels are simply messengers of God who ordain his message to mankind (Acts 10:3-4). Neither angels or men are to be worshipped by mankind (Romans 1:25, Acts 10:25-26, Revelation 22:8-9). This surely denies the authority of the Pope to be worshipped (Matthew 23:9) and all others who set themselves up as God (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). John later makes this same mistake again and the angel of God warns him again not to bow down and worship him (Revelation 22:8-9). God’s Name is “holy and reverend” and his glory and honor he will not give to another (Psalms 111 :9). Angels are simply “ministering spirits” sent forth by God to those who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).

Indeed the whole and heart of the message of the prophets was that of God’s Son Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44-49). Indeed these very words and visions that John is hearing and seeing come from Christ (Revelation 1:1-2, Galatians 1:10-12). So God is the author of these Words and Visions and he alone is worthy of praise and worship (John 4:23-24). In the New Testament (II Peter 1:16-21) the apostle Peter assures his readers that they need not depend solely upon eye and ear witness testimony of the apostles regarding the deity of Jesus Christ. But that we have something more sure than the human testimony we have the Spirit of God and his testimony (Acts 5:32) which came through Christ (Acts 2:29-36).

(V. 11-16) The Triumphant Warrior of Righteousness (Jesus Christ) is pictured here personifying the Word of God which is “living and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12). John sees heaven opened by the Spirit and beholds the True and Faithful Witness of God (Revelation 1:5-6) even the “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” riding forth gloriously conquering every adversary with his sword (Ephesians 6:17) and pouring out upon the ungodly the fierce wrath of God casting them into the “wine-press” of God’s vengeance (Revelation 14:14-20). This description of Christ with eyes as a flame of fire befits his glorious description in Revelation 1:14-19 where he is introduced in his radiant glory as the Alpha and Omega, and the God of all eternity whether past, present or future. His eternal vision and omnipotent power are demonstrated clearly in the Scriptures in many passages (John 1:1-2). He has on the “Victory Crown” of many diadems which is symbolic of his “everlasting majesty” and continual destruction of those who oppose God and his Righteous Cause. First Christ conquered his “Spiritual Enemies” (I John 3:8, Hebrews 2:14-15). He led “captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8) and spoiled the goods of the strong man (Matthew 12:24-29). Even though the Devil solicits the help of the Kingdom of Rome, as he seeks to destroy Christ and his church, Satan loses the war to Christ. It was not possible for the world in its wisdom to know God nor his Son (I John 4:1-7, I Corinthians 1:18-24, I Corinthians 2:8).

His clothing was indelibly stained with the blood of those who opposed him and his church (Revelation 16:4-6), for those who withstand God’s Word end up committing “spiritual suicide” (II Timothy 2:24-26). Back in the Old Testament God is always pictured as a “Warrior” that is stained with the blood of his adversaries as he destroys them and exalts his own righteousness (Isaiah 63:1-4, Psalms 45:1-7). The word of God was “ratified and sealed” with the blood of God’s Son (Luke 22:20). Those who are the army of the Lord (Ephesians 6:10-18) fight with him, and share with him in the victory over Satan and his temptations and persecutions as they reign with him as Christians (Ephesians 2:4-10). Each soldier in the army of Christ is so charged to follow the orders of his Captain (Ephesians 4: 20-24) and seek to imitate God to the best of his ability (Ephesians 5:1-2). In so doing they will be arrayed with the garments of Holiness which reflect the glory of God and the righteousness of his commands (Romans 1:16-17).

Christ is so pictured in prophecy (Psalms 2:9-12) as the great Ruler who would rule and direct the affairs of nations and men through his Will as he reigns at the right hand of God. This sharp sword is symbolic of the fact that God’s word will cut and devour his enemies when they come up against it (Hebrews 4:12, Acts 2:37-38). This expression “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” surely so indicates that Christ dwarfs in power, majesty, knowledge, and wisdom all others who would ever occupy the thrones of earthly Kingdoms or spiritual Kingdoms. Note for reference these passages that so indicate: I Timothy 6:15-16, Psalms 2:10-12,

Psalms 24:7-10, Psalms 47:1-8, Psalms 76:7-12, Psalms 95:3, Psalms 145:13-20 and a host of others too numerous to mention. Note one other passage for consideration if you will, Jeremiah 50:18. Here God openly declared that he had punished the King of Assyria for his evil and also was going to destroy Babylon for its wickedness and pride against God.

- (V. 17-19) John sees an angel standing “in the sun” which is probably symbolic here of the fact that he is under the charge of God and thus reflects the glory and majesty of God who sent him. This angel issues forth a great call to the “fowls that fly in the midst of heaven” to come to the great supper of the Lord. This symbolic picture finds its true meaning back in prophecy in Ezekiel 37, 38, and 39. God would again bring back his people from captivity and bondage of Assyria to inhabit the promised land of Palestine and Jerusalem. Especially note Ezekiel 39:17-22 where God so indicates that he would destroy Gog and Magog and their forces for their evil ways. In symbolism God pictures a great battle where the countless victims of God’s judgments lay dead, wounded, and dying and the vultures come and feast upon the carcasses of the slain. In like symbolism God so pictures his defeat of Rome. At this stage of development Rome has become so evil that it is the hold of every “unclean and hateful bird” (Revelation 18:1-2), and as covetous people turn against one another (Jeremiah 6:13) so also have the inhabitants of Rome turned against one another in biting and devouring one another with their evil and ungodliness (Galatians 5:15). This wicked and corrupt nation has actually “eaten up itself” with its rampant sinfulness. Now God has destroyed this nation and her power by his providence so that the filth and corruption this harlot is spreading world-wide and the persecution of the saints can cease and the church enjoys victory. The prophecy of Ezekiel 37:24 surely is Messianic in its fulfillment (John 10:10-16) speaking of the Kingship of Christ and his blood-bought church (Acts 20:28, Revelation 5:9). The symbolism of War of Satan as he gathers his forces together “Gog and Magog” (Revelation 20:7-10) is pictured by God and shown that he and his forces and devices are headed for destruction at the hands of God Almighty. This picture of a “supper for the vultures” is also pictured in Matthew 24:27-28 and Luke 21:20-22 where Christ speaks of the destruction of the Jewish economy and nation at the hands of Roman armies.
- (V. 20-21) The “Beast” and the false prophet were both cast “alive” into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8, Matthew 25:41). This is symbolic of the fact that Rome and the beasts that occupied the throne of Rome (Emperors) were defeated. by God’s faithful people. Their attempt to cause the Lord’s church to disappear from the face of the earth through persecution and slaughter has failed. All violators of God’s word have met with the judgments brought upon them by God’s word (John 12:48-49). Indeed both Nero and Domitian and all others like them have failed to stop Christ and his cause (Luke 1:31-35). Truly the Kingdom

of God is proven unshakable and thereby God and his word revered (Hebrews 12:22-28)!

Chapter 20

Main Theme: The Victorious Christ and his church bind the Power of the Devil by the overthrow of his Allies which are the Roman Empire and its persecution of the Saints. Emperor worship is abolished and destroyed.

(V. 1-3) John is now privileged to see this vision which depicts and manifests the glorious Son of God binding Satan through his sacrifice upon the cross and his resurrection from the dead, and the glorious gospel of Christ (Hebrews 2:9-15, I Corinthians 15:1-4, Romans 1:16-17).

Jesus Christ is referred to as an “angel of God” in the sense of messenger of God in Paul’s writings (Galatians 4:14). Truly as God's final prophet (Hebrews 1:1-3, Acts 3:22-26) he has the “words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

In all probability this angel is symbolic of the Christ for the Lord “came down from heaven to do the Will of the Father” (John 6:38). His great objective was to “destroy the works of the devil” (I John 3:8). He came to “bind the strong man” and spoil his goods (Matthew 12:24-30). He declared that he was the one with the “keys of death and of Hades” also (Revelation 1:17-18). The angel of the bottomless pit (Satan) according to Revelation 9:11 who is called Apollyon, Abaddon, or Destroyer can only hurt and destroy those who will not follow the Christ as he leads by his gospel (I Peter 5:8-9). Everyone who faithfully follows Christ Jesus is able to “resist the Devil” (James 4:6-10). Satan is bound by the Christ and his soul-saving gospel (Romans 1:16-17) and those who obey the gospel of Christ are those who have a part in that eternal city of everlasting glory (Revelation 22:14).

Satan can never again be victorious over those who find refuge in Christ as long as they “continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast” (Colossians 1:23-28). It is only when Christians leave the state of faithful obedience to God that Satan can have his little season in their lives (Matthew 6:24).

Christ has bound Satan as he so declared that he would do in his gospel (John 12:31-33) through his vicarious death for all mankind. He made possible salvation from sin universally through his propitiation (I John 2:1-2). No one needs to be controlled by the Devil since in the Lord there is power to resist the Devil and overcome his fiery darts of temptation (Ephesians 6:10-18).

When Jesus Christ bound Satan it was for a thousand years which is, simply, another way of saying it was a great binding or a complete binding. Notice how the number 1000 is symbolically used in the Bible (Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalms 50:10). Contrary to the fact that this does not refer to a literal thousand year reign of Christ which will supposedly begin at his second coming, this refers to completeness or

greatness. Note, for example, how the number 10 is used in other passages for reference to this point (Revelation 2:10). These Christians were to suffer tribulation 10 days or a complete period of time of great persecution: The great reign of Christ is symbolized by multiplying 10 many times.

The reign of the Lord Jesus Christ began on Pentecost (Acts 2:29-36) and will continue until his last enemy is destroyed which is death (I Corinthians 15:24-28). Hence this 1000 year reign of Christ began at Pentecost and will end at the end of the world. Everyone who renders obedience unto the gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:38) is allowing Christ to bind Satan for them and as long as they continually obey the Lord the Devil remains bound as far as his ability to hurt or harm them by deceit or cunning (Ephesians 4:11-16).

This 1000 year reign of Christ is seen in its greatness and completeness by the words of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20). He has been given “all authority ... in heaven and on earth.” He has been given a name that is above every name and has been exalted far above “all principality, and power, and might, and dominion” (Ephesians 1:20-23).

Since Jesus commands and controls Satan, for those who follow his Word (John 6:63, John 12:48-49), Satan remains bound by the gospel of Christ which is the “chain” Christ uses to “bind Satan” thereby (II Corinthians 4:4-5). Satan can only “do” that which Christ “allows” him to do. But those who follow the Victorious Lamb are always provided a “way of escape” from the tempter’s snares (I Corinthians 10:12-13). Satan can no longer accuse those who obey the gospel of Christ (Revelation 12:7-11) of their sins, because the blood of Christ is the means of complete and total forgiveness of sins to those who remain faithful (I John 1:7-9).

But Satan surely has his “little season” (verse 3). But what does this actually mean in this symbolism here? If the “reign” of Christ is going to last for “1,000 years” or until the end of time (I Corinthians 15:24), when will Satan have his little season? The text says that it will be after the 1,000 years are expired that Satan will be loosed out of his prison (verses 3 and 7). It is evident that when the end comes Satan is completely defeated (I Corinthians 15:24-28) and he all those who serve him will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41,46). So this little season that Satan has must be symbolic of a period of time that Satan rules and reigns in the lives of men and women (Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 1:28-32, Ephesians 4:17-20). Since the power of Satan is minute compared to that of Christ he is referred to as having a “little season” in contrast to the reign of Christ for a “1,000 years.” It is interesting to note that Satan is bound by Christ for the same period that Christ rules and reigns. Hence if Christ is “in charge” from Pentecost until the end of time and the gospel teaches that he surely is (I Peter 3:22) then the Devil will not have a literal period of time that he is dominant over Christ and his followers, but

rather this is simply referring to the period of time that Satan deceives the whole world by the pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:24-26). Satan has his little season in the hearts and lives of all who never obey the gospel of Christ, and also in the lives of those who defect from Christ and go back into bondage as taught in New Testament (II Peter 2:20-22, Hebrews 6:4-6).

Through emperor worship Satan has found a means of deceiving the Nations to fight against God (Revelation 13:15-18), but now he is defeated by the Lord and his Saints who refuse to bow down and worship the Beast and Image.

- (V. 4-6) Here is a glorious picture of the Saints living and reigning with Christ victoriously (Revelation 5:9-10). This would and does encompass two groups of Saints (John 5:24-25). Here are pictured the martyred saints who have died for the Lord having been faithful to the point of death (Revelation 2:10, Revelation 6:9-11, Revelation 12:10-11). But also everyone who has a part in the first resurrection (Romans 6:3-7, Acts 2:38) and who lives faithful to the gospel of Christ is living and reigning with Christ also as depicted by Paul (Ephesians 2:1-10). Here in this vision John sees the beloved Saints sitting upon thrones with Christ (Revelation 3:20-21). But note carefully that reigning with Christ during his reign from Pentecost until the Day of Judgment is dependent upon living with and for him (Hebrews 5:8-9). In John 6:53-58 Jesus Christ teaches this great lesson about godly living.

Earlier in this book (Revelation 6:9-11) we see saints who were slain for the Lord as being under the altar of persecution. But God pictures them as actually sitting and reigning with Christ as they live and die for the Lord. These saints cry out for rightful justice and vengeance from God and God will surely avenge them of their adversaries (II Thessalonians 1:5-9). Actually those who suffer persecution on earth and die for Christ actually share and enjoy his great Victory over Satan, and Satan is bound by their obedience to the truth, and Christ and his powerful gospel. Note some references in this regard (Romans 6:11-12, Galatians 2:20). This resurrection is not referring to the end of time nor the resurrection of a cause, but rather a person's initial obedience to the gospel of Christ (Romans 6:3-7). Everyone who obeys the gospel of Christ according to God's specified means by faith (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confession (Romans 10:9-10), and baptism (Galatians 3:26-27) are saved from sin by the blood of Christ and are raised to live and reign with Christ through their continual obedience (James 1:25). Of course those in focus here in this verse are those who have not "worshipped the beast, neither his image" (Revelation 13:15-18). Under Nero and Domitian thousands of Christians perished because of their faith. Those who did not die were persecuted severely and had terrible hardships placed upon them (Revelation 6:7-8).

