

Study of the book of

Revelation

Chapter by chapter and verse by verse . . . Revelation made simple and easy to understand

This last book of the Bible bears the title "*Revelation*," meaning "*unveiling*" and, yet, it presents visions of:

- horses racing across the land
- the breaking of seals on a mysterious scroll
- angels sounding trumpets
- the pouring out of vials
- its dragons and beasts

Revelation is the most controversial book in the Bible and, yet, it is the only book, which specifically promises a blessing to those who hear it, and who meditate upon it.

Under the law of the Old Testament the terms of the "*Law of Redemption*" were written within a scroll and placed in the Temple. It was brought out only when a "*kinsman*" gave evidence that he was able, and willing, to redeem the property that had been lost for whatever the reason. The *kinsman* could demand that the sealed document be brought forth as he publicly tore the sealed scroll open that invalidated the mortgage and the property returned as he paid the price of redemption. ***This is the picture of the book of Revelation.*** Jesus is redeeming the world back unto Himself for His coming Kingdom!

God gave the book of Revelation especially for the generation of the end-time. The majority of the Bible scholars of our time agree that these are indeed the latter days. Yet many people, even though they may be skilled in the Word, cannot grasp the deep and important message of Revelation. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is written in a tone of extreme urgency, and we of this end-time should study and seek the guidance that Christ wants to give us for this perilous age.

From the study of Darrel Mitchell

Forward

There is far more order and classification in the Bible than most people seem to realize, in fact, the Bible is the unfolding of a great plan that was ever in the heart of the eternal God. The only way to understand the details of God's Word is to have a clear understanding of it as a *whole*. Let me say that too much should not be made of any charts within this study. These charts should be compared to an architect's plans, which he uses with his specifications. **The Word of God is our specification**, *all* our information must be found within its sacred pages, and we use the charts merely as a blue print to give God's specifications various parts and divisions and thus simplify them for the earnest and diligent soul.

The reader, of course, is invited to take the views of this study and submit them to the test of Scripture and, if in his judgment they are not in accordance with the teaching thereof, he, certainly, is at liberty to reject them. However, at the same time, let us remember that neither the reader's judgment nor this study can lay claim to infallibility. Hence, the main purpose of this study is that the reader may be led, by a perusal of the following study, to a deeper interest, and a more profound study of the infallible Word of God.

Darrel Mitchell

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Before we start our study of . . .

Revelation

. . . let's consider a few important truths

There has been much abuse of prophetic Scripture! Many foolish and sensational speculations have gone under the title of "*Prophecy*." Imagined future events or fixed dates have brought discredit upon the whole study of Bible Prophecy.

Thus, a necessity of a sane approach to Bible Prophecy is all the greater.

In this study of the book of Revelation, we will be stepping into an unfamiliar world of angels, demons, lambs, lions, horses, dragons, seals are broken, trumpets blown, and contents of bowls poured out! To many it is an insoluble puzzle containing chaotic confusion of weird mysterious visions. For the most part it has been totally abandoned, or else, it has become the happy hunting ground of religious fanatics,

Instead of relegating Bible Prophecy to oblivion, the honest student of God's Word will give himself to diligent study of this *book of the hour*, and discover for himself what God has revealed by this *revelation*.

Bible Prophecy was not written to frighten, or bewilder, but to aid the reader in understanding God's program for time and eternity. **WE MUST NOT NEGLECT IT!** Indeed a

special blessing is promised if we read and study it.

Revelation 1:3 states, "*Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.*"

If God devoted *one-fourth* of the Scriptures to the subject of prophecy, it certainly behooves us to give attention to it. If the book of Revelation is the only book in the New Testament given exclusive to prophecy, does it not deserve our time to study it diligently?

HOW SHOULD ONE INTERPRET PROPHECY?

1. Give the words of prophecy the same meaning one would give words of history.
2. Don't change the literal to a *spiritual*, or symbolic, meaning.
3. Don't seek to find hidden meanings in words of Scripture.
4. Believe that prophecy can be understood, as it is simply a record of things yet to happen.
5. Forget the idea that prophecy must be *fulfilled* before it can be understood. When God uses a symbol, or figure of speech, one has a right to expect Him to make true explanation elsewhere in Scripture.

The following facts and principles of interpretation should be understood in order for one to arrive at a correct understanding of the book of Revelation.

1. The book of Revelation must be taken *literal* whenever possible. Every statement is to be taken to mean for exactly what is written unless such interpretation is highly improbable to spiritual reason, or against Scripture elsewhere. Only when the passage will not admit a *literal* interpretation is one to seek a *symbolic* explanation. This is the only **safe** method. Since God has entitled this letter, *the book of Revelation*, it is just that..."a *Revelation*"...and, one should not attempt to *spiritualize* it.
2. In order for one to understand any symbol correctly he should find a sufficient number and variety of the same symbol elsewhere in Scripture and study carefully the truths of those identical symbols, which are explained in Scripture. One will find that the language and statements of Scripture, itself, should make these symbols clear.
3. A symbol is simply an object used to represent something else. Example: The wine and bread in the Lord's Supper are symbols of the body and blood of Christ. Symbols merely give variety of expression and beauty to the thing expressed. For instance, the word "*dove*" is used as a symbol of peace, however, one would not say that the *bill, feet, wings, etc.* of the dove symbolize different aspects of peace. The principle is: **Only the part of the symbol, which conveys the truth intended, should be emphasized.**

4. If one is to understand the book of Revelation fully...specially the time of its fulfillment...he should always remember the **three divisions, which** are given to us by Christ, Himself. It is when one forgets these three divisions that he becomes confused as to the order of things, which are so clearly given, in *consecutive* order.

The **three divisions**, given in Revelation 1:19 are:

(1) *Those things, which you (John) have seen,*

(2) *Those things what now are taking place*

That is things concerning the Church Age
...from Pentecost to the Rapture of the Church...

(Covered in Revelation 2 &3).

(3) *Things, which will take, place later*

5. Revelation is a *succession of consecutive events*, rather, than an unsystematic, or confused, book. The events must be taken in the order which God gives, and, if not, then upon what ground does one attempt to fix the arrangement of these events, and by what authority?