The rest of the dead here is probably referring to everyone who had perished in the wake of God's judgments who worshipped the Beast and his Image. They lived not

again until the thousand years were finished. Just what does this symbolism mean? The word “until” does not mean that they lived again after the thousand years were finished. For example note how “until” is used in I Timothy 4:13. Here Paul told Timothy to give himself to “to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” until (till) he comes. This does not imply that after he comes Timothy should cease this activity does it? So also in this verse those “dead” who do not take part in the first resurrection are not going to “live” after the thousand years reign of Christ is finished. In fact those who do not obey the gospel are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1-3) while they live on earth (I Timothy 5:6). Then when they die in that condition they are subject to “everlasting death” (Romans 6:23. Hence they never actually live at all according to scripture. Surely when Christ calls the dead from their graves (John 5:28-29) some will come forth to everlasting life, and some to everlasting death. There will only be one resurrection when Christ comes the second time (Hebrews 9:27-28).

God promises great blessings and promises to those who have part in the first resurrection (Romans 6:16-18, Mark 16:15-16, Romans 8:35-39). The second death (Revelation 21:8) will not have power over them. This would and does include those Christians who are “living stones” in the Temple of God and are spiritual priests who continually offer up to God sacrifices of godly living until and to the point of death (I Peter 2:5-11).

(V. 7-10) Satan is loosed from his prison after the thousand year reign of Christ expires. But since Christ remains in power and control until the end of time (Revelation 19:11-16) this little season of the Devil is “given unto him” by Christ. Satan is allowed to “go out to deceive” the nations of the world (Gog and Magog) and deceive whomsoever he can that will succumb to his temptations. Through their yielding to sin and the pleasures thereof Satan has his “little season” with them. But at whatsoever time a person who is living in sin and under Satan’s control does hear the gospel of Christ and obeys the Truth and purifies his soul (I Peter 1:22-23) he is freed from Satan’s control and the Devil is bound by Christ and the gospel and service rendered to the Lord. Those who take the whole dose of the Devil’s L.S.D. to the point of death (James 1:13-15) never know life but abide in death, both on this earth, and in the hereafter for all eternity.

Satan is pictured in Revelation 16:13-16 as he gathers his forces for the great battle of Armageddon as soliciting help from “Idolatry-Worldliness” and “Pride”(I John 2:15-17). Satan uses every conceivable means of deception to devour his victims (II Corinthians 2:11, Galatians 5:15, I Peter 5:8). Nearly the whole entire world is following after his lies (Revelation 12:15-16, I Timothy 4:1-5). He has false preachers working for him (II Corinthians 11:13-15, II Timothy 4:1-5). He has the “care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches” which he uses so effectively (Matthew 13:22). He uses persecution and reviling also to cause many that have

obeyed the gospel of Christ to turn away (Matthew 13:20-21, Matthew 5:10-12). He is the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:1-3) and as long as he can get men to follow the lusts of the flesh and live by the desires of the carnal mind (Romans 8:5-8) he can keep them enemies of God. Truly Satan has by all of these means “compassed the camp of the saints” (church) with everything from fornication and pornography to false doctrines and complacency. He is working over-time so to speak to get Christians to fall. Many have fallen and many still shall in the future, but the victory belongs to those who endure courageously every temptation (James 1:12).

Here God pictures fire coming down from heaven (II Thessalonians 1:7-9) and devouring the enemy. Satan and all of his followers are cast into the lake that burns with “fire and brimstone.” There is found the Beast and false prophet (Revelation 19:20-21) and the Dragon himself who deceived them all. They shall taste the “wrath of God” poured out without mixture (Revelation 14:10-11). They shall be tormented “day and night” forever for their sins. Jesus pictures that scene again in his teachings (Matthew 7:21-23). Everyone who says and does things “in the name of Jesus” without his permission and authority shall be lost for committing iniquity. Many people shall be lost for practicing “good works” that Christ never authorized.

(V. 11-15) God here depicts the great and final judgment scene (II Corinthians 5:10-11). Christ Jesus in all of his magnificent array as “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” is going to burst upon the scene of human existence in all of his radiant glory and power unlimited to judge mankind. He will descend from heaven with a shout, “Dead come forth” (I Thessalonians 4:13-18, John 5:28-29) and the realm of Hades shall give up every Spirit therein as well as death and the seas and all people shall be judged. Everyone will receive judgment from God, which is totally righteous and just in bearing with their obedience to the laws of God under which they lived and died. Whatever law was in force at the time they lived on earth will be their standard of judgment (Revelation 20:12, James 2:12). The Books of God will be opened and also the Book of Life (Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelation 3:5, Luke 10:20). Each person shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body which implies that there will be no “second chance” for anyone after they die (Hebrews 9:27). This judgment is going to be terrible in its consequences to those who love not the Lord and obeyed not his law (II Corinthians 5:10-11). Unless a person’s faith has been evidenced by his works (James 2:17-24, Titus 3:3-8) he cannot hope to receive eternal life from God by grace (Ephesians 2:8-10).

After Judgment Day neither Hades nor death will have a need to exist, so hence it is said that they also are cast into the “lake of fire” along with every person whose name is not written in God’s “book of life.” This everlasting, nightmarish death will be for those who lived a lie (Revelation 22:15) and for those who were fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, fornicators, idolaters, sorcerers, and liars. The most despicable company of sinners ever collected together into one place (Galatians 5:19-21, Romans 1:28-32, Colossians 3:5-11) and the worst part of all is that they will be forever in the company of demons and the Devil himself. Torment will never end from the Devil nor his demons, nor the searing flames of God’s wrath and judgment.

Thus the great spiritual victory of Christ is manifested in this Chapter and to the people of John’s day these Christians could take refuge in the hope of victory in Christ and assurance of conquest over every adversary. This surely depicted God’s triumph over Nero and Domitian and the evil Roman world that persecuted and killed many of his Saints.

Chapter 21

Main Theme: Glorification of the saints around the Throne of God as they live and abide in the heavenly city for all eternity praising God. (II Thessalonians 1:10-12)

(V. 1-7) The first heaven and the first earth are passed away seems to have double significance and meaning. First the material universe has already passed away here (II Peter 3:10-13). There will no longer be a continuous sea of society as the world has already come to an end (Revelation 13: 1). But more importantly the “first heaven and the first earth” also surely represented the relationship of the Saviour and his body as people through the “general assembly” (Hebrews 12:22-23) served God in the Kingdom that cannot be shaken (verse 28). Note in Isaiah 65:17 that God promised by the mouth of his prophet to create “new heavens and a new earth.” Since it is also shown in Isaiah 65:9 that this is speaking of the Messiah Jesus Christ and his universal reign over all of God’s universe (Daniel 7: 13-14) as well as his headship of the Lord’s church (Ephesians 1:22-23) , we can realize that the old heavens and earth was the system before Christ and the new heavens and earth was the system after and through Christ. In like manner this first heavens and earth in this verse is symbolic of the system under Christ as he providentially ruled the Universe (I Peter 3:22, Revelation 1:5-7) and the church (Ephesians 4:15). After Judgment when the end comes there will no longer be a need for a Saviour and Redeemer because Christ will have already delivered and redeemed God’s Kingdom (I Corinthians 15:24). There will be a new spiritual system where all will be in subjection to Deity for all eternity as ages roll on.

Surely this ties in with the statement of the apostle Peter (II Peter 3:13) that the righteous “look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (God himself) according to Revelation 4:1-11. Peter is actually saying that the righteous and faithful have awaiting them the glorious promise and privilege of living in heaven with God (Deity) for all eternity serving and praising Deity for their everlasting Salvation (Revelation 19:1-5).

Also this “sea” here has another more significant meaning. As we studied in Revelation 4:6 God is surrounded by a “sea of glass like unto crystal.” This surely is symbolic of the fact that God is in a class by himself being the only being who is totally perfect and righteous and truthful and merciful, whose judgment and justice cannot be refuted. Notice again in Psalms 89:14 how God himself describes his throne and the surrounding area. Notice also Psalms 47:8 that Jehovah rules on his throne of Holiness. If we put all of these ingredients together we have this picture. That Jehovah is separated from his Universe creatures (man) by this sea that none can transcend or go across except the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 6:20). This sea is made up of perfect justice and judgment, and mercy and truth, and holiness. No man can measure up to God’s divine standards except

the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 1:8-9). But Christ arose from the dead having never committed sin and ascended up into heaven (Romans 1:4, Acts 1:7-11). When he, so to speak, arrived at the portals of glory (Heaven) he simply crossed this sea and went up and sat down at the right hand of God. He never committed sin and so was never separated from God as a result of his own sins (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Since Christ never committed sins like all others have done (Romans 3:23, I John 3:1-5) he simply went up to the throne of God as if that sea of God's righteousness and holiness and truth were not there. But no man has ever seen God's face at any time except the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:18). He dwelt in heaven with God before he came into the world (John 17:3-5), and he ascended into heaven after his great resurrection from the dead, to intercede forever for the faithful who would obey the gospel of Christ and continue to obey (Hebrews 7:25-28). But this passage in our text (Revelation 21:1-7) pictures the righteous as walking and talking with God and dwelling directly with him in heaven. This is possible because there is no more sea. This is another way of saying that all of the righteous in the Kingdom that is delivered to God by Christ (I Corinthians 15:24-28) will be able to enter the portals of glory and go right up and associate themselves with God for indeed everyone in heaven will have been accounted by God as being saved by God's mercy (Titus 3:3-8), and his Truth (Ephesians 1:13, II Thessalonians 2:13-14), and through the blood of Christ (I Peter 1:18-20) have found the forgiveness of their sins (Colossians 1:13-14) serving God in his Kingdom. All of the saved in heaven will have received God's divine Judgment and Justice through their obedience to the gospel of Christ and continual walk by faith on earth as they served God through his Son in the church. For "we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7) while yet we live on earth and serve God. But after Judgment we will with all of the righteous of all ages be permitted for the very first time to see God's face and behold his Omnipotent majesty and glory in heaven as we live and reign with him forever.

Back in the Old Testament (Exodus 33:2-23) God allowed Moses to see his "back parts" but Moses was not allowed to see God's face. Some believe that Enoch and Elijah both went directly to heaven where they are now living with God and of course "see God's face." But at the time that Jesus made his statement (John 1:18) both Enoch and Elijah had been translated (Hebrews 11:5-6, II Kings 2:1,11) into heaven. But what heaven did they go to? This answer is given in an account of the beloved Paul (II Corinthians 12:1-7). He was "caught up to the third heaven" as he also calls this Paradise. This is the spiritual abode of the godly who await the judgment day of God (Luke 16:22, Revelation 2:7). Even Elijah and Enoch went to Paradise and not directly into heaven for it was not God's will that any man precede Jesus Christ into heaven (Hebrews 6:20) as he was the "fore-runner" who would make intercession for all those who served God on earth. Also God is no

“respector of persons” (Acts 10:34-35) and has so planned that all of the righteous of all ages will be able to see his face and his glory all at the same time as they enter the portals of glory. Notice in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 that after Christ leaves heaven to come to judge mankind that he will, so to speak, make a stop at Paradise and bring all the spirits of the righteous with him (those that sleep in Jesus). Then those who are righteous on earth, living when Christ comes, will join the “dead in Christ” together in the air with the Lord to be forever with him. Of course this simply means that those in Paradise and those on earth still living will all be with Christ as they enter into heaven to dwell eternally with God!

Since this text we are studying (verses 1-7) pictures the righteous in God’s presence we can understand the meaning of this term that “there was no more sea.” Everyone in heaven will be like their “heavenly Father” (Matthew 5:48) and hence Deity and the saved will no longer be separated by sin for there will be no sin there (Revelation 21:27). Those righteous, saved, and redeemed people will be accounted by God as being Holy, truthful, just, and saved by mercy so they can, so to speak, go right up into God’s holy presence for they have been saved and sanctified by the precious blood of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27) and are now fully without blemish and without spot. So for them there is no more sea or an “expanse” that they cannot cross to get to God and his Holiness.

As a bride would be fully adorned for her husband the Lord’s church is now fully prepared and ready through faithful, godly living and the blood of Christ to go to heaven and live with her husband forever (Revelation 19:7-9). This is the glorious church that Christ presents to God the Father (I Corinthians 15:24).

As is indicated in Revelation 21:3, God himself is living and dwelling with his people personally and spiritually as in comparison to dwelling in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:14-21) while yet we live and serve him here on earth.

Since after Christ comes and judgment takes place (Revelation 20:11-15) both death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire the Spirit declares to John that in heaven there will be no more death or sorrow or pain or tears (verse 4). The cause of all of these things, Sin itself, will not be found in heaven (Revelation 21:27, Revelation 22:14-15). Also, we will all have the glorious bodies Christ will have given us (Philippians 3:20-21), that are not subject to pain and sorrow or dying (I John 3:1-3). We will have every reason to rejoice for our redemption from sin and rescue by Christ from Hell so that no “tears” will ever be shed, but happiness shall permeate heaven and each dweller there. We will all realize that everyone in Hell will have in God’s perfect judging eye have deserved such punishment so our eyes will not pity them ever. We shall be so busily engaged in the beholding of God’s majesty and greatness and praising him that the moment to be saddened over loved ones will never occur.

This great voice from heaven declares that he makes all things new (II Peter 3:13). This is, of course, speaking of the new spiritual system under Deity where the righteous will continually dwell with the God of heaven who is the light and love and life of all eternity.