DANGERS IN STUDYING BIBLE PROPHECY

1. **CURIOSITY** - Some people delight in hearing "*some new thing*" (Acts 17:21), however, Bible prophecy is not a curiosity shop or simply a "*hobby*."
2. **PRIDE** - Some people become spiritually proud because they are able to distinguish between the beasts, or because they are able to interpret Daniel's image, they feel that they possess a spirituality that puts them on a superior plane than those who have not been taught these things.
3. **FELLOWSHIP** - Bible Prophecy should never be the basis of fellowship between believers, but, rather, the basis of fellowship should always be the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
4. **MISSING CHRIST** - All Scripture is given to reveal Jesus Christ.
Revelation 19:10 states, "*For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*"

If the student of Bible prophecy becomes so interested in the "*Antichrist*" that Christ is removed from the place of centrality, then he has been derailed from that which is meant to be preeminent...the Person of Jesus Christ!

VIRTUES OF STUDYING BIBLE PROPHECY

1. **STRENGTHENS FAITH IN GOD'S INFALLIBLE WORD**

God's prophecies of past events which have proven to be so accurate, certainly makes

reasonable to believe that His predictions of things yet to be fulfilled will receive a like realization. "**Fulfilled prophecy**" proves that a God, Who can tell what is yet in the future, is a God Who is to be trusted.

2. REVEALS THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

As the Bible student pursues the study of prophecy he will come to new depths of understanding of the wisdom, power, and might of our eternal God.

3. REVEALS THE PURPOSE OF GOD

As God revealed His purpose in destroying Sodom to Abraham (Genesis 18:17), He reveals to the student of His Word the unfolding purpose of the events of the last days, in order that believers can understand "*why*" God allows certain events to take place.

4. BRINGS PEACE AND ASSURANCE

In John 14:1-4 Jesus states, "***Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.***"

Being acquainted with prophetic Scriptures, the believer rests in the assurance, having before him God's blueprint of future events.

5. PRODUCES A HOLY LIFE

Note whenever the second coming of Christ is mentioned in Scripture it is always followed by an exhortation to holy living. (See, for instances: Philippians 3:12 to 4:1; Colossians 3:1-5; and 2 Peter 4:10-11)

6. INTENSIFIES ONE'S DESIRE FOR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

In Scripture, we see that God often revealed to those who followed Him what He intention for the future was.

7. MAKES INTERCESSORS AND SOUL-WINNERS

When Abraham realized Sodom's awful fate, it led him to intercede for the souls of that city. If one realizes God's terrible judgments about to overtake this world, he would set himself to plead that many would turn to Him, ere the day of vengeance engulfs them.

The book of Revelation closes its awful description of the judgments which are coming upon the earth by inviting to the sinner, "*Come to Christ,*" and, after one reads and understand the book of Revelation, he too will close the book and invite the sinner to, "*Come, and receive,*

Jesus Christ as you Savior."

One's soul-winner power would, certainly, more than double if he diligently studies, and understands, the book of Revelation, and realizes what is going to take place on earth before too long.

8. GIVES A RIGHT PERSPECTIVE OF WORLD'S EVENTS

Instead of the child of God being discouraged and depressed, he can rejoice in the face of present conditions because he realizes things are in God's hands and progressing as He foretold in His Word.

9. EMPOWERS ONE TO RUN THE RACE SET BEFORE HIM

Habakkuk 2:2-3 warns, "***Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation waits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.***"

Hebrew 10:37-38 states, "***For in just a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.***"

In view of this race which the believer is in, Hebrews 12:1-2 states, "***Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***"

As the believer begins to understand what God is doing...and what He will do...on the earth, he disentangles his affections from all that is alien to the mind of the Coming One, Jesus Christ, and functions as a tireless runner, running toward the glorious goal which awaits all who follow on to know the Lord!

God's Word gives a positive command to study Bible prophecy because it is the revelation of God's mind concerning coming events. The believer is guilty of gross neglect if he closes his mind to what God desires him to know!

The student must never approach the study of Bible prophecy in a haphazard manner; however, as certain principles are recognized, the student will find that careful study of Bible prophecy will always produce both profit and pleasure.

Dogmatism is out of place with it comes to unrevealed details of Bible prophecy. A good rule to follow is: "***IN ESSENTIAL THINGS - UNITY; IN DOUBTFUL THINGS - LIBERTY; AND, IN ALL THINGS - CHARITY***"

Without the book of Revelation the canon of Scripture would be incomplete.

- Will sin continue? • Will Satan be defeated? • Will sorrow; pain, and death go on?
- Where are we in God's plan? • When will the Church be raptured?
 - Is Christ coming to the earth?
 - What are we to expect on earth before Christ's coming?
 - In what order are the events of the last days to come?
 - Where is Christ to reign during the Millennium?
 - When is Antichrist revealed?
 - What about church union?
 - Where will saints spend eternity?

These, and many other indispensable questions, are no where fully answered apart from the book of Revelation!

Next to the plan of salvation and the sufferings of Christ, nothing should be more interesting to the child of God than the study of Bible prophecy because it enlightens us to the wondrous destiny of the church, the glorious future of Israel, and the future of all mankind generally.

Though the child of God should always be ready to benefit by the study of others whom he knows to be of God, yet, he should be very slow in embracing any new ideas. Let us always be absolutely dependent upon the Word of the great Author of all true, reliable, prophecy and He will reveal to us a correct understanding of that which He has written concerning the future. For we must interpret all Scripture in harmony with the general scope of the Bible as a whole. No prophecy is of private interpretation, and therefore, all prophecy must be accumulated and examined before a conclusion is drawn. There must not be a violation of the general teaching of the whole Bible, but, rather, prophecies must be arranged in the order that they demand to be placed, and give them that interpretation which is in perfect harmony with all other Scripture revelation.

2 Timothy 2:15 states, "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

Acts 1:9, referring to Christ's ascension after His resurrection, states, "***a cloud received Him...(Jesus Christ)...out of their sight.***" The book of Revelation is the gradual melting of that cloud! It is an *apocalypse...that is, it is, an "unveiling" of Jesus Christ!*

As a "***revealing***" of what is behind the breaking veil, it is a literal transcript of facts and events actually seen by John.

Of the thirty-five symbols in the book of Revelation, twenty are explained, and thus cease to be symbols. Fifteen undeciphered symbols, certainly, does not make the book of Revelation a book that one cannot comprehend what God is saying to the Church in this book.

Since the judgments of God in the Old Testament, and the prophecies of the New Testament were fulfilled literally...[Prophecies, such as, the virgin birth, Christ being born in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary's call into Egypt, Christ's entry into Jerusalem on a colt, Christ being betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and the parting of Christ's garments]...then, one can

only expect that the book of Revelation is to be fulfilled literal throughout.

The structure and proportions of the book of Revelation...that "*golden thread on which can be strung all the pearls of earlier of prophecy*"...are exactly defined, and defined once for all, by our Lord Himself

Suppose that someone from the deep forest of South America, who had never known anything of modern civilization, was suddenly transported into today's world and you decided to take them to visit the airport, after which they returned to your home and watched television before retiring to bed. The next morning you asked them to write down what they had seen the day before.

They probably would describe their adventure something like this, "*We rode in chariots without horses, which had fiery lights of amber behind and bright white ones in front. These horseless chariots were faster than lightening and rode on foundations solid rock.*"

This native from the bush might describe traffic lights as, "*these chariots seemed to be directed by weird a three-eyed creator which had an eyes of amber, one of emerald and one of gold,*" and he might describe airplanes as, "*giant bird with the sound of a mighty sea, belching men from her side.*" And he would probably describe television as an "*eye of a monster glaring forth visions.*"

The point is that one describes the unfamiliar by his familiar language. John, the revelator, saw many unfamiliar things in his vision, however, he describes them in the language that he was familiar with, which accounts for some of the strange descriptions one finds in the book of Revelation.

WHY DOES GOD USE SYMBOLS?

The disciples once asked Jesus, "*Why do You speak to people in parables?*" Jesus answered by saying, "*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. For the people's heart is waxed gross...(callous)...and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and should heal them*" (Matthew 13:11, 13, 15).

Jesus uses parables so that those who have rejected Him...unbelievers...would not understand!

Matthew 11:25, "*At that time Jesus answered and said, `I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*"

Jesus, often, openly condemned the powers of man and, in order to protect Christians from unnecessary persecution, He spoke "*in parables*" (or symbols). God, in His Word seems to have ransacked ever realm to use symbols that would convey a faint conception of the glory, splendor and majesty of Jesus Christ to our dull, finite, minds.

These notes are Bible lessons and, therefore, are to be studied with God's Word open before the student. Begin right, get your Bible and open it to the book of Revelation and read every verse in connection with this study.

A Study of the Book of Revelation

It is important that one reads God's Word along with any study of the Bible.
Read the first chapter of Revelation before you read the following notes!

Because Christ is so often pictured in His awful hour on the Cross-, many think only of the "*suffering of a lowly Jesus*." Of course, it is right to reflect upon the scene at Bethlehem, when Christ was born as a *human* baby, and to remember "*the cross*." the child of God needs recall to his mind...and never forget...the birth and crucifixion of our Lord!

However, many seem convinced that Jesus still is **a poor, helpless, crucified one that is in need of the world's sympathy** and have a conception of the world's Redeemer that enable them to feel quite comfortable to spend time living in sin to their hearts content.

I wonder if we have not presented a Christ that gives sinners a license to reject His claims? It is high time that men stop weeping about Christ's suffering and shed a few tears for the sins that drove Him to Cross.

Jesus summed it up, when He stated, "*Do not weep for Me, weep for yourselves and your children*" (Luke 23:28).

The book of Revelation presents Christ, **NOT AS HE WAS IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, but, rather, as He is today!** If one gets a Scriptural conception of Christ...the one given in the book of Revelation...he would never be the same again!

The book of Revelation is the only prophetic book in the New Testament. The veil between heaven and earth is rolled aside and the future disclosed to John, who, then, reveals it to the Bible student.

John, an old man, banished from country by decree of emperor and condemned to labor in tin mines on the Island of Patmos.

In Revelation 1:13, Jesus Christ is standing in the midst of seven candlesticks... (which represents the "*leaders*" of the churches) and John turns around and beholds Christ, "*clothed with a garment down to His feet and girded about His chest with a golden sash,*" which is not unlike the description of the garments of the High Priest of the Old Testament

(Exodus 28:4-12).

John describes the vision he had of Christ as, "***His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow.***" White was symbolic of purity...(The reason women, originally, wore ***white*** in their wedding was to show that they were pure virgins). Whenever the color "***white***" is used to qualify the hair, it denoted wisdom, as well, as age. Daniel calls Christ, "***the Ancient of days***"(Daniel 7, verses 9 and 22). Christ dwells "***from everlasting to everlasting***" as the eternal Son of God.

It certainly, behooves us to remember just Who Jesus Christ is! The concept of the modern artist does little to honor Him, but, rather, often robs Him of His majesty. It is true that He **was** the world's suffering Savior, however, let us never forget that Christ's period of anguish...(when He suffered the Just for the unjust that He might bring men to God)...is **now** past forever and ***He is now Heaven's exalted Redeemer!***

Revelation 1:14, goes on to state, "***His eyes were like blazing fire***" God's Word often speaks of Christ's **penetrating judgment**, as the Judge of all of the world. His eyes will search out, and expose, evil in all its hideous nakedness. Sin cannot be covered from Him. He looked down in Noah's day and beheld awful moral chaos. He saw the scene in Sodom and Gomorrah and He sees all the mockery abroad today. **There is no escape from His all-revealing glance**

How different this is than it was in that hour at Calvary!

John continues in verse 15, by saying, "***His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace.***" When Jesus walked the earth, His poor, weary, sandaled feet were often sorely bruised. The nails of Golgotha pierced through flesh, and muscles of His feet, causing large clots of blood too drip from the feet of the lowly Jesus. However, **NOW**, when John beholds Him **after** His translation, "***His feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.***"

Brass (or, bronze) was emblematic of strength in the Old Testament (The Tabernacle altar was of brass). Jesus' feet being brass was indicative of the awful strength of Christ's righteous judgment. We are told in the Old Testament that, "***His feet will tread the wine press of God's wrath.***"

John states in verse 15, "***His voice was like the sound of rushing waters.***"

Visit Niagara Falls and listen to ceaseless roar of the water, stand on the ocean's brink and hear turbulent waves splashing on the rocks, or, catch the sound of torrents of rain pouring down hillside, and, maybe, then you can get a faint idea of power and grandeur of Christ's voice.

Psalms 93:4; picturing Christ as John saw Him, states, "***The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the waves of the sea.***"

Oh, the supreme authority of Christ's voice. His voice, at creation, brought order out of chaos...light out of darkness...and...life out of deadness. His voice stilled the angry storm at sea. The boisterous winds, and waves, were hushed by His command, "***peace be still.***"

John, in his vision, sees, and hears, Christ speaking in judgment. That same voice, often ignored today, will be heard in eternity.