In verse 6 we hear God declaring that he has kept his promises that he made to those who would direct their lives by God's word, and be humble towards God and obey him through their lifetimes (Revelation 22:14). They have given themselves to God (II Corinthians 8:4-5) and God has given to them an everlasting reward (Luke 6:38) which surpasses our imagination to be able now to appreciate fully. As he refers to himself as the Alpha and Omega he has completed his eternal purpose (Ephesians 1:3-14) in Christ and now the faithful have been redeemed and have joy unspeakable forever.

In verse 7 of this great Chapter of God's mind, God mentions the fact that every faithful follower of God who has overcome the Tempter and every obstacle that the Devil has placed before him, shall enjoy God's greatest rewards. They have truly been "more than conquerors" zealously serving Christ to death (Romans 8:35-39). This great word "overcometh" is used many times in this book. Let us note the verses for our benefit:

- a. Revelation 2:7 – Promises of eating of tree of life in God's paradise.
- b. Revelation 2:11 – Promised not be hurt of the second death (Revelation 21:8).
- c. Revelation 2:26 – Promised to rule over the nations if keep God's works.
- d. Revelation 3:5 – Promised to be clothed in "white raiment" and salvation.
- e. Revelation 3:12 – Promised to be "pillar in the temple of my God" (I Timothy 3:15).
- f. Revelation 3:21 – Promised to rule with Christ on his Throne of Glory.
- g. Revelation 12:11 – Righteous saints overcame Satan through being martyred for the cause of Christ Jesus their Lord.
- h. Revelation 17:14 – The Lamb overcame every adversary with his power.
- i. Revelation 21:7 – Promised to inherit all of God's greatest blessings (Ephesians 1:3, I Peter 1:3-4).

This reward comes only to those who are not "overcome of evil" but who "overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17-21).

Paul proclaims in II Corinthians 6:14-18 that God only has fellowship with those who separate themselves from the world of sin and wickedness. Those who "cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit" (II Corinthians 7:1) and perfect holiness in the fear of Jehovah shall be rewarded with everlasting life (II Timothy 4:6-8).

- (V. 8) Conglomerate view of the inhabitants of hell as they are tortured for all eternity being with the Devil and his angels and demons. Every ungodly person and every kind of sin and sinner will be there (Galatians 5:19-21, Romans 1:24-32, Colossians 3:5-11, I Corinthians 6:9-11, etc.). This is the second death and is the “paycheck” of the sinner for his works rendered (Romans 6:23).
- A. Fearful – Represented by those fearful of using talents to serve God and glorify his name (Matthew 25:25).
 - B. Unbelieving – This would include those who knew God’s commands and obeyed for awhile and then apostatized (Hebrews 3:12-13). Also include those who believed not the gospel and never obeyed God and were lost (Mark 16:15-16, John 6:37-47).
 - C. Abominable – This includes those who once had the Truth but went foul and whose works were an abomination to God (Proverbs 28:9; Romans 1:25-32).
 - D. Murderers – This would include those who take human life such as mentioned in I Timothy 1:9-10 and Genesis 9:6 and would include those who murder their own souls by failure to feed them God’s word (Matthew 4:4, Matthew 5:6). They die of spiritual malnutrition and in the day of judgment will be lost for “soul murder” (their own and also they influence others to be lost).
 - E. Whoremongers or fornicators – God describes those who are intimate friends with the world and at enmity against God as being guilty of this sin of spiritual whoredom (James 4:4, I Corinthians 6:13-21). Of course this includes every form of fornication (Matthew 19:9) and every case of adultery (Hebrews 13:4).
 - F. Sorcerers – This would and does include every kind and form of witchcraft that would include illegal and evil use of drugs to inducements of sin (Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Galatians 5:19-21). Certainly inclusive of liquor and nictines and any and every other drug men use to delude their thinking and living.
 - G. Idolaters – This would and does include those who love money or any other object or any other thing to allow them to come between them and their service to God. (Colossians 3:5, Ephesians 5:5). For example, people could allow money to be their idol (I Timothy 6:9-10) or they could allow television to be their God (Ephesians 5:15-17). Everyone so mentioned in Revelation 9:20-21 is included here in Revelation 21:8
 - H. Liars – This would include any and all false doctrines (II Thessalonians 2:9-12; Matthew 23) and all hypocrites (Matthew 24:50-51). Every false teacher and his followers (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

Everyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). This surely will be the collective body of the worst degenerates that ever lived, and include those who were morally excellent but never obeyed God's laws (Revelation 20:11-15). Note also Matthew 7:21-23 that many deceived religious and sincere people shall be lost for not following Christ.

(V. 9-10) Pictorial view of the beauty and holiness of the Lord's church is seen by John in this vision. Since she is the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22-23) she is said to be "descending out of heaven from God." Everything concerning Christ and his church is the divine concept of God and a product of his wisdom (Ephesians 3:9-11). The Lord's church is so high and holy that she is said to be "Mount Zion" (Revelation 14:1-5). In Isaiah 2:2-4 God had foretold how he would establish the "Mountain of Jehovah's house" (I Timothy 3:15; Matthew 16:16-18). This is the great people of God who had been wise enough to hear and obey the voice of God through the ages of time that man had inhabited the earth.

(V. 11-27) The glorious description of the church of our Lord as it has now been redeemed and is in heaven enjoying God's richest blessings, is presented in these verses. Beautiful beyond imagination or description is God's holy habitation (Ephesians 2:20-22, Revelation 4:1-11). First let it be noted that this glorious city has no glory of her own but all her glory comes from the glorious God who created her and redeemed her (Ephesians 5:25-27, Isaiah 46:13). All of the glory of any kind in this Universe finds as its source the only true and living God (John 17:1-5). Truly the physical Universe declares the glory of God (Psalms 19:1,3) and the "law of the Lord" declares his glorious and infinite righteousness and true holiness (Psalms 19:7-10). Since the Lord's church is cleansed by the Word of Christ (John 15:1-8, Ephesians 5: 23-32) the church is as glorious as the Word of God is also. And indeed the crowning act of God's glory is seen in the sacrifice of his Son and our redemption through his blood and obedience to the Truth (I Peter 1:22-23, Ephesians 1:3-7).

The light of the church is Christ Jesus (John 8:12) and the glorious gospel (II Corinthians 4:4) that he has given mankind to follow. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, so also do Christians reflect the light of the Sun of righteousness (Malachi 4:2, Matthew 5:13-16). Christ and his word are to live in and direct the lives of everyone who is a true child of God (Galatians 2:20, I John 3:1-3). This light pictured here radiates from within the jasper stone and is symbolic of the great spiritual influence the church was to have in God's scheme of redeeming man from sin (I Timothy 3:15, I Peter 2:9-12). Just as radiation comes from radium, its source, so also is the Truth and righteousness of God to come from God's people as they radiate the word and power of the living God and his Word. (Romans 1:16-17, Ephesians 3:15-21). God truly is the source of truth (Psalms

31:5, Titus 1:1-2) and from his Throne of Glory he fills his subjects with his “radiation” of godliness (II Peter 1:3-4) to bring them cures from the dreaded cancerous disease of Sin. Of course this prophetic passage here (Revelation 21:11-27) so pictures the glorious church now at home with God who gave them glory and honor.

How does a “mere mortal” like me begin to further elaborate on the magnificent and majestic city described here by inspiration. We hope only to point out some things to your minds that will cause you to “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matthew 5:6) and long to be for all eternity where only righteousness shall dwell (II Peter 3:13, Psalms 23).

The number 12 surely is symbolic of the perfection and completion of this glorious abode of the faithful.

- a. Twelve gates and each is a pearl (verses 12 and 21) – This seems to indicate that there is abundantly ministered to the faithful an entrance into the “everlasting Kingdom” (II Peter 1:5-11). Jesus is the way (John 14:6). Buy the Truth and sell it not and be saved (Proverbs 23:23).

This picture of “twelve angels” at each gate probably symbolizes the great royal welcome and treatment awaiting those who are saved. God will surely give those whom he has redeemed the red carpet treatment, so to speak. This also symbolizes the great Truths that every messenger of God who spoke God’s truths in the Old Covenant system will be sort of welcoming those who follow God’s commands as they also did (Matthew 5:10-12). Surely all of the faithful followers of God both under God’s Old Testament system as well as his New Covenant will be saved and welcomed by God’s messengers, so to speak. Another way of saying this is that everyone saved under the Old Covenant system will have diligently followed God’s voice (Hebrews 11:4-6) as he spoke through messengers (Hebrews 1:1-3). The twelve tribes of Israel are mentioned here as symbolic of God’s redeemed people under every covenant from beginning of time until the end (Revelation 7:1-8, Hebrews 12:22-23,28).

This city with three gates each on the North, South, East, and West is pictured in the Old Testament also (Ezekiel 48:30-35). This surely shows that heaven will be open to the righteous under the Old Testament and also to the righteous under the New Testament system that follows the “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42). This also manifests that since each gate is a “pearl” (Matthew 13:45-46) that only those who obey the Truth under the law they did live and die under shall be saved. Jesus declares that Truth allows us to be free from sin (John 8:31-32, I Peter 1:22-23).

The wall of this glorious city has “twelve foundations” which indicates that its stability is rooted and founded in the Truth that the apostles of Christ were guided into (John 16:13). The foundation of the apostles and prophets which they laid is Jesus Christ and his law (Ephesians 2:19-22, I Corinthians 3:9-11). This simply means that the church only has the glorious light of God emanating and radiating from her if she is the “pillar and ground of the Truth” (I Timothy 3:15, Ephesians 4:11-16). Of course a city or structure is only as sound and strong as the foundation that it is built thereon (Matthew 7:24-27, II Timothy 2:19-22). Since it is shown here that God’s church is built on the Son of God who is the true living Way (John 14:6) this church will endure forever.

This golden measuring rod is, of course, the word of God (James 1:21-25, II Corinthians 13:5). Only God’s word determines how many will be saved and, so to speak, just how large God’s heavenly city will be to accommodate them (John 12:48-49, II Corinthians 5:10-11). Only the God of heaven who did create this majestic and gorgeous city of glory is able to furnish the means of measuring it accurately (Ephesians 4:13). God intends for his Word to have all of his power compacted into it to save men (Romans 1:16-17). Everyone who enters heaven and feeds upon the tree of life there eternally will have been obedient to the commands of God (Revelation 22:14). Those who have been guilty of doing “good works” not taught in God’s Word will not enter into heaven (Matthew 7:21-23, II Timothy 3:16-17).

This city is “four-square” which perhaps may symbolize that it is conclusive of the saved of every people and tribe and tongue and nation (Revelation 5:8-9). Surely all saved people from every corner of the earth will be saved (Romans 10:17-18, Colossians 1:23). But this surely has much deeper meaning. Sometimes we think of a square as being one who is morally upright and won’t do wrong. Here God pictures the righteous and the saved as being spiritually correct and morally correct and physically correct, and emotionally correct, or mature (Hebrews 6:11). God wants us to grow in maturity in all of these areas (II Corinthians 7:1, I Corinthians 6:19-20, Philippians 2:12-15). Only those willing to pay the price of denying themselves (Luke 9:23) shall follow Christ and only those who follow the Lamb will keep themselves wholly serving God (Romans 12:1-2, Revelation 14:1-5). Back in prophecy (Ezekiel 48:20) God says that the holy oblation (sacrifice) was to be offered “four-square.” In the pattern for the things of the Tabernacle God told Moses to build the altar of burnt offering “foursquare” (Exodus 27:1). In the next chapter (Exodus 28:15-16) God said that the breast-plate that Aaron was to wear as High Priest was to be “foursquare.” Compare this to the “breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:10-18). The altar of incense was also to be “foursquare” (Exodus 37:25). As God directed Moses so did he build this altar of incense (Exodus 38:1). God also instructed Solomon to build certain parts of the Temple “foursquare” (I Kings 7:31). Also in prophecy

Ezekiel measured the court of God's tabernacle in this vision and it was "foursquare" (Ezekiel 40:47) which would symbolize the great purity and holiness of God's church under the Christ (Matthew 5:8, Ephesians 4:20-24). So this city that "lieth foursquare" is composed of those who offer themselves completely to God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:1-2, I Peter 2:5,9-12).

Surely the size of this great city is mind-boggling (verses 16-17). God surely has built heaven large enough for the righteous ones in his Kingdom (Matthew 25:21-23,34). This great incorruptible inheritance (I Peter 1:3-9) is only for those who all their life were kept through the power of faith and now enjoy everlasting bliss and blessings with God. Those who had their faith tried and tested through the fires of temptation and tribulations and daily cares and they overcame them all by steadfast obedience unto God (James 1:12-15). These great dimensions here simply are twelve multiplied to unlimitedness. This great city will be plenty large enough to house the faithful and obedient children of God who ever pilgrimaged upon the earth. Of course in this city will be included all those who died during the "infancy age" and never reached accountability to God (Matthew 18:3). Also will be included those who never had the mentality to read and understand God's word, that in God's righteous eyes could never respond to the word of God. The wall being 144 cubits simply symbolizes that it is large enough that none will ever breach the wall and get into the city. Note Matthew 6:19-21 and marvel about this fact presented here. Only those who enter this city by the gates of Truth (II Thessalonians 2:13-14) will inhabit this glorious home. The wall of the city was "jasper" which is a very beautiful and clear stone reflecting beautiful lights from within itself. So also the church in heaven reflects God's glory.

The city was "pure gold" like clear glass. Since the body, the "church of Christ," is purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28) it is as valuable as the blood that purchased it. God pictures the church as "golden candlesticks" (seven) in Revelation 1-3. This shows the beauty of the church as she lives by the Word of God that is more valuable than the finest gold or silver (Psalms 19:10-14). This simply manifests the purity of God reflected through his people the church (Philippians 4:8). All that God will ever "salvage" from his Creation is the church. In Paul's writings God declares that the church is his "heritage" (Ephesians 1:10-14). Of course since this city, heaven, is the home of these righteous people then heaven itself is the "righteousness of God" now concealed from our eyes except through faith (II Corinthians 5:7, Romans 1:16-17) but after Judgment God will reveal his righteousness to the church as they behold his glorious dwelling and habitation for the first time. He who is the essence of righteousness lights this great City with his glory for certain.