Verse 16 reveals that, "*out of His mouth will come a sharp double-edged sword.*" There is no difficulty in interpreting this figure because Hebrews 4:12 states, "*For the Word of God is quick, powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword*"

When the meek, and lowly, Jesus was in His hour of suffering, "*He answered not a word,*" however, when John gazed upon Him in Heaven, He is speaking words like a sharp, doubled-edged, sword

None will be able to escape His words...(His words will either save now or condemn later).

Revelation 19:11-16 reveals one of the saddest sights earth will ever see...**THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON**. Congregated nations, under their Satanic leader, will gather in open defiance to God, when the mighty "*word of Christ*"...the resistless power of His Word...is unsheathed against His enemies

John continues describing Jesus Christ, as He is today, "*His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance*" (verse 16).

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It is *important* to remember the three divisions God gives to understanding the book of Revelation mentioned in verse 19, that is:

- (1) The things that John had witnessed in his lifetime,
- (2) the things that **now** (that is in the church Age) were taking place, and
- (3) the things that would take place later (After the church would be gone).

The seven letters to the churches in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, were:

(1) Seven letters to seven literal, historic, churches, which were in existence at the time the Revelation, was given. These were letters, which contained message to the **local** church in Asia Minor.

(2) Warnings, or admonitions, for all churches for all time.

There are churches today which are warm and on fire like the church of Ephesus, and there are, also, others which are cold, and dead, like the church of Laodicea. There are churches today which are full of ritualism and ceremonialism, like the church of Thyatira, and there are others which are mere dead formalism like the church of Sardis, etc.

(3) Personal messages to each believer to examine himself by. These seven letters provide texts by which the believer can discern his spiritual state in the sight of God. They are personal exhortations to "*him that hearth.*"

(4) A panoramic view of seven periods, which the professing church would pass through during the Church Age. Keep in mind that "Revelation is a **prophetic** book," therefore, one needs to look for prophetic meaning in the description of these seven assemblies in Asia!

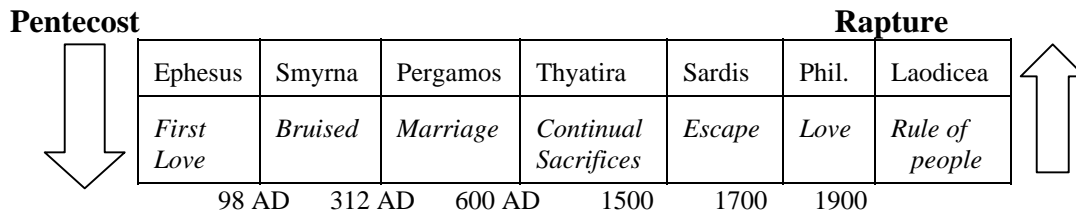
Now that the present age has almost run its course, one can look back through twenty centuries (**Church Age**) and see that these seven churches are a progressive picture of the history of the "**professing**" Church, from Christ coming into the world to His return for His Church. It is fairly easy to see the seven period clearly set off, each of them describing in unmistakable detail, and clearness, a certain period of Church history.

God saw seven local churches in Asia Minor that had the seven characteristics which would be found in seven periods of church history and, by following these prophecies out-lined in chapters 2 and 3, one is able to obtain a "**bird's eye view**" of church history.

In these two chapters, Christ...Who knows the end from the beginning and is able to predict the things that would come to pass in each Church period, right down to the close of the age...looks down through the Church Age and reveals the truth concerning **PROFESSING** Christendom.

Since there were many other churches besides these seven, why did God choose these to write too? The answer is simply; God selected them because they fit His plan to reveal the future.

These seven letters to these seven churches form a complete picture of the entire Church Age from then until the time Christ calls His saints home to be with Him.



Messages to seven Churches
(Ephesus, the loveless Church)

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AGE
IN BIBLE PROPHECY

Read Revelation, chapters 2 and 3

The seven letters to the seven churches, described in Revelation chapter 2 and 3, present the history of the Church Age, that is, from the day of Pentecost to the second coming of Jesus Christ. These churches had names, which were prophetic, and quite a revelation to the student of God's Word. They were:

1. "***Ephesus***," - Church of the first century
2. "***Smyrna***," - persecuted Church of the 2nd & 3rd centuries
3. "***Pergamos***," - Church from about 312 A.D. to 600 A.D.
4. "***Thyatira***," - Church from of the Dark Ages to the 16th century.
5. "***Sardis***," - Church of the Renaissance and the Reformation
6. "***Philadelphia***," Church of the Revival of the 19th century
7. "***Laodicea***," the end-time Church of apostasy

Let's look at these churches one at a time:

1. The church of EPHESUS (2:1-7)

Here is a description of the early Apostolic Church. The first three verses describe how she started out, while verses 4-7 tells how she ended.

"Ephesus" was the commercial center, and the greatest seaport, of the ancient world. She was also the **religious** center, containing the Temple of Diana (One of the seven wonders of the ancient world). History records of her, "*The sun sees nothing finer in all its course.*" However, unspeakable, immoral, acts were committed, and the "***professing***" church began to flirt with these lovers.

2. The church of SMYRNA (2:8-11)

Smyrna means "*Bruised*," and was thirty-five miles north of Ephesus and was famous for her library out-door stadium, and boasted of the largest theater in Asia Minor.

Everyone within its city was compelled to go to its Temple and offer incense to Caesar, while saying, "*Caesar is Lord.*" Christians, who refused, were considered a "*subversive influence*" and were persecuted. History records, "*No where was Christian life more dangerous*"

Christ, knowing that persecution would come, prophesied that "*poverty*" would come to the Christian at Smyrna...(and the period of church History which she represented). History shows that Christians were boycotted in business, refused employment and had their homes and business destroyed during this period.

Christ, also, predicted that Christians would be "*slandered,*" and, again, history records that the authorities in Smyrna...(as well as the Church period represented by Smyrna, 98 to 312 A.D.)..."*calculated unkind, untrue, reports and then spread this poisonous venom.*"

Christ, also, prophesied that some of them would be cast into "*prison,*" and, certainly, these Christians knew what the inside of prisons looked like because these prisons often became centers of worship for them.