The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. This is also true of the Temple that God instructed Solomon to build (I

Kings 7:1-12). Skilled craftsmen hewed and cut these stones until they were at last ready to garnish God's house as the gorgeous foundation of beauty! This is also true of every Christian (I Peter 2:5). God takes us from the beginning of our conversion (Acts 3:19, Acts 2:38) and begins through his Word to cut out the flaws and shape and mold us to be beautiful stones (living) that garnish and adorn God's temple (church) according to Paul (Ephesians 2:19-22). Each stone would be different in beauty and depth of brightness and in shape just as each Christian has differing talents and abilities (Matthew 25:13-30) and each offers different degrees of dedicated service to God (I Corinthians 12:13-27). But each Christian can be a rare jewel or precious stone through whom God's light shines (Matthew 5:13-16, I Peter 2:9-12). This surely symbolized that heaven itself will be composed of those rare and beautiful jewels faithful followers of God who loved him and lived for him and if need be died for him (Philippians 1:20-23).

Notice that as God instructed Moses to build this breast-plate for Aaron to wear as he served God in his office as High Priest, so also it was made up of these same beautiful stones mentioned here. Notice Exodus 28:15-21 for closer examination of the parallels.

a. Four rows of stones to be set in it.

1. First row – sardius – topaz – carbuncle
2. Second row – emerald – sapphire – diamond
3. Third row – ligure – agate – amethyst
4. Fourth row – beryl – onyx – jasper

These represented the most beautiful of all stones in the entire world!

Just in like manner those who will inhabit heaven and live with God shall also be the most beautiful stones (people) that ever lived on earth (I Peter 2:5). Those Christians who served God with fear and trembling and were good examples to those they lived among (Philippians 2:12-15).

What kind of stone does God see when he looks down from heaven on you? To the extent that you allow God to mold you and cut the flaws from your life, you will reflect the glorious beauty of God's divine righteousness that dwells in your heart and flows out into your everyday life (Luke 9:23, I Timothy 4:12). Just how deep is God's light reflecting from your stone (life). Only a surface reflection will not lead others to Christ (Matthew 13:20-21) but a real true conviction in God's word will lead the sinner in darkness to the light of God's saving grace (Matthew 13:23). The

more beautiful and colorful your light is for the Lord the more you will imitate God and draw others to him (Philippians 3:13-16).

These stones in the foundations of the wall were as follows:

- a. jasper
- b. sapphire
- c. chalcedony
- d. emerald
- e. sardonyx
- f. sardius
- g. chrysolite
- h. beryl
- I. topaz
- j. chrysoprasus
- k. jacinth
- l. amethyst

Each of these stones represents different followers of God using their different talents and abilities to serve God and each one giving off their brilliant colors and brilliance that was representative of their faithful obedience and good deeds done by God's authority (I John 3:18). For example Paul said that he "laboured more abundantly" than the rest of the apostles (I Corinthians 15:8-10) but they were all pleasing to God except Judas. In the Lord's church there will be those who are very eager and aggressive in their service for God and others who will work but perhaps slower and still achieve results to God's glory.

The street of the city was "pure gold" which symbolizes that the city of heaven is paved with God's golden commandments and that, indeed, those who serve God are being lead "in the paths of righteousness" (Psalms 23, Psalms 119:32). Surely every pathway in heaven that leads up to God's throne of righteousness and holiness is produced from God's heavenly "highway department" (Isaiah 35:8, John 14:6).

The city has no Temple therein where God's people will go and worship for heaven itself is one Holy Temple where God lives and dwells (Ephesians 2:20-22, II Corinthians 6:14-18). There will not be seen great huge Cathedrals in heaven for God does not live in houses made with hands (Acts 17:22-29).

This glorious majestic home of God and the righteous has no artificial source of light such as the sun that God manufactured for the dwellers upon the earth (Genesis 1:16). Because God himself dwells in the most brilliant light of truth and holiness (I Timothy 6:15-16) he is the actual source of all light and love (I John 1:6-9, I John 4:8-10). This glorious abode of the faithful will always be lit up by the righteous commands of God and his brightness (Hebrews 1:3).

The nations of the saved are referred to in prophecy (Isaiah 2:2-4) as being those of all nations who flowed into the church by the grace of God and rendering obedience to the gospel of Christ (Acts 8:12). The kings of the earth here symbolize those who were “kings and priests” on the earth as they served Christ and gave God glory (Revelation 5:8-10, Ephesians 2: 4-10), and now they bring their God-given glory into heaven. God is bestowing abundant honor to those who inherit eternal life (John 10:10, I Timothy 4:8).

The gates shall not be shut by day or night, surely symbolizes the true fact that God’s “office hours” never close as far as his giving grace to save them thereby (Ephesians 2:8-10, Colossians 2:12). But Jesus teaches that since no thief can ever break through nor steal there (Matthew 6:19-21) that is the place we should lay up our treasures. Another reason that these gates will never be locked by day or night, is that after judgment all the wicked will be suffering hell for all eternity (Matthew 25:41,46) and they will never be able to escape from that place of torment to come to heaven where the righteous dwell. Surely this is symbolic of the perfect security we will enjoy both in Christ (Hebrews 13:5-6) and also in heaven, that glorious holy and spiritual home!

There will not be any sinner there to ridicule us as we serve God (Matthew 5:10-12), neither will there be any persecution or hypocrites to cause us to stumble. All wickedness and wicked people will be in that lake of “fire and brimstone” (Revelation 21:8) suffering God’s eternal vengeance. The righteous will need to never fear for their health or well-being for there will be nothing there that “maketh an abomination” but those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will live in everlasting happiness and bliss serving God for their Salvation (Revelation 5:8-14).

Chapter 22

Main Theme: Completion of the description and benefits of those heavenly dwellers and their eternal abode with God and affirmation of the authority of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the church (Ephesians 5: 23-27). Christ warns against tampering with his WORD also.

(V. 1-5) This pure river that John beholds in this vision is without doubt spiritual words of Truth from God (John 6:63-68, John 14:6). This great river of “life” proceeds from the Throne of God and henceforth points to the immense power, infinite wisdom, and knowledge of Jehovah (Psalms 147:5, Matthew 28:18). Jesus told the woman at the well in Samaria (John 4:10) that he could give her “living water” and that this water would be in her a well of water “springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). In prophecy (Psalms 12:6) God declares that his words are “pure words: as silver tried in the furnace of earth, purified seven times.” Also note a similar passage in (Psalms 119:140) exalting God’s word as being “very pure.” By inspiration Solomon declares also that every word of God is “pure” (Proverbs 30:5). Without further delay let us sum up this great majestic appraisal of God’s word by using the words of Christ (Matthew 4:4). Only the “pure in heart” which abide throughout their lives by the pure word of God shall ever see God (Matthew 5:8, II Timothy 2:19-22). As the great beautiful river went out of Eden to water the garden paradise where the tree of life was found (Genesis 2:10) so also is this symbolic of God’s paradise (Revelation 2:7). Of course only those who obey God’s commandments have the right to eat of the tree of life (Revelation 22:14) which is in heaven. This is simply a colorful and dramatic way of expressing everlasting life in heaven. God declares also in prophecy (Psalms 46:4-5) the beauty of the river that makes glad the “city of God” (John 8:32, John 17:17). God allowed Ezekiel by vision to see the glory of Christ and the church, which at that time was yet in the future (Ezekiel 47:5-12). God revealed to him that the Kingdom of God under Christ was watered with the Truth (Psalms 89:14).

In verses 2-3, John envisions the “tree of life” as being in the midst of the street and on either side of the River of life (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). The fact that this tree (plural of them) yielded twelve manner of fruits and this fruit was available every month, simply is symbolic that God has so prepared heaven for those who do the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21-23) as being all-sufficient to furnish the saved with every conceivable divine nourishment and comfort to last throughout eternity. In the New Testament we are told that the fruit of the Spirit as we develop through growth comes as a result of our knowing the Truth (I John 1:3-7) and walking in the glorious light of God’s divine laws (Galatians 5:22-26). Surely through the gospel of Christ God has given to us all things that pertain to “life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3-4). But the great “inheritance incorruptible” (I Peter 1:3-4) shall only be for those who exemplify daily their “holy conversation” without spot and blemish (II Peter 3:10-14). The tree of life was removed from the garden of Eden after sin

entered into the world (Genesis 3:24), and the location of it is now heaven, the spiritual Paradise of God (Revelation 22:1-3, Revelation 2:7).

The “leaves” of the Tree of life were for the healing of the nations which suggests that the cure of all ills of all nations is the precious Word of God (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, Matthew 7:21). Since there will be no more death, or pain or sorrow or sickness nor dying in heaven (Revelation 21:1-6) this is certainly not talking about physical sickness nor healing but finds its greatest fulfillment in the fact that God’s word cleanses us (John 15:3). Everyone in heaven will have abided within the word of God (II John 9) and shall be made whole for all eternity as a result of God’s power through the gospel and blood of his Son (Ephesians 5:25-27).

There shall be no more curse (verse 3) for everything that produces sin (I John 2:15-17, I John 3:8) shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10, Revelation 21:8). Christ came the first time to die for the sins of all men (I Peter 2:21-25) and he was cursed for our sakes but when he comes again (the second time) he will be “apart from sin” (Hebrews 9:25-28). As long as man sinned (Isaiah 59:1-2) he stood accursed and separated from God by sin and, hence, for that reason none ever saw God’s face but Christ (John 1:18). But after Judgment and the righteous enter heaven’s portals there shall be no more curse, for all will have received forgiveness and atonement in the blood of the Saviour (I Peter 1:18-20, Titus 2:13-14) and all can behold God’s glorious face for the first time in the history of the world! Heaven is glorious because the Throne of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit beautify and decorate the city of God’s eternal reward (Revelation 21:22-23). The servants of God will have, so to speak, the words “Redeemed of God” written in their foreheads (Revelation 14:1-3). This simply means that all of the inhabitants of heaven will be there because they were identified by their obedience to God and unselfish desires to serve him fully while on earth in the flesh (Galatians 2:20, II Timothy 4:6-8).

Notice how verse 5 also relates to Revelation 21:22-23 and points to the fact that we shall never grow weary or tired there and need to sleep and find rest for tired bodies (Philippians 3:20-21, I John 3:1-5). There will never be found darkness there (I John 1:6) because God lights up his surroundings with perfect “righteousness and holiness of truth” (Ephesians 4:24). God’s power and blessings of the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2) will never cease to be more than abundant. Heaven shall consist of the righteous of all ages worshipping, serving, and obeying God’s commands throughout all eternity and simply praising him and his power and greatness while at the same time bathing in the sunlight of his glorious presence and eternal Deity. Surely every spiritual blessing is found in Christ Jesus according to God’s eternal purpose (Ephesians 1:3-14). Wonderful blessings in the life we live on earth but beyond the gates of Hades blessings and benefits which surpass comment. The Apostle Paul confirms this in his message by the Spirit (II Corinthians 12:1-10).

Surely God has so purposed that every faithful child of God through Christ would be a “tree of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:3). Each tree began from the seed of God’s glory and truth (Galatians 3:16) and they constantly fed upon the “river of the water of life” (Truth) as they served God and brought forth fruit to please him (John 15:1-8, Psalms 1:1-3). These are those who purified their souls through obeying the Truth (I Peter 1:22-23) and those who continually practiced “pure and undefiled religion before God” (James 1:27). Indeed each inhabitant of heaven shall continually feed upon God’s word and obey his voice for all eternity. God’s witness and testimony to the Truth of these facts is seen in the sacrifice of his Son (I John 5:10-15). The tree of life simply suggests living by God’s commandments he grants us eternal life (I John 2: 1-6).

- (V. 6-7) John is assured that these visions and words are “faithful and true” and, hence, they emanate and come from King Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:5-7). Jesus’ purpose in coming into this world was “to testify to the truth” (John 18:36-37). Everyone that is of the Truth hears his voice. Jesus Christ and his redemptive work for man embodies God’s Truth that the world is worth saving in God’s eyes (John 3:16). Christ is God (Hebrews 1:8-9), and, hence, it is impossible that God should lie (Titus 1:1-2, Hebrews 6:18). Jesus Christ who commands the angelic hosts sent his angel to John to show John these visions and prophetic utterances which were shortly to come to pass (Revelation 1:1,3) which means they were “at hand.” Christ is about to administer his judgments and punishments upon the persecutors of his people (Revelation 6:9-11, Revelation 11:7). He is shortly fixing to bruise Satan and his power over the saints (Romans 16:20). The claims that God had made concerning his Kingdom (the church of Christ) had now been put to the real test and the Kingdom had proven unshakable (Hebrews 12:28). Rome had asserted all of the forces within her power to stop the growth and progress of the Lord’s church even to the point of killing Christians (Revelation 2:13, Revelation 12:11). The expression in verse 7 simply suggests that Christ shall come suddenly and unexpectedly upon his enemies to judge them (II Peter 3:10-14, Matthew 24:43-51). This statement here perhaps has double meaning in God’s purpose. Jesus Christ would come swiftly and shortly to recompense the persecuting Empire and his second coming is also implied here as to its imminence as pertaining to God’s timetable of events in his eternal purpose (I Corinthians 15:24-28). The salvation of the reader of these Truths depended upon whether or not he kept the sayings of this prophecy of God. To pervert it meant certain damnation (Galatians 1:6-9), and failure to keep God’s laws and teaching meant disaster and death (James 4:17, Romans 6:23). Many have perverted the great message of this book of God’s timetables of events and throw off warnings of the severe spiritual judgment of God when the end comes (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). God used angels many times to reveal his Word (Matthew 1:19-20, Galatians 3:19), and each word spoken by angels was “steadfast” (Hebrews 2:1-2). Much more so is the word of Christ true and faithful

and those who violate such shall answer to the Judge whose word they have broken (John12:48-49).