And, Christ prophesied "*death*" for some Christians, and, indeed, many did die during this period. Many of them were burned, beaten, hanged, crucified, cast to lions and tortured to death by various other means. Under ten tyrants from Nero to Constantine the Great, the church was persecuted unto the death, in what has been called, "*the blackest history of Church history.*" Martyrs stood upon fagot piles while praising their God. They met lions in the great coliseums quoting Scriptures and singing psalms to their Lord!

During this period, from 98 to 312, tens of thousands of Christians were put to death for their faith and sealed their testimony with their blood.

IF EVERY MATERIAL POSSESSION WERE TAKEN FROM YOU, WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO FIND IN YOUR EXPERIENCE THAT CHRIST ALONE IS ENOUGH?

The phrase, "*ten days of tribulation,*" in verse 10, probably refers to the ten great persecutions between Nero and Constantine.

3. The church of PERGAMOS (2:12-17),

Pergamos means," *marriage,*" and was fifty miles north of Smyrna. It is the most **northerly** of the seven churches. Pergamos, the capital of the province of Asia, has been called, "*the greatest city in Asia Minor.*"

Pergamos was famous for her libraries, containing over 200,000, hand-written, and books. She, also, had many temples with altars, which "*smoked all day.*"

Verse 14 refers to the "*doctrine of Balaam*" because Balaam entered into an alliance with Moabites. Christ, foreseeing the Church entering into an alliance with pagans likened her unto Balaam's.

Verse 15 refers to the "*doctrine of Nicolatanes*" [The Greek word "Nicolatanes" comes

from the two words: "**nikao**" meaning, **to conquer** and the word "**loas**," meaning, **laity**] In Pergamos there was a development of a priestly order that would rule over the laity...and, also, the period of Church history represented by this city (312 to about 600 A.D.)...the laity no longer thought for itself, Christ was no longer their Mediator, but, rather, a priestly order would. There would be a rise of a hierarchy of the clergy...a dominion of special class of so-called clergy...over the laity.

The phrase, "*where Satan's seat is*," no doubt refers to the Babylon cult, originally in Babylon, however fleeing before the conquering Persians to Pergamos, where it was in Jesus' day. Later, it shifted to Rome, where it was joined to the "*professing*" Christian church in Rome.

4. The church of **THYATIRA** (2:18-29)

Thyatira means a "*continual sacrifice*," and lay forty miles southeast of Pergamos and was a prosperous center of trade in, primarily, wool...known for its ability in dyeing. It had numerous trade guilds (or unions).

The letter to the church in Thyatira speaks of the period referred to in history, including "**The Dark Ages**." The word "**works**" is mentioned in this passage and, it was during this period of Church history...(600 to 1500 A.D.)...that the completeness of the finished work of Christ was denied, and the "*professing*" church became a religion of "**works**."

Revelation 2:20, accuses the "*professing*" church of allowing **Jezebel** to seduce her. No better figure than **Jezebel** could be used in describing what happened during this period of Church history when the "*professing*" church began to commit idolatry and to turn from the pure worship of the true God.

Verse 24 refers to the "*depth of Satan*," probably referring to the time of the Inquisition and the years that the **Vandals**, the **Huns**, and the **Goths** overran Europe, bringing with them their own idolatrous pagan worship. The *professing* church, in a spirit of compromise, seeking to win these pagans to "*professing*" Christianity, adopted part of the pagan idolatrous religion of these heathen with the result that there emerged from this age a Church that was "*part Christian, and part pagan*."

Chapter Three: **Sardis, The Escaping Church (Those who `come out.')**

Revelation states that the "spirit" of four of these seven churches
[Ephesus, **Smyrna**, Pergamos, and Thyatira]
and each of these "*spirits*" will continue unto the end of the Church Age

5. The church of **SARDIS** (3:1-6)

Sardis means "**to escape**" and the oldest, and most famous, of the cities in Asia Minor.

Remember, these seven churches represent the **PROFESSING** church, however, among the masses of "professing" Christians are true believers. The name, "**Sardis**" also has the meaning of "remnant."

The gloom of the **Dark Ages** was lifted largely because of the testimony of the faithful remnant of true believers. This period of Church history is referred to as, "**The Renaissance**," meaning "*rebirth*." The renaissance was the great awakening in the 14th, 15th and 16th century, leading to "*The Reformation*."

Many factors were instrumental in bringing about the "**deliverance**" from the Dark Ages. Certain discoverers, and inventions, set the stage for the Reformation and the Church period of Sardis. The invention of the printing press made Scriptures available to the laity in printed form, and, as a result, many unbiblical beliefs were exposed.

Reformation swept over Europe under men like Luther, Erasmus, Zwingli, Le Fevre, Calvin and John Knox. While there was a protest, and reaction, against the rigid ecclesiastical hierarchy, these still remained **dead orthodoxy**, with many religious organizations, with little evidence of spiritual life. Christ prophesied in 3:1, "You have a name (or reputation) of being alive, but you are dead!"

Verse 1 refers to "*seven spirits*." No doubt, this refers to the "*completeness*" of the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 4:6 will give some light on this subject. It states, "*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord Almighty, and verse 10 states, "These seven are the eyes of the Lord."*"

6. The church of **PHILADELPHIA** (3:7-13), Philadelphia means "*brotherly Love*."

As a result of the carnality, divisions, and worldliness of the *professing* church, God rebukes its dead orthodoxy and presents the next church age, the church of the 19th century. The message of Christ's return to earth was revived, as God raised up men full of power, zeal, fire and a passion for souls to awaken the dead church. God used men like Whitfield, Wesley, Edwards, and later, Moody, Darby, and Spurgeon to bring revivals sweeping the continent of Europe and spreading to the new world. Great missionary movements were born, with missionaries like Livingston, Tayler, and many others.

In verse 7, the phrase "*who holds the key of David*," no doubt is concerning the prophecy of the coming Messiah. For instance, Isaiah 22:21 states, "*I will clothe him with your robe and fasten your sash around him and hand your authority over to him, He will be a father to those who live in Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.*" Verse 22 states, "*I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.*"

In verse 10-11 is a definite promise to the Church that some will escape the Great Tribulation.

7. The church of **LAODICEA** (3:14-22) Laodicea means "*lukewarm*."

We have here, God's picture of "*professing*" Christendom just before the Lord returns at the end of the age. The description is one of being poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked.

Remember, at the beginning of the age, Christ is seen "*walking midst of the churches?*"

He is the center, and the object of worship of all the churches devotion and service, however, at the end of the age, He "*stands outside the door, offering His fellowship.*" Verse 20 states, "*Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him - and will sup with him, and he with Me.*"

Read Revelation 4

Revelation 4:1, then, states, "**AFTER THIS!**" After what? - *After the Church Age!*

The Church Goes to Heaven

Reasons for the "*Rapture of the Church*" taking place in Revelation 4:1.

1. There is a marked change in God's attitude from one of *mercy*, which is found chapters 1-3 to one of *judgment*, which is found in chapters 6 to 19, in the book of Revelation.
2. There is a *natural* division in the book of Revelation beginning with chapter four, according to the divisions given in Revelation 1:19.
3. The word "*church*" is found 19 times up to chapter four, and never mentioned again after that.
4. The "*enthroned elders*," representative of the saints of the Old and the New Testaments are seen in heaven in chapter four.
5. There is no Scripture to show that the Church will be on earth during any part of the Great Tribulation and Revelation begins to describe the Tribulation in chapter six.
6. There is no logical place in the book of Revelation for the Rapture of the saints to take place except in Revelation 4:1.

[Some would place the Rapture of the Church in Revelation 12, but that is not possible, as we will see later.]

7. God's Word promises the Church that she will escape the Great Tribulation.
6. In front of the throne was a sea that looked like shiny crystal. On each corner of the throne were four Living Creatures with eyes every- where to see in front of them and behind them.
7. One of the Living Creatures was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third like a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle.
8. They had six wings each, with eyes all over their wings. They worshipped God day and night, without stopping, they kept saying, '*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord, the Almighty, He lived in eternity and He is alive today, and He is coming back again*'
9. These four Living Creatures give glory and honor and thanks to God on the throne, Who

lives forever and ever!

10. The twenty-four Elders fell down before Him Who sat on the throne, and they worshipped the Eternal Living One and they presented their crowns at His feet in worship to Him.

11. The twenty-four elders cried out, *'You are worthy to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You created all things and for Your pleasure all things are created.'*

Luke 21:34-36 states, "***Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day... (the `day' of Christ's coming again) will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.***"

2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 states, "***And now you know what is holding him back... (the Antichrist)... so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way [Referring to the Church being taken out of the way]. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of His mouth and destroy by the splendor of His coming.***"

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 states, "*Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, gets drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breast-plate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. **For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.**"*

[See study on "22 reason why Scripture teaches that the Church will **not** go through the Tribulation."]

The question of the twenty-four elders, and who they are, is important in understanding the book of Revelation. I share my reasons for believing that these twenty-four elders are representative of the redeemed, raptured, saints of the Old and New Testaments:

1. The only one ever seen sitting on thrones, and wearing crowns, are God, Christ, or saints. These 24 Elders cannot be representative of either God or Christ; therefore, they must be representative of *saints*
2. The only ones seen wearing "white" robes in Scripture are either Christ or saints. These 24 Elders are wearing "white" robes; therefore, they must be representative of the saints.

3. Whenever "*angels*" are mentioned in the book of Revelation, they are always distinguished from natural men. And, because, these 24 Elders are not so distinguished, they must be men...saints!
4. They make reference to the *earth*, and *nations* in their speech, therefore, they must be from earth.
5. The term, "**Elder**," used 152 times in the Old Testament and 62 times in the New Testament (12 times in Revelation), is never applied to angels, [Angels are not effected by age] therefore these 24 Elders must be men.
6. These 24 Elders are referred to as "**redeemed being**" in Revelation 5:9, therefore, they must be redeemed saints.
7. Revelation 1:6 states that Christ Jesus, "*hath made us kings and priests unto God*" and 5:10, states, of the 24 Elders, that Christ Jesus, "*hast made us unto our God kings and priests*," therefore, the 24 Elders, and the redeemed saints, must be one and the same.
8. The 24 Elders are referred to as "*God's servants*" in Revelation 19:5, and, because the saints are called "*God's servants*," they must be one and the same.

Who are the "four living creatures"?

It is true that most translations of the Bible render the word, the four creatures surrounding God's throne, as "*beasts*" in Revelation 4:6-11, and again in 5:6-8, however, in the original Greek the word is "**Zoe**," which is quite a different word than the Greek word translated "*beast*"...(Translated from "*therion*")...later on in Revelation. The Greek word "*zoe*" simply means "**living creatures**." They can be seen in the Old Testament as well, in Ezekiel 1:5-26 and again in Isaiah 6:2-7.

It appears that they are always standing around the throne of God ready for service. It is said of them "*they rest not day or night*."

They are of less importance than the Elders, because they honor the 24 Elders, also, they are referred to in, what is called, "*the gender of present participles*," showing the Elders president over them.

These "four living creatures" are especially appointed to assist the Holy Spirit to minister to the saints in Heaven. These four living creatures "*give glory and honor and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever*."

These "**living creatures**" are distinguished from the redeemed (4:9-11)...the seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-8)...and other beings in the Spirit World. An examination of this passage will reveal the differences. They are simply four "**living creatures**," created by God...described in Isaiah pictured in Ezekiel 1:4-28 and 10:1-22...and, evidently, are for the purpose of calling attention to God's glory and holiness. They cry, "**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is and is to come**."

What do these four "*living creatures*" do?

1. They call attention to the holiness of God - Rev 4:4-8
2. They fall down before the Lamb - Revelation 5:8-10
3. They sing and play on harps of gold – Rev. 5:8-10
4. They officiate in a priestly capacity – Rev. 5:8-10
5. They call for the horsemen of the first four seals to "*come forth*" - Revelation 6:1-8
6. They give the seven vials to the seven angels - Revelation 15:7

They are associated with God, the Lamb, elders, angels and all classes of redeemed and always are separate from them, therefore, are different from all of them.

- (Revelation 5:6, 14,14; 7:11; 14:3; 19:4).

Interestingly, the symbol of an eagle, an ox, a lion, and a man is something, that has great significance to God, as they are seen in the Old Testament camp around God's Tabernacle, seen around His throne in Ezekiel, and, even the four Gospels portray these symbols, because Matthew presents Christ as "*King*," or a lion (the king of the beasts); Mark presents Christ as "*servant*" (or oxen, the beast of burden); Luke presents Christ as "*the son of Man*," (or Man); and the gospel of John presents Christ as "*Deity*" (or an Eagle).

In Revelation 4:6 there is a "*sea of glass like*" described that stands, "*before the throne*" *This is an actual part of the heavenly tabernacle, which looks "like unto crystal."* It is unoccupied here, however, in Revelation 15:2-4 it is occupied by the great multitude.