- (V. 8-9) The angel refuses worship from John and straightway corrects John for paying him homage and worship that belongs only to God (Matthew 4:10). Earlier in this book John is so overwhelmed with the majestic and glorious appearance of Christ that he fell before him “as dead” (Revelation 1:12-17) and this worship was rightly placed. As also did Thomas realize that it was fit and proper to worship the Son of God (John 20:26-29). But God never intended for men to worship the prophets or preachers at any time (Matthew 17:5, Acts 10:25-26). No man should be called “Pope” or “Papa” in a spiritual sense and referred to as his “Holiness LORD GOD the Pope” nor be called “Father” as some refer to the Priests of Catholicism and other religions (Matthew 23:8-9, Psalms 111:9). Angels are simply “ministering Spirits” who worship and serve their Creator like also should every man (Romans 1:25, Psalms 103:19-21, Psalms 148:1-6). John made this mistake of worshipping the angel also in an earlier chapter of this book (Revelation 19:10) and the angel rebuked him sharply by saying, “See thou do it not.” Those who did worship angels were in error (Colossians 2:8-23). This message that John has received by these visions belongs to John but they have originated from God and are thus inspired and to be desired. John has no right to worship only the created being that God used to deliver his message. Rather the Revealer and Originator of this great Message was to be revered and held in esteem and worshipped eternally. This “Faithful and True Witness” was Jesus Christ who is worthy of the Worship of John and all men (Revelation 5:8-14) and all of the angels also according to God’s word (Hebrews 1:6).
- (V. 10-12) The angel of God declares to John to “seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book” because the time is “at hand” for the fulfilling of Christ’s judgment upon Rome. In contrast to Daniel’s visions (Daniel 12:9) whose words were “sealed up” until the time of their fulfillment. Of course as we have already studied the destruction of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:24-27) was shown to Daniel that Jesus also spake of in Matthew 24:15. But Daniel also was shown the rise and fall of the Roman world because it persecuted the Saints of God (Daniel 7:7-28). When Daniel received the visions from God some 750 years must elapse before the fulfilling of the prophecy of Jerusalem and of Rome. God told Daniel that these sayings were “sealed until the time of the end.” But what John has seen in visions can never be sealed because they contain the words of Christ who is God’s final spokesman (Hebrews 1:1-3), and also foretell the second coming of Christ which many deny or have become skeptical of (II Peter 3:1-3). But to seal these words is to diminish in importance the final words of the Lord to man, and take away some embellishment of the glory of his return to redeem the church. Even though the primary meaning of this expression “at hand” means nearby or on the threshold and surely the Roman judgments of God and its ultimate fall from power was imminent, the next and greatest event as far as God’s eternal purpose is concerned is and will be the second

coming of Christ (I Thessalonians 4:13-18) and is therefore spoken of as being “at hand” also. Since a thousand years is as a day with God and vice-versa that a day is as a thousand years, even if Judgment Day is a million years away it will only be but for a moment as far as God is concerned (II Peter 3:8-14)!

Since the time for God’s judgments were at hand as far as rendering vengeance upon the Roman Empire for persecuting and killing saints, God declares that the state in which they live (either good or evil) will determine their final destiny (verse 12). God surely teaches in the New Testament that every man will be judged by the deeds done in the body (II Corinthians 5:10-11, Revelation 20:11-15). He that is unjust and will not repent shall die the death of the wicked (Revelation 21:8, Revelation 9:20-21). He that is faithful to God and lives the sober life of holiness (Titus 2:11-12) shall receive the reward fitting to God’s royal heirs (Romans 8:16-18, Romans 2:4-11). Whether Christ is referring to his coming in destruction and judgment upon Rome or whether he is referring to the Last Day (John 12:48-49), all shall receive fair and impartial judgment from the hands of a righteous judge (II Timothy 4:8, James 4:12). This great passage here in the last Chapter of God’s word unto man absolutely reinforces the truth that we must work the works of God’s divine righteousness (Ephesians 2:10) in order to be saved by God (Titus 3:3-8). “Faith without works is dead,” and eternal doom awaits those who are so deceived and offer God “dead faith” while here on earth (James 2:17-24). Only that faith that WORKS by love avails in Christ Jesus (Galatians 5:6).

- (V. 13) The omnipotent authority as the everlasting God (Romans 1:20) befitting Jesus Christ is again emphasized (Revelation 1:8). He who has purposed to complete God’s plan from beginning to end, is speaking (Ephesians 3:10-11, I John 3:8). He is stressing the fact that Caesar’s power and that of Rome is nothing compared. to his greatness. This great and eternal God has now completed his scheme of redemption as the book of Revelation aptly points out the destruction of Satan and his forces (Revelation 20:10-15) and the superlative reward of the righteous as they feast upon God’s abundant blessings in heaven (Revelation 21:1-6). He is the “first and the last” to SPEAK (Genesis 1:3, Matthew 7:21-23) and his word is final and law and order. He has always existed being God (John 17:5, Micah 5:2) and has brought many nations and governments to their knees before Rome and shall bring many after Rome (Jeremiah 18: 7-10).
- (V. 14-15) His word is absolute law and all those who explicitly keep his commandments prove their love to God (John 14:15, I John 5:1-3) and receive by grace from God entrance into the upper and better Kingdom (II Peter 1:5-11) where they may feed continually upon the tree of life. By so doing they shall “eat, and live forever” (Genesis 3:22). Doing the commandments of God make men whole indeed (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The growth process of a Christian using the gospel of Christ accurately produces a Christian who is “holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1-2). They become spiritually and bodily sanctified and Holy like God (I

Thessalonians 5:23). They become well rounded spiritually, physically, emotionally, and intellectually (Luke 2:40,52).

Again Jesus repeats that one of the beauties of heaven will be the absence of evil of any kind, for they will all be roosting on their perch in Hell fire (Revelation 21:8) befitting the life they lived while yet on earth. The fact that Jesus stresses that “whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” shall end up having their geese cooked indicates God’s hatred for hypocrites (Matthew 23). The reason this is so is because not only will every hypocrite lose his own soul, but by their conduct they drive many away from salvation and share in their destruction as well (II Peter 2:1-3,10-22). The Lord knows those that are his (II Timothy 2:19-22) and likewise he’s aware of every imposter (Matthew 21:28-31, Revelation 3:1-5). That person will not love the destiny that he has made for himself by his hypocrisy (Matthew 7:1-5). Jesus said that nothing that defiles or “maketh an abomination” is going to be found in heaven (Revelation 21:27) and this means that every hypocrite must repent while he has opportunity, or end up with the entire collection of the Devil’s advocates in the eternal fires of torment (Matthew 25:41).

- (V. 16-17) Even though the angel has delivered this message to John and caused John through the Spirit to witness these visions, this Revelation came to John the same as Paul (Galatians 1:10-12). The certified gospel message of Jesus Christ who reigns at God’s right hand is just what John has received (Acts 2:32-36). Christ is anxious for all of the churches to know and understand these great truths (Revelation 1:3-4). Since they are preserved for us today we can only surmise that Christ wants us to know and understand this message and find encouragement and strength to stand against the Devil until Christ comes again. When Christ said to John then, “Behold, I come quickly,” he was referring to Judgment upon Rome for slaughter of the Saints but now he has to be referring to his Second Coming as far as we are concerned (Revelation 22:20, II Peter 3:10-15). He declares that he is the “root and the offspring of David.” which points to his being the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-2). He is also declaring that he is the Ruler that sits upon the Throne of David (Acts 2:29-36, Luke 1:31-35, Psalms 89:35-37). He rules from heaven over all authorities, principalities, powers, and dominions (I Peter 3:22, Hebrews 1:8-9). He declares that he is the “Bright and Morning Star” which points that he is the “light of the world” (John 8:12), just as the sun lights the world in the morning. He is saying that just as the sun dispels darkness and brings new life and vitality to a world crouching in darkness during the night, so also is he come to bring us life “more abundantly” (John 10:10). Also in prophecy Christ is referred. to as the “Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre (that) shall rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17, Zechariah 6:12-15). He is affirming the fact that he has all AUTHORITY both in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18) and that those who follow not after him shall walk in the control of the Devil blinded by sin and its pleasures (II Corinthians 4:4, II Timothy 3:1-5).

The Holy Spirit, who has been the guidance of the Apostles and New Testament prophets as they wrote the Word of God (II Peter 1:20-21, John 16:13), constantly implores men to come to God (Matthew 11:28-30, II Corinthians 6:2, Acts 24:25) and NOW. Procrastination will steal your soul the Holy Spirit cries (Hebrews 3:7-12). Also it is the responsibility of the Lord's church (Bride) to say, "Come" (Isaiah 2:2-4, Luke 14:23-24). Every Christian according to his own ability should be a soul winner for Christ and a "Living Invitation" to obey God and receive his blessings (Matthew 5:13-16). The purpose of the Lord's church is to be the "pillar and ground of the truth" that will save the souls of all men (I Timothy 3:15, James 1:21-25, I Timothy 2:3-4). Indeed, everyone that "heareth the words of the prophecy of this book" that is keeping these words (Revelation 1:3-4) should be and must be inviting others to come obey Jesus Christ and bathe in his soul-cleansing blood. (Romans 5:8-10, Romans 3:23-26). Indeed the Holy Spirit has challenged all men to come out of sin (Romans 3:10-12) and come to the Lord through faithful obedience (Acts 22:16, Acts 2:38, Revelation 2:10). Those that "hunger and thirst" after righteousness will seek to win others to Christ by invitation and teaching (Matthew 5:6, Proverbs 11:30). Jesus will give you of his waters of life eternal (John 4:14). God is leaving this great decision up to each man, respecting their autonomy (Revelation 3:20-21). It is our prayer that each will choose to open his heart to God, hear his voice, obey his commands, and be saved from sin (Mark 16:15-16, II Peter 1:5-11). The cost of discipleship is very high (Luke 14:26-29), but if we will strive for the mark of the high calling of God (Philippians 3:13-16), God will freely, through his grace, pour out to us his every blessing (Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:7-8).

- (V. 18-19) Divine penalty for "tampering" with Inspiration is very stiff indeed (Galatians 1:6-9). Those who pervert God's word are trouble-makers. They make trouble for themselves and others (Matthew 15:8-9) and they are in serious trouble with God. (accursed and devoted to destruction)! God's word is pure and infallible (Psalms 19:7-10, II Timothy 3:16-17) and to pervert it by adding to it and/or taking from it is but to mutilate and mar its perfection. When man adds to God's Word he inserts his opinions that are uninspired and holds them in higher esteem than God's wholesome thinking (Proverbs 30:6). Man proves himself the liar and suffers the consequences (Revelation 22:15, Revelation 21:8). God's word contains everything pertaining to life and godliness, and if man removes one jot or tittle, without God's permission he revokes as unimportant and unnecessary that which he removes (II Peter 1:3-4, Deuteronomy 4:2). For men to add to God's word is to "speak" where God is silent! Who is able to counsel God (Romans 11:33-34) as if God forgot some things in the Gospel of Christ that we need to and must know to be saved? Perfection becomes God's word and it is irrefutable and absolutely correct, any effort on your part or mine to change or modify this Book of God's Love and Severity (Romans 11:22) is to deface and scar the words of "eternal life" (John 6:68). Many have handled the word of God deceitfully, however, (II Corinthians 4:2) to their

own shame and destruction. God's word will make those who read and obey it "perfect" in God's divine eye-sight (Colossians 1:23-28, Hebrews 4:13).

Many alone have tampered with the meaning and message of this book (Revelation) and, thereby, have mutilated and defaced its beauty and powerful prophecies. Some use it to teach "Premillennialism" while others say that all these things have been fulfilled already. In so doing the true meaning and message of this book goes unlearned and men teach perverted lies instead of the Truth (II Thessalonians 2:9-12). While no man on earth knows and understands this Book absolutely perfectly, the deep, rich message of Christ is clear to discern by diligent study (II Timothy 2:15, Psalms 1:1-2). Let us close this discussion with this passage, Psalms 119:128, that declares that everything that God has to say about everything is perfectly right and stands in opposition to every false way that the righteous should hate (Psalms 119:104). Let no man think himself wiser than God and, thereby, prove his own folly (Romans 1:18-25). Therefore, we conclude by saying, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). Stick to preaching and teaching and living God's word as it is written and God will stick to you (I Corinthians 4:6, II John 9-11).

(V. 20-21) Jesus Christ is saying that "I certify these things to be True just as sure as I am God" (Alpha and Omega). He is saying that he controls the destiny of all men and nations (Revelation 1:5-7, Psalms 2:9-12). He is saying that **neither** any man, nation, or enemy keeps him from bringing judgment upon Rome and any and all others for their wicked and sinful conduct toward God and the Saints of God (II Thessalonians 1:3-9). He will surely come again (Hebrews 9:28, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, Acts 1:9-11) to reward the righteous (Matthew 25:19-23) with that Kingdom prepared for them before the foundations of the world (Matthew 25:34). But he is also coming to reward the evil and mete out recompense such as they deserve (Romans 1:28-32, Romans 2:1-11). He is coming suddenly and unexpectedly to those who are not doing and working enough in the Lord's house (Matthew 25:1-10). The world will be surprised that Christ has come for certain according to Matthew 24:36-51. The whole world will be encased in Evil and seeking to destroy the Saints of God when suddenly fire comes down from heaven and destroys them all (Revelation 20:7-10, 11-15, II Thessalonians 1:3-9, II Peter 3:10-15). The cry of the Holy Spirit through John should be our cry also as we yearn to set our eyes upon the Lord (Revelation 1:7). "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" declares John. Like John we should yearn and long to be clothed with that home from on high (II Corinthians 5:1-10). Paul was anxious to go beyond the veil of flesh and blood and behold and enjoy being in Paradise (II Corinthians 12:7-12, Philippians 1:20-23) and later be ushered by God's angelic escort into God's glorious eternal habitation and live forever (Hebrews 1:14, Revelation 22:14). As John closes this marvelous discourse of God's mind which has been revealed to

him, he prays that the loving grace of God which comes through Christ Jesus abide upon them. It is only fitting that God declares in his last statement to man that it is the grace of God that provides Salvation for man (Ephesians 2:4-10, Titus 2:11-14, I Timothy 1:11-16).

He is telling all who read this book that God's grace is indeed "Amazing" and that all who will remain true to Christ and obey his divine commands shall continue to enjoy God's greatest blessings and loving favor (I John 1:7-10). Surely God's grace would reign over them through righteousness (Romans 5:19-21, Romans 6:1-12). Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound should be the nucleus of every thought that we think as a Christian (II Corinthians 10:3-5). Such should be our desire to constantly abide in God's love and favor by continually obeying his Son Jesus Christ (Hebrews 5:8-10).

Synopsis of Chapters 12-22

Introduction

In the last half of this book we have been privileged to see the spiritual conflict that takes place in the “heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12, Ephesians 1:20-23). Chapter 12 describes the spiritual war as being between Christ and the Devil, and the Lord’s church and Satan’s allies. We also see how Satan enlisted the help of the mightiest nation upon the earth to help him seek to destroy the church of Christ (Chapters 13-20). We are privileged to behold the glorious church of Christ come through this great conflict VICTORIOUS through the leadership and salvation of the Lamb of God (Revelation 14:1-5), who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:11-16). Satan can hurt their physical bodies (Matthew 10:28) but he is not able to cut the faith and conviction they have in Christ out of their hearts (Revelation 12:11, Revelation 14:12-13). In the end the Beast, the False Prophet, Satan himself, and all of his subjects are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 14:10-11, Revelation 19-20). The righteous are seen rejoicing and praising God for all eternity for their redemption through Christ Jesus (Revelation 19:1-9, Revelation 21:1-5). Thus none is able to stand against the wrath of God (Revelation 6:16-17), except those who follow the Lamb faithfully (Revelation 2:10, Revelation 5:8-10).

Chapter 12

Here we are spell-bound to behold the glorious nation of Israel (Isaiah 46:13) giving birth to the Christ child (Matthew 1:18-23, Isaiah 9:6, Galatians 4:4). Satan seeks to devour the Lord Jesus Christ all through his life (Matthew 2:13, Matthew 4:1-10, Matthew 16:21-24) but fails to cause Christ to sin by yielding to temptation (Romans 6:16-18, James 1:13-15). Christ “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity” (Hebrews 1:8-9) and never transgressed the Law of God (I John 3:4, Hebrews 4:15). Hence after his resurrection from the Dead (Romans 1:4) he was caught up into heaven to the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-3, Acts 1:9-11). There he was crowned Prophet, Priest, and King (Daniel 7:13-14, Acts 3:22-26) and began his reign over the nations of the world (Revelation 1:5-7, Psalms 2:9-12) and as “head of the ... church” (Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 4:15). When Satan tasted defeat at the hands of Christ Jesus (Hebrews 2:14-15, I John 3:8) he sought to make war on the Woman (Spiritual Israel = church) and her seed (Romans 2: 28-29, Galatians 3:26-29). Spiritual war took place in “spiritual realms” and Satan was found inferior (Revelation 12:7-9) and he and his angels were cast down. All this took place through Christ establishing his church and providing forgiveness of sins through his blood to all who would obey the “gospel of Christ” (Revelation 12:10-13, Romans 1:16-17, Acts 2:38). Many Christians were called upon to give their lives for the Lord Jesus and were martyred for their faith (Revelation 2:13, Acts 12:1-2, Revelation 6:9-11). But God protected the church by preparing her a place of refuge (Romans 8:35-39) in the wilderness of “sorrow and sin” (world). God nourishes and provides care and keeping for the church through his word (Acts 20:32, Matthew 4:4, Matthew 5:6). He gives them through his Son the strength to overcome every temptation also (I Corinthians 10:12-13, Philippians 4:13). Satan seeks to deceive the Christian through his counterfeit gospels (I Timothy 4:1-4) but the world helps the woman (church) by swallowing the

lies and deceit of the Devil (Revelation 12:9, John 8:44, Ephesians 2:1-3). Through his earthly allies Satan seeks to undermine and destroy the faith and conviction of Christians and to shake God's unmovable and unshakable Kingdom (Hebrews 12:28, Matthew 16:18-19). But those who love the Lord Jesus Christ continue in faithful obedience to his Testimony.

Chapter 13

John beholds a great prophetic beast (Daniel 7:1-11) that Satan uses to do his "dirty work" of persecuting and killing the saints of God. This Beast is representative of the world and all things therein (I John 2:15-17, I Corinthians 10:32) and at this time was epitomized by the Roman Empire and her evil and sinful rulers (Emperors) according to Revelation 17:18. Just as Babylon once ruled and controlled the world during the time that Israel and Judah were brought into captivity so also Rome was the Conqueror of the nations of the earth and they sought to persecute Christians and stamp out God's Kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14). This beast is seen as fearsome and powerful which befits the description of Rome and her military might and evil scourge. To this evil nation Satan gave his power of deception (II Thessalonians 2:9-12) and they were deceived by the Devil into living after the flesh and the lusts of worldly desires (Ephesians 4:17-24) while the Christian sought to imitate God. This beast (Roman Empire) and her rulers spoke blasphemous words against God (Daniel 7:8,25, II Thessalonians 2:1-12). Many rulers even commanded their subjects to address them as Deity and worship them as God and led them into idolatry just as King Nebuchadnezzar of old Babylon (Daniel 3:1-6). Two of the more notorious Emperors of Rome who murdered Christians and persecuted them severely were Nero and Domitian (Revelation 13:3-7, Revelation 11:7, Revelation 17:8-11). This Beast from the sea (Roman Empire) also has another ally of Satan join forces with him in the War against Christ and his church (Revelation 13:11-18). This beast is of Satan but seeks to persuade men that he is of God for he had two horns like a "Lamb" but his speech was that of Satan (Revelation 12:3,9). This beast is probably false religion in general and specifically at this time was personified in Emperor worship (Revelation 13:15-18). This committee of Soldiers and dignitaries of the Emperor was called the *concilia* and was headquartered in Pergamum (Pergamos) according to inspiration (Revelation 2:12-13). They did kill and persecute and discriminate against all those who would not bow down and worship Caesar as God or burn incense on an altar to him as Deity. This evil Emperor who was chiefly responsible for this wholesale slaughter of Saints was Domitian who ruled Rome from about 81AD – 96AD. The Beast whose Number was 666 probably represented Domitian and his evil rule and deadly persecution of the Lord's church.

Chapter 14

God pictures the faithful and obedient Christians who have been sealed (Revelation 7:1-8) as standing on Mount Zion with their victorious Saviour (Titus 2:13-14, I Timothy 6:15-16). This melodious praise of the Lamb is given because he has redeemed them from sin through his blood (I Peter 1:18-20, Ephesians 1:3-7). This is a great throng of the faithful (144,000) who do not defile themselves with false religion nor do they adulterate themselves with the world (James 4:4). They are pictured sharing in the victory of Christ and through their godly living and

faithfully giving themselves to God to the point of death, they share in the righteous judgment God pours out upon the ungodly (Revelation 14:8-11). The wicked are seen having God's full wrath and anger openly poured out upon them in its purest and unpolluted strength (Revelation 21:8). God does declare that the righteous who die in the Lord shall rest from their labors while there is no rest for the wicked for they shall be really tormented day and night forever. This picture of God's judgment should strike terror into the hearts of all disobedient people upon the earth (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Next is the scene of harvest and reaping of Christ the Kingdom that his Father has planted (Matthew 13:31-32) which is the church. The wicked are cast into the winepress of God's wrath and squashed like grapes (Revelation 14:14-20).

Chapter 15

John is now beholding through the Spirit (Revelation 4:2) God's angels preparing to pour out God's wrath upon the wicked world and at this time did find its meaning in the evil nation of Roman Empire and all controlled by it. But before the angels of God's wrath (Matthew 3:37-43) begin to pour out their vials of wrath (judgments), John sees the faithful and righteous having been sealed by God standing on the glassy sea having overcome their individual battles with Satan and his tribulations by their faith in Christ (James 1:2-4, I Peter 1:3-9). These redeemed Saints are attributing Victory to God by their worship and praise through Song. They declare his greatness by virtue of his power over his enemies. His ways are Truth and his works are Marvellous (Revelation 15:3). Through his judgments God would humble the nations that would fight against his Son and the church (I Peter 3:22). John is now about to see that God is angry in heaven over the state of the world under Rome's domination (Revelation 11:18). He is going to punish the stout-hearted nation for seeking to destroy God's purchased possession (Acts 20:28). As the angels proceed from God's throne of power (Revelation 15:6) John sees heaven as filled with smoke and God's anger is at the "boiling point" and woe be to the inhabitants of the wicked world of Rome (Revelation 8:13, Revelation 9:12). There was not to be appeasement of God's wrath from heaven until his judgments had been carried out upon the wicked nation of Rome for they had killed and shed the blood of God's precious Saints for which they must answer (Revelation 6:9-11).

Chapter 16

Gods angels of Vengeance are given charge from God to "go ... pour out the vials of the wrath" upon the wicked which inhabit the earth. The first angel obeys and as he pours out his vial of Wrath the people who worship the beast and his Image have a grievous sore (cancer-like) that falls upon them, such as God smiting the nations of Old Testament with "emerods" (I Samuel 5:5-6). Probably this represents the terrors and horrors of a sin sick society (Revelation 18:2). The second angel pours out his Vial of God's wrath and the sea became as blood and every living soul therein died! This judgment reaps complete destruction and is not partial. The third angels pours out his Vial of God's anger and the inland country and rivers are polluted as happened to the Nile River back in Egypt (Exodus 7:19-20). This judgment was severe because God was allowing them (wicked) to drown in the taste of their own blood even as they had

become drunk on the blood of the saints by killing them (Revelation 16:4-7). The fourth angel pours out his Wrath upon the sun and darkness resulted as men were scorched with fire (verses 8-9). Probably this was sin and wickedness and hardships that resulted on the average citizen of Rome because of their evil leaders and rulers. Men repented not to God of their evil doings and, therefore, blasphemed God for their troubles. The fifth angel poured out his Vial of wrath upon the throne of the Beast. This resulted in great darkness (Colossians 1:13) that was so severe that it was as if the darkness could be felt and men gnawed their tongues for pain and because of the grievous sores upon them because of their sins (verses 10-11), but still they repented not (Revelation 9:20-21). The sixth angel pours out his vial of wrath upon the Great River of Euphrates which was the direction of the invaders of Babylon and Assyria back in the Old Testament. This was just God giving way for Rome to destroy itself with the rampant wickedness within the Empire itself (Proverbs 5:22). They had become holden and captured by their own sins. The spiritual battle of Armageddon is seen raging in its fullness as Satan summons his forces together from the four corners of the earth (Revelation 20:8-9) . He has these three unclean spirits like frogs working for him and with them he deceives the nations and fights against God. They probably represent False Doctrine (Matthew 15:8-9, I Timothy 4:1-3), Immorality (I John 2:15-17), and Materialism (Matthew 6:19-20). For with these three spirits of damnable demons Satan deceives the mass of mankind (II Corinthians 11:3, II Corinthians 11:13-15, I Timothy 6:9-10). God always won Victories over his enemies in the Valley of Esdraelon or Har-Magedon. This valley of Megiddo was well known to the people of John's day. The seventh angel pours out his Vial into the air and the world succumbs to the judgments of God (Revelation 16:19) and at this time Rome was the very epitome of the world with its evil demons of seductions that we have just mentioned above. No man could stand under the weight of the righteous judgment of God (John 12:48-49, II Corinthians 5:10-11).

Chapter 17

God pictures to John the judgment of the "great harlot" (the evil seductive world) so fitly represented and embodied in the Roman Empire. The whole earth has been corrupted by her idolatry and lasciviousness as she has through commerce, trade, and influence infected the whole world with the disease of sin and tyranny against God (I Corinthians 15:33). The woman of seductive beauty that John sees surely in this period of time represented Rome deriving her power and glory from the Empire that she controlled and ruled over (Revelation 17:18). She is called the Mother of Harlots as she gave birth to the sensuous wisdom and deception that Satan had planted in her bosom through sin and temptation (James 1:13-15). The Harlot was "drunk" (intoxicated) with the blood of Saints which surely so fitly points to the atrocious crimes that Rome perpetrated against Christians. John has revealed the "mystery" (verse 7) of the woman and the Beast who make war on the saints. This chapter surely shows that God is symbolically describing the Nation of Rome and the city of Rome as the headquarters from which evil crimes and persecution emanated. Domitian was a "type" of Nero in that he persecuted and killed the Saints of God but to a more severe degree and over a wider geographical area than did Nero. He is probably the Beast from the abyss (Revelation 11:7) that was to make war with the Saints and overcome them (kill them). But he was destined through his evil ways to be destroyed by his

own evil and through the Judgments of God. His persecution and slaughter of Christians reached over into Asia minor. For awhile the smaller nations under Rome's control cooperated with Rome in persecution of the Saints but later they rise up in rebellion to Rome and her control. They ultimately participate in the judgments that bring Rome toppling from her perch of power (verses 12-16). This evil city of John's day is identified in verse 18 as the Harlot of Rome, the most powerful and prominent city in the world at that day.