[This "*sea of glass*" reminds us of the "*molten sea*" made by Solomon for the Temple to replace the laver in the earthly Tabernacle, 1 Kings 7:23-26; 2 Chronicles 4:2-15.]

This sea of glass must be vast in its dimensions in order to accommodate a "*multitude that no man could number*," Revelation 7:9-17; 15:2-4.

Note the phrase in Revelation 4:3, "*there was a rainbow round about the throne, in the sight like unto a emerald.*" God's throne is a throne of *righteousness*, or, as Hebrews 1:8 states, "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom.*" God's throne is a throne of **justice**, and, if we were to receive justice...just what we deserve...from God on His throne, we should be consumed with His holiness. However, a rainbow surrounds His throne!

Remember, God gave to Noah a rainbow as a sign of His mercy (Genesis 9:11-16), that, when man saw the storm clouds of rain . . .with its lightening and thunder . . . coming, he would have to fear God's wrath of destroying the earth by a flood again, because of the rainbow. It was a sign of God's mercy.

In Ezekiel 1, Ezekiel saw the terrific sights in the heavens above. He sees the *whirlwind, a great cloud, a great fire unfolding itself, a color of amber in the sky*, and, then, he sees *living creatures*, around God's throne.

(These "*creatures*" described much like the ones in Revelation 4.)

This vision of Ezekiel took place at a time when Judah had rebelled against God and were in captivity for their sins. Ezekiel was in captivity with them and he views the judgments of God. Ezekiel speaks of "*sin always bringing terrific and swift judgment from God.*" Ezekiel knew that the sin that Judah had committed was the direct cause of their captivity and he sees in his vision all that is happening in the skies above, that it is about to rain down fire and brimstone and consume them all, however, at that moment, he see in the midst of all this coming judgment a "*sapphire rainbow*" In the midst of God's anger, Ezekiel sees that His throne is wrapped in a *rainbow of mercy*.

This "*rainbow*" is seen again in Revelation 10:1-6, where, during the Tribulation period, angels are flying through the air shouting to the inhabitants of earth that the end of time is at hand, however, the rainbow is still seen, indicating that God mercy still remains. God's mercy will continue to extend until the curtain of time is completely closed and time shall cease.

Here, in Revelation 4...immediately after the rapture takes place...the saints will meet Jesus at the Judgment Seat, however, it is a throne of mercy. If it were not for His mercy, symbolized by the rainbow, we would be cast out of heaven!

Thank God for the rainbow in heaven!

Read Revelation 5

The seven-sealed scroll - The key to Revelation

This little seven-sealed scroll in the hand of the One on the Throne contains the secret of the chapters which follow and is the key, which opens the entire book of the Revelation.

A correct interpretation of the mysterious scroll will give a correct understanding of the rest of the book of Revelation, however, a mistake here, and one will...with all probably... have a misunderstanding standing of the rest of the book of Revelation.

In the first chapter of Revelation we have the vision of the glorified Christ in the majesty of His second coming. In chapters 2 and 3 we have the history of "*professing*" Christendom pre-written under the figure of seven churches. When the last of the church ages has run its course, it is then that John, representing the true Church, is caught away into heaven and sees, first of all Christ on the throne in all His glory and majesty, this is followed by heaven's song of praise and adoration of the entire hosts of glory...the twenty-four elders, representing the saints of all ages, and the four "*living creatures.*" (Revelation 4)

The scene is in heaven where John was caught up to meet the Lord and where he saw Christ on the throne. At first John sees nothing but Him, the Savior, and is completely occupied by his rapturous vision of his Lord and his God. However, John, now, notices something else, of which he had not been aware. He sees another sitting on the throne and in the hand of this one is a scroll...a roll of parchment sealed with seven seals.

Everything comes to a standstill in heaven while a diligent search is made to find someone who can break the seals and open the scroll.

Until that man is found there can be no further revelation. Everything hinges upon the finding of one who is worthy to open the scroll. In this scroll is contained the revelation and the account of all that is to follow upon the breaking of the seven seals, the blowing of the seven trumpets, and the pouring out of the seven final vials (or bowls), of the wrath of God.

For the interpretation of this "*scroll*" we must go back to Israel's history in the Old Testament. In the giving of the numerous laws and regulations there was a law, which dealt with what is referred to as "***The Book of Redemption.***"

This "*Law of Redemption,*" found in Leviticus 25, stated that if anyone, because of neglect or misfortune, fell into debt and was legally tried and unable to pay, he was to serve his master to whom he owed this debt. However, the law provided that he could be redeemed, ***if***, first of all, he was "***fit***" (meaning a close relative), second, he was ***able***, and, third, that he was ***willing***, to redeem whatever was lost.

Whenever anyone fall into debt, and, as a result, lost his property, he was taken before the judge and a document was prepared which stated that the land had passed from the debtor into the possession of the one to whom he owed the debt. However, this was not to be a permanent transfer, but, rather, could be purchased back by a near relative.

Originally, there would be two scrolls, on which were written the terms of the redemption of the lost possession. One scroll was left open in the court of the Temple or Tabernacle for all to read, but the other was rolled up, and ***sealed with seven seals and placed in the Temple to be brought out only when a kinsman redeemer gave evidence that he was willing and able to redeem it.*** He would go to the court of the Tabernacle, read the terms of redemption as found in the open public scroll, and then go to the priest or judge and demand that the sealed document be brought forth and the debtor be freed and his property returned!

When this relative was, first, able to show that he could pay the redemption price and, second, that he was willing to meet all the conditions of the law, the sealed scroll was produced and he publicly tore open the seals and invalidated the mortgage and the man could return to his purchased possession.

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As time passed, the practice of using two scrolls...one public and the other sealed...was combined into one scroll. The terms of the redemption of the mortgage was written on both sides, within and without. The scroll was, then, rolled up and sealed with the seven seals,

This is the picture we have in Revelation 5, where we see the Judge of all the earth sitting on His throne and in His hand is a scroll, and sealed with seven seals.

[Verses 9-10 make it clear that this is a scroll “*of redemption*”]

In the old Levitical law three things could be redeemed: a servant, a wife and land. At this point in Revelation (chapter 5) the first two have been accomplished. The Church, the bride of Christ, has been caught up in the Rapture spoken of in Revelation 4 and we, His servants, have been fully redeemed, having received our resurrection bodies at the Rapture of the Church. ***However, the earth and the creatures of the earth, both vegetable and animal, are still under the curse.*** The earth is still groaning under the curse of man's sin. These must be redeemed, for Christ is a perfect Redeemer, and every realm, which came under the curse of Adam's sin, must also be delivered by the redemption of the Last Adam.