Chapter 18

God shows John the fall of Rome in descriptive detail in this great Chapter of judgment. Rome has become so wicked and corrupt that it is said to be the "hold of every unclean and hateful bird." This is another way of saying that sin and ungodliness was so prevalent there that this was "Robber's Roost" (cf. Revelation 9:20-21). Every nation on earth had been influenced by Rome financially and spiritually and had been polluted by their association with this Harlot. God was going to repay her "double" for her iniquities and untold damage that she had fostered in the world she controlled. Every sinner is a "two-time loser." He reaps the unhappiness of sin's consequences while here on earth and the indescribable agony and torment of hell for all eternity as well. This wicked nation had reveled in the beauty of her own glory and in pride had lifted up herself against God (Isaiah 14:12-15) and, therefore, had tasted defeat from the Lamb of God. Her Judgments had come suddenly and unexpectedly when Rome was at the zenith of the power she exercised. God can bring any nation to abasement even at the height of its dominion (Daniel 4:32-37). The nations that traded and had waxed fat with riches were bewailing the loss of their spiritual Harlot of Evil for they would have to look elsewhere for another market to peddle their goods. Rome had dealt in every kind of commerce from precious stones to costly garments of silk, etc. She had actually even reached to the state of degradation that they bartered with the souls of men (slave trade) with no remorse or regret for their ill treatment. She had no respect for the dignity of man being created in the "image of God" (Genesis 1:26-28). Rome had lusted after, as had the whole world, the perishable goods of life to her own destruction (John 6:27). The great City which was the Capital and pivotal point of the Empire and the whole known world had collapsed by evil and had received God's severe Judgments in total! John sees the angel drop a great millstone into the depths of the Euphrates (sea) as the prophet of old also witnessed (Jeremiah 51:61-64) which depicted the fall of Babylon into the sea of society. The usual festivities, noise, and excitement that accompanied the inhabitants of the "City of Sin" was heard no more. She has fallen by the mighty hand of God's judgments upon her!

Chapter 19

John now sees and hears heaven rejoicing and praising God for the great Triumph that he has gained over Satan and his Allies. The prayers of the Saints have been heard and answered (Revelation 6:9-11, Revelation 8:3-5). Rome had been destroyed forever never to rise again. Her power had failed her in the hour of conflict with the King of Kings (Revelation 19:11-16). John sees the church glorified with Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27) as she has remained faithful to Christ and has prepared herself for the heavenly journey to the City of God's eternal Love and Light.

John is privileged to see in Vision the conquering Christ and his armies riding forth to complete and total Victory over their adversaries. Christ uses his “sceptre of righteousness” (Psalms 45:1-7, Romans 1:16-17) as the means by which he rules the nations with power and authority and destroys his enemies as grapes squashed and drained of juice within in the winepress. The Everlasting Word (John 1:1-2) has now realized the Victory over Rome and also all who have followed the Lamb. God calls to the vultures or birds to come gorge themselves upon the remains of the slain upon the field of battle (Ezekiel 39:17-20). Actually when all is said and done those who “bite and devour one another” with sin, will end up being devoured (Galatians 5:15). The beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire.

Chapter 20

John now sees a spiritual overview of the Conflict between the Lord and Satan as Christ, through the vicarious death that he died for all men, becomes the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men (I John 2:1-2). He came down from God out of heaven (Philippians 2:5-9) that he might bind Satan (I John 3:8, Matthew 12:24-29, Luke 10:17-20). When he arose from the dead he had conquered Satan and he had the “keys of death and Hades” (Revelation 1:17-18). Christ laid hold on the Dragon so to speak and shut him up into captivity so that his power to deceive the world was limited (I Timothy 4:1-3). But through the gospel of Christ every man can resist the Devil (James 4:7-8) and draw nigh to God (John 6:44-45). Those Christians who had been martyred for the cause of Christ are now resurrected to Paradise where they sit on thrones and the Devil can no longer reach them with temptation (on such the second death hath no power). These Saints that lived for Christ are now experiencing the true joys and benefits of those who “die in the Lord” (Revelation 14:13). As long as these Christians would render faithful obedience to the gospel Satan would not have any “little season” in their life. But when they “defected” from Christ then they became servants of Satan (Romans 6:16-18, II Peter 2:20-22). Before people obey the gospel of Christ after reaching accountability before God, Satan has his “little season” of sinful pleasure in their lives (Hebrews 11:24-26). If they never obey the gospel they allow Satan to have his “little season” in their life to the point of death. After death the pleasure ceases and torment begins! Satan has many more followers than does Christ (Matthew 7:13-14) because most will not deny themselves and follow the leadership of Christ (Luke 9:23, I Peter 2:9-12). Hence all of his followers all over the world which represent Gog and Magog (verses 7-10) make war with the Saints and seek every means and measure to cause them to fall from their own steadfastness (II Peter 3:17). But just as the situation looks and seems obscure as far as Victory for the saints is concerned, God intervenes with his Son from heaven and the wicked are punished (II Thessalonians 1:7-9) and the righteous are escorted into heaven (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). The “white throne” of Judgment symbolizes the Final Day of time upon this earth as we all stand before God in judgment and all will declare to the glory of God the Father that Christ is Lord (Romans 14:10-12). Death and Hades will have no need for existence after the Judgment neither will there be a society of man-kind anymore. For the wicked will be cast into Hell-Fire (Revelation 21:8). All men will be judged righteously by the law under which they lived and were responsible to God thereby (II Corinthians 5:10-11). The Devil himself is cast into hell along with his followers (Matthew 25:41).

Chapter 21

John now beholds the glorious church at home with their God as he has abundantly blessed them with grace unto their salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10). This new heaven and earth symbolize the Spiritual government of Deity in heaven after judgment (I Corinthians 15:24-28). The church is seen having intimate eye and ear contact with Jehovah God as he himself reveals his Face to them for the first time in all history of mankind (Revelation 22:4, John 1:18) God shows John that there will be no more problems and tribulations such as they experienced upon the earth. No more pain or sorrow or sickness or dying. But all things shall become new forever!

In sharp contrast to the comfort and blessings of heaven John is told that the wicked who inhabit the lake of fire are tormented. They are classified into eight general groups of people. Those who are “fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars.” These shall not escape the damnation of God’s eternal vengeance (Romans 2:1-9). John also sees the majestic beauty of God’s holy city (heaven) as she opens up her arms and welcomes the righteous of all ages. God himself is their God and his glory lights the grand city of eternal love. This great city had twelve foundations (strength and security) with high walls of jasper. Each foundation was a precious stone and pointed to the glorious beauty of the Christian and the blessings that await him as a gift from God. The foundations of the city were garnished with every manner of precious stones which symbolize the purity and holiness of God and his Saints. The city was spacious enough to accommodate the righteous of all ages. There were twelve gates to the city and each was a pearl which merely means that the way to heaven is abundant through abounding obedience to the Lord and his Truth (John 14:6, Revelation 22:14). All nations of people who had followed the leadership of God throughout the ages were found there. This was a city of righteousness (II Peter 3:13) and no abomination or sin shall be found there (verse 27). Perfect eternal security from the Devil and his angels is enjoyed there for the gates to the city are never closed and thieves cannot break through nor steal (Matthew 6:19-20, Colossians 3:1-2). God himself is the Temple there and the glorious light of God’s presence brightens forever more unto the perfect day of eternity this glorious home of the soul of the redeemed of God (Revelation 14:1-5).

Chapter 22

John now pictures in vision the Throne of God and the river of Life which flows from out of the Throne. This simply means that God’s life-giving Words (John 6:68, Matthew 4:4) come from God himself and are the truest and purest Words men will ever hear (Psalms 19:7-10, Psalms 12:6-7). John sees that the righteous are made whole by God’s words of Life and truth that are found abundantly on the tree of life which is now in heaven. Man was separated from the tree of life in Eden through Sin, but now God has allowed men to be saved by grace through faith and they are reunited with God’s Truthful fruit of everlasting life. The Saints in heaven shall be privileged to see and behold God’s face, which implies intimate association with God and the right to come near to his Throne as the sea around it has disappeared for the righteous. John is told by the angel that these visions are faithful and true and certified by the Faithful and True witness of God Jesus Christ the Lord (Revelation 1:5-7). God’s judgments upon Rome were imminent and “at hand” (Revelation 1:1-4). He declares to John that these judgments will come unexpected upon the wicked world of Rome. Each Christian needed to be busy working and being faithful in preparation for these judgments that come upon the face of the earth. John is forbidden to worship the angel that brings him these great visions of truth and prophecy as God

only is to be worshipped and served (Revelation 4:8-11). John is told not to seal up the words of the Book of prophecy which he has written and has been revealed to him. These people of John's day needed to know and understand the coming judgments of God upon sinful Rome.

God said to John that the time for judgments had arrived and that the "evildoer" that persists in evil shall be punished and the righteous shall be rewarded with great and eternal blessings from the God that reveals himself as the God of eternity who purposed the scheme of redemption for Man through Christ and would bring this purpose to its lawful conclusion when Christ comes again to Judge the world according to each man and his deeds (I Peter 1:17). God pronounces spiritual tribute to those who "keep the sayings of this book" (Revelation 1:3, Revelation 2:7). But God also states that keeping his commandments was equal to doing his commands (verse 14). For only those who give great diligence to obedience will have right to the tree of life which is in the midst of God's Garden of Grace. Again he points out the purity of heaven when he states that "dogs" (people who live and act like beasts), sorcerers, fornicators, and liars shall not be found in heaven but their eternal abode will be to be tormented by the Devil in Hell (Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:10-15). Jesus Christ did assert his authority once more as being the Author of these visions and testimony (Galatians 1:10-12) and the heir to the throne of David that God has raised from the dead to rule over the universe (Acts 2:29-36, Psalms 89:35-37). John now sees that it is the responsibility of the church to tell the world of God's saving grace through Christ (I Timothy 3:15). God's great invitation for salvation is free to all who will drink of the waters of life (John 4:14). Jesus Christ warns against perversion of his PURE and Truthful word by adding to or taking from anything therein (Galatians 1:6-9, Deuteronomy 4:2, Proverbs 30:6). By tampering with God's word man would only wrest and twist it to his own destruction (II Peter 3:15-16). Christ now testifies of assurance that he will come again "quickly" or suddenly. This reference to his coming is surely witnessing the fact of His second coming (Hebrews 9: 28) to call all men from their tombs (John 5:28-29) and to judge the world in "righteousness" (Acts 17:30-31). The faithful can truly with great anxiety look forward to the day of their redemption (I Corinthians 15:24). To John's word we add "Amen come quickly Lord Jesus." The second coming of Christ is the next great event of God's eternal calendar. Life is so short and the advent of Christ so certain and sure that it is also to be thought of as IMMINENT. Let us live each day as if it were our last day before the judgment of Christ (Galatians 2:20). Surely through Jesus Christ God has given to us grace all-sufficient. What need we more than Christ (Hebrews 13:5-6, Philippians 4:13).

CONCLUSION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Introduction

Any time God's people are having their faith tried and tested (I Peter 1:3-9, Matthew 5:10-12) they need to hold closer to God and his own faithful Word (Revelation 3:3-5, Hebrews 13:5-6) for encouragement. This noble apocalypse was written to encourage the saints of John's day (Revelation 2:10, Revelation 22:14) to be faithful under every and all adversity. Since their Savior was the "ruler of the Kings of the Earth" (Revelation 1:5-7, Psalms 2:5-12), Caesar and Rome could only do what Christ "allowed" Satan to do and accomplish using them as his allies in his war against the Saints (Revelation 12-13). This book was written to inform these great persistent Saints that their Deliverer was faithful (I Corinthians 10:12-13) and that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords would triumph (Revelation 19:11-15, I Timothy 6:15-16). Caesar would be able only to destroy their fleshly tabernacle (Matthew 10:28) but he was not able through persecution and slaughter to make a dent in their faith (I John 5:4). In like manner today this great book of Hope can instill in us the confidence and boldness to "allow Christ to "be magnified in (our) body, whether by life, or by death" (Philippians 1:20-21). This book has a three-way application if it is understood correctly. Let us consider God's marvelous wisdom (Ephesians 3:10-11, Matthew 16:18-19) as it is unfolded and revealed to us in this inspired treatise.

Spiritual Conflict

The war that takes place in the "heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12) is a spiritual conflict between God and Satan (I John 3:8). This great spiritual War is further described in this book (Revelation 12:7-11) as being between Michael and his angels (I Thessalonians 4:13-18) and the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). The Devil and his troops lost to the Christ and the Lord conquered the Devil (Revelation 20:1-7, Matthew 12:24-29) and did bind him through the gospel chain of righteousness (Romans 1:16-17). When Christ arose from the dead (Romans 1:4) having defeated Satan (Hebrews 2:14-15), he had the "keys of death and Hades" and was now preeminent in all things (Revelation 1:17-18, Colossians 1:18). Satan was cast down from his deceptive perch of power (Revelation 12:9) when Christ shed his precious and atoning blood for the redemption of men (Titus 2:11-14, I Peter 1:18-20). When the day of Pentecost arrived (Acts 2:1-5) for the first time ever men could be completely forgiven of their SINS (Luke 24:44-49, Acts 2: 38). Christ was crowned God's Anointed Victorious King after he arose from the dead (Acts 2:29-36) and began his reign over the worldly Kingdoms of men and over the church on Pentecost (Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 1:20-23). Christ did redeem through his blood (Colossians 1:13-14) all those whom God translated into his Kingdom which included the obedient and faithful who lived from the beginning of time unto Pentecost which the Word of God refers to as "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:22-24, Galatians 4:4). Since the day of Pentecost all who have and ever do obey the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:38, Romans 10:9-10) have a "living hope" of heaven (I Peter 1:3-4) provided that they are cautious and careful enough to maintain good works (Titus 3:8) that God authorizes within his Word (II Timothy 3:16-17, Colossians 3:17) and repent and confess their faults to God regularly (I John 1:7-10). God gives each Christian his daily allowance through his Word and Prayer and other blessings, the way of escape from every temptation. Only the faithful Christian enjoys this great promise (I John 3:22).

Satan seeks to entice men to commit sin through his various devices of deception (II Corinthians 2:11). He seeks to cause men through temptation to lift up themselves in pride against God and his word (I Timothy 3:6, Isaiah 12:14-16). He seeks to get men to “lay...up...treasures upon the earth” (Matthew 6:19-21) and in the end die “spiritually poor” and lose their soul (Matthew 16:24-26). He also seeks to cause men through enticements to “satisfy their fleshly appetites” in an unlawful manner (Ephesians 2:1-3, Galatians 5:19-21). But God through the gospel informs men that he knew in advance Satan’s battle plan (I John 2:15-17) and warns us against following after Satan (John 8:44). He makes plain in his inspired Word where the Devil and his angels are going to end up (Matthew 25:41) and all those who pattern their lives after the adversary of God and man (Revelation 21:8). But even though Satan causes many saints to be martyred (Revelation 6:9-11, Acts 12:1-2, Revelation 2:13), these saints will end up in victory (Revelation 20:4-6). This war has raged continually and ferociously since Pentecost and in our “present evil world” we are not immune (Galatians 1:3-4). Satan has introduced to men his “doctrines of demons” (I Timothy 4:1-3) and his perversions of the beloved “gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6-9) and has thereby deceived most of the population of today (Matthew 7:13-14). Man-made denominations have sprung up in this land just as “image-worship” sprung up in the Roman Empire (Revelation 13:15-18, Matthew 15:8-9, 13). Even though Satan is not using physical persecution as he did in the first century church to seek to shake the Kingdom of God (Hebrews 12:28, Acts 8:1-3, Revelation 2:10, Romans 8:35-39) he is still seeking to cause Christians to betray the Lord (Luke 22:22, Hebrews 6:4-6, II Peter 2:20-22). Satan as leader in the forces of Evil (Revelation 20:8-10) is seeking to destroy God’s people today in the spiritual battle of “Har-Magedon” (Revelation 16:13-16). But just like in any “war” the victor may lose a few battles (Romans 3:23), God and the faithful will win the War (Revelation 20:8-15). Christ made many claims of his Deity which were tried and tested (Revelation 1:4, John 2:19, Matthew 28:18-20) and he was found to be God’s “faithful and true Witness” (Revelation 3:14). Christ stated that his church would stand against the “gates of Hades” also (Matthew 16:18-19). This claim was tested and proven to be true when Christ arose from the dead (I Corinthians 1:12-22), and when faithful Saints were willing to die for the Lord and his Testimony (Revelation 12:11). Satan was not able to destroy God’s church through physical persecution or deception (Romans 8:1-2, 35-39). Rome has perished and fallen (Revelation 17:1-5, 18) but the Kingdom of God still stands and is continuing to grow (Matthew 13:31-32). This great Book was penned by God through John to let these first century Christians know and understand that the War between themselves and Satan would be won by the Lord and his saints. The omnipotent power of Christ and his Word and church is revealed throughout the pages of this book and the restraining and destroying authority of Christ over the nations of the world for the benefit of his saints. “What need I fear, when thou art near, and thinkest Lord of me” as the words of this song so fitly express (Psalms 23, Hebrews 13:5-6).

The great Harlot “Babylon the great” is surely representative of the entirety of the “evil world” of lust and sin and pride (I John 2:15-17). Paul is cognizant of the use of the comprehensive “evil world” (Galatians 1:3-4).

In John’s Day the Great Beast was Rome as contrasted to Babylon that once ruled the world (Revelation 17:18). And the Harlot which rode upon the Beast was Rome, the capital city where Emperors lived and ruled (Revelation 17:1-6).

First Century Application

This book had great meaning and significance to the people of John's day and the early Christians of the first century for they were being martyred and persecuted for the cause of Christ (I Peter 4:14-16). The great "red dragon" of Chapter 12 (verses 3, 9) had solicited the help of the Roman hierarchy in an effort to completely destroy the cause of the Lord and stamp out Christians from upon the earth (Daniel 7:7-28). The beast with "seven heads and ten horns" of Chapter 13 (verses 1-7) is symbolic of the ferocious warring Roman Empire. From within the Empire arose false religion of every kind and sort, and in the first century Emperor worship was very prominent (Revelation 13:15-18). This is again vocally called by God the "false prophet" (Revelation 19:20-21). Roman Emperors seeking glory and fame literally commanded the occupants of Roman dominion to pay homage and adoration to them as deity or God (Isaiah 14:12-16, Daniel 3:1-6) just as the Kings of Babylon did in the long ago. Those Christians who did refuse to worship the Emperor as God were killed or persecuted and discriminated against. But those who remained faithful even to the "point of death" (Revelation 2:10) were resurrected to Paradise at the point of martyrdom or death (Revelation 20:4-6). The Devil was able to use human governments in his fight against Christ and the glorious church that belongs to him (Revelation 13:1-6, Revelation 17:14-17). But the most powerful army and nation in the world could not destroy the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13-14, Hebrews 12:28, Exodus 15:1-19). Just as God freed his people from Egyptian bondage and broke the power of Pharaoh the mightiest monarch on the earth at that time, so also God's power brought about the downfall of Roman persecution (Revelation 18:21-24). God used many judgments to destroy Rome and weaken this great nation of influence and power world-wide. He used judgments which nature furnished as God through his "arm of vengeance" sought to bring sinful men to repentance and at the same time allow his church to be tried and tested. The 8th and 9th chapters of Revelation manifest these great Judgments of God. But sinful and wicked men ignored God's "trumpets of warning" to their own downfall. Sin speedily crept across the Roman Empire as a scourge of "unmerciful locusts" as Satan sought to bind the world and make them holden with the chords of their own sins (Proverbs 5:22, Revelation 9:1-21). God sealed his people (Revelation 7:1-8, Revelation 14:1-5) against the Judgments that he brought upon the wicked Roman world (Chapter 16). Today Rome is long gone but God's Kingdom which is the church of Christ is ever growing and prospering (Matthew 16:18-19, Matthew 13:31-32). Jesus Christ did in-deed come quickly and unexpectedly in judgments upon Rome through his many and effective means of judging a nation and Rome was no match for the Christ.

General application

Not only in the first century did Satan use human leaders of the "powers that be" (Romans 13:1-6) to accomplish his purposes. Satan will seek to destroy Christ and his church until the end of the world arrives (I Corinthians 15: 24-28). The Beast with seven heads and ten horns could easily represent any and all worldly nations or powers that seek to rise up in rebellion to Christ and his great and worthy cause (worldly powers in general). Of course the Land Beast of Chapter 13:11-18 is representative of all and every false religion which Satan has erected through the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:8-9). Any and every religion and their teaching that is not of God (2 John 9) is against God (Romans 8:5-8). Wherever Satan can seize through lust and temptation worldly leaders to fulfill his evil purposes (I Peter 5:8) he will do so (James 1:13-15). Christ rules the nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 12:5, Psalms 2:9-12) and

as his providence so rules this globe he destroys nations and builds them up for the good of his Saints (Revelation 1:5-7).

Throughout history God has brought judgments upon nations through the forces of nature such as famines, earthquakes, storms, floods, droughts, plagues, tornadoes, and hurricanes, etc. God has established nature as sources of ways to benefit man upon the earth as well as he can use them for exercising discipline and correction to man upon the earth (Psalms 148:1-14). There have been great sea disasters as well as land disasters all, which should serve to point out to men the greatness of God and the brevity of life. It is God's desire to see all men come to the point of repentance (II Peter 3:9). For this cause God sent his Son, the Gospel, and the church for man's salvation. But God also flexes his "spiritual muscles" from heaven as he judges men through his laws of nature also. He established these forces in order that he might rule the world through Providence (I Peter 3:22, Ephesians 1:2-23). Just as this great Book declares men will most of the time ignore these warnings from God and continue living in and enjoying the sensual desires of men and commit sin and revel in it (Revelation 9:20-21). But this great book also shows that when the end of the world comes and the Lord returns he will destroy this physical world, political kingdoms of men (II Peter 3:10-15), and the false religions of the world (Matthew 15:13, II Thessalonians 2:9-12). Only those who are counted by God as faithful will be in the Kingdom of Christ that he delivers to God the Father (II Peter 1:5-11, I Corinthians 15:24-28). In view of this may every man and woman, boy and girl upon this earth have the wisdom to build their life on Christ Jesus (Matthew 7:24-27). Those who do not will meet with God's vehement vengeance when Christ comes again (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). The Devil and his rotten host (Matthew 25:41) will be the constant companion of those in Hell for all eternity (Revelation 21:8).

Specific application

Just what does this great Book of God's knowledge and wisdom mean to people of our day? Does this book have a specific bearing on our lives in Christ Jesus now? Certainly until the end of time God also will use or allow the governments of men (Romans 13:1-6) to be his minister to execute wrath on evil-doers and accomplish his objectives such as praising the good. To accomplish this every Christian is commanded by God to pay his taxes and support his government (verse 7). Sometimes however even human government passes laws which could and would affect the Christian and his faithful service to God. In such a case (Acts 5:29) we must obey God rather than man. For example suppose the U.S. passed laws that would demand that "women could be preachers" which would contradict the law of Christ (I Timothy 2:12). In that sense Satan through evil men that would introduce such a law would have deceived them and used them as puppets (Luke 22:31). Of course faithful Christians and churches of Christ could not allow such in the pulpits or else stand condemned by God's word at the Judgment (John 12:48-49). Every government today stands opposed to the Lord's cause for the only "holy nation" on this earth is the Lord's church (I Peter 2:9-12). And God looks at every nation in the world as a "heathen nation" as far as his Providence is concerned. In every nation on earth God is continually warning the citizens thereof to repent of their sins and obey his Son (Proverbs 14:34, Acts 3:19). He does this through the preaching, teaching, and living of his godly people upon the earth (I Timothy 3:15, Matthew 5:13-16). But he also works through nature as his "minister" to motivate men to repent. Disasters such as earthquakes, famines, droughts, storms, lightning, and thunder all display the omnipotence of God over man. God can with his breath cause frost to form and cold wintry snows to paralyze man and his hustling bustling civilization (Job 38:26-30,

Job 37:1-10). Look at these great events in light of our awesome winters recently and hot droughts in Texas where many died in the wake of such disasters. Look at the floods and earthquakes also.

God is continually sending trumpet warnings and judgments upon the U.S. and every nation on the Earth warning the occupants on the earth and their governments to repent and turn to God in faithful loving obedience (Revelation 9: 20-21, Revelation 8:6-13). How many great plane disasters and shipping calamities take place on the sea and in the air. Could not and should not these all indicate to man that he is here temporarily and that death is certain and sure but uncertain as to when it will occur? In every nation today there can be found some Christians (Isaiah 2:2-4, Acts 10:34-35). In that nation for the good of the Christian God continues to pour out his judgments upon those who oppress his saints whether physically through persecution and death, or through ridicule and more subtle temptations such as riches or pride. But in every nation where Christians dwell, they shall enjoy victory in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:35-39). Nations still rise and fall today as back in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 18:7-10). Let us consequentially, since God rules in the affairs of men and manipulates the governments of men for the good of the Christian, “pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17) for the rulers of the world (I Timothy 2:1-4). Let us pray that God’s word has free-course in the minds of men everywhere (II Thessalonians 3:1-5). Let us seek to be the best example to every fellow human being on earth that we can be (Philippians 2:12-15) to lead them to the Lord by teaching and influence (I Peter 2:9-12). Satan is the Father of and Author of sin and all its consequences (I John 3:8, John 8:44, Ephesians 2:1-3). But God is able to control Satan by his Son (Hebrews 2:14-15) and all those who obey the gospel of Christ and remain faithful to God need not fear Satan and his fiery darts of deception (Ephesians 6:10-18). Through the gospel of Christ the Lord can “bind Satan” for your benefit and give you complete ability and protection against him and his temptations (I Corinthians 10:12-13). Specifically let us be Christians first (Matthew 6:33) and citizens of the U.S. second (Romans 12:17, Romans 13:1-6, I Peter 2:13-17). Let us not fear Russia or the atomic holocaust that some say may come, or invaders from Mars but let us be confident that we serve the Lord Jesus Christ who rules beings on other planets if such there be (Acts 17:22-29) and rules the governments of men for the sole benefit of his Saints (Daniel 4:17, I Timothy 2:1-4, Revelation 1:5-7, Revelation 19:11-16). We serve the Creator who made all things “visible or invisible” (Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:15-17). He created atomic energy, gravity, electricity, and magnetic energy. But even if we are killed by such devices of men’s evil uses, we are assured of a home in heaven with the Lord (Revelation 14:13). Let me close with this particular statement if I may. Let every Christian be diligent to present themselves to Christ without spot or blemish or any such thing (II Peter 3:10-15, Ephesians 5:25-27, James 1:27). In so doing they will influence others to obey the Lord and be a peace-maker in this world for the Lord (Matthew 5:8-9). All authority both in heaven and on earth belongs to Christ. Let us serve him faithfully and seek and save the lost through his “everlasting gospel” (Luke 19:10, Romans 1:16-17, Revelation 14:1-6). “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14, I Peter 1:3-9, II Peter 1:5-11, Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 25:23).

Closing Remarks

Truly this book summarizes the Divine scheme that God formed in his mind before the foundations of the world to save the world by his Son and thereby manifest to man the “exceeding riches” of God’s grace (Ephesians 2:3-7). Thanks for your faithful and careful consideration of the great truths contained in God’s final Chapter of Revelation to man (Acts 17:11) and may God bless us all as we labor to do his good and righteous works and find the grace that will bring his Salvation to our souls (Philippians 2:12-15). I appreciate your encouragement.

May God be with you dearly beloved brethren, this has been a great study.

Bob Dodson - Evangelist