Adam lost his dominion over the earth, which God originally gave to him, and, as a result, man battles the forces of nature...fighting weeds, thistles, insects, caterpillars, storms, droughts and floods. The animals prey one upon the other, and death and groaning and destruction are everywhere.

Adam lost his inheritance, however, God has provided for a plan of redemption whereby that which Adam lost may be redeemed. All this is contained in the mysterious seven-sealed scroll in the right hand of Him that sitteth upon the throne, of whom we read in Revelation 5.

The seven-sealed scroll contains the terms on which Adam's lost estate may be redeemed by the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, even the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

*After the Church...represented by John...is caught away
and in heaven, the next step is the redemption of the earth.*

The only One who could be found Who could meet the conditions of this seven-sealed scroll is One Who is "***the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, He hath prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose the seven seals thereof***" (5:5). He is described as "***a Lamb as it had been slain.***" He is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

The story of Ruth is a beautiful illustration of this Law of Redemption, showing the work of the kinsman redeemer. The book of Ruth, in God's Word, helps us to understand the work of our great Redeemer, Christ, as He opens the seven-sealed book of which Revelation is all about.

The story of Ruth and Boaz

There was in Bethlehem a happy family consisting of a father, a mother and two sons. The father's name was Elimelech, the mother's Naomi and the two boys were named Mahlon and Chilion. For a time they were happy and then a famine came upon the land, and this family moved from Bethlehem and traveled to Moab across the Jordan in search of food.

While they were in the land as strangers, the father Elimelech, died, leaving Naomi a widow. Then one of the boys married a Gentile Moabitess by the name of Orpah and the other married Ruth. After a period of time both the sons of Naomi died, leaving her with two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. Then the famine in the land of Bethlehem subsided and Naomi prepared to go back to her homeland. Orpah remained in Moab, however, Ruth refused to leave her mother-in-law and traveled with her to Bethlehem.

However, when they arrived in Bethlehem they found that their home and land, under the terms of the Levitical law, had been confiscated, as a result of the debts, which they were unable to pay. They were penniless and Ruth was compelled to work in the field as a gleaner behind the harvesters. It so happened that she gleaned in the field of one Boaz who became interested in her and inquired regarding her identity. He found that she was the daughter-in-law of Naomi, a relative of his. Under the Levitical Law a relative could redeem a lost inheritance if he was ***willing, able and fit***. To be fit he must be a relative; to be able he must be sufficiently wealthy to pay the redemption price. Boaz determined that the inheritance which Naomi had lost [which belonged to Ruth as well, by virtue of her marriage to Naomi's son] should be redeemed and returned to its former owners.

Remember that not everyone could be a kinsman redeemer. Only those who met the conditions could function in this capacity, and so the Holy Spirit gives us in Ruth 2:1 a bit of important and interesting information concerning this man Boaz, who was a type of the Kinsman Redeemer, Jesus, and opener of the seven-sealed scroll.

"And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's a mighty man

of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz."

God saw fit to record the fact that Boaz was first a kinsman, and, second, he was wealthy. These were two conditions, which had to be met. Was Boaz *willing* to act as a kinsman redeemer and thus fulfill the third condition? Chapter 4 of Ruth gives us the answer.

"Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spoke came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! Turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. And he (Boaz) took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it." - Ruth 4:1-4

Naomi was about to lose her inheritance unless a kinsman redeemer was found. Boaz undertook for Naomi and Ruth and called the nearest of kin whose right it was to redeem the property. Boaz challenged him to redeem it and added, *"If you don't, I will."* The kinsman promised he would but later found that he was unable to do so. Boaz told him that he must not only redeem the land but redeem Ruth, the widow, as well. [There was a law, which stated that if a man died his brother was to take his widowed wife and perpetuate the name of his brother] This kinsman, however, was unable to do so, and we read accordingly in Ruth 4:6, *"And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."*

Upon this confession, Boaz offered to redeem the inheritance as well as the widowed Ruth, so, in the presence of the witnesses, Boaz purchased the possession and restored it to the owners, by not only paying the price, but, also, marrying the owner.

Ruth 4:9-10, recording the transaction, states *"And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. More over Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day."*

This whole story of the book of Ruth points to Jesus Christ, our Kinsman Redeemer! Adam had lost his inheritance and broken with God. He was separated from God and had lost his dominion over the earth, which God gave him when He created him. A Redeemer must be found. Man's nearest of kin could not redeem him. In the case of Naomi and Ruth there was a near kinsman whom Boaz challenged, but he was unable to function as a redeemer because he had an obligation of his own to fulfill.

What a picture of man's impotency, and inability, to save either himself or his brother! We, too, must say, *"I cannot redeem it lest I mar mine own inheritance."* There is no man who can by any means redeem his own soul, much less the soul of another. Someone else must be found who is willing, who is fit and who is able. In the case of Ruth this man was Boaz. He was

fit for he was a kinsman. He was able for he was a man of wealth, and he was perfectly willing.

Our Redeemer is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the Lamb that was slain!

In Revelation 5, a search is made in heaven and earth, and under the earth, for a man who could redeem man and wrest creation from the grip of the curse upon it. No man was found and we read in verse 4, "***I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or to look inside.***"

[Remember, this scroll was the mortgage containing the terms of redemption.]

Suddenly One stepped forward Who is described as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the root of David and as a Lamb that was slain, and He boldly stretched out His hand and took the scroll, and the scroll was delivered to Him, signifying that He had met the conditions to redeem man, the widowed bride, and to redeem the earth, the lost possession!

Does Jesus meet the conditions of a Redeemer?

The first requirement was the Redeemer must be related to the debtor. Almost two thousand year ago Jesus came from heaven's glory and became one of us, a human Redeemer, a member of the human family. He was made like unto us in all things, only without sin.

The apostle John declared, "*The Word was made flesh.*"

Hebrews 2:16-17 states, "***For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.***"

The humanity of Christ, His incarnation, was an absolute and indispensable necessity in the plan of salvation. It was as essential as His deity. Christ became a man, a perfect man, one of us, a member of the human family, in order that He might be a kinsman redeemer.

The second requirement was the ***willingness*** of a Redeemer to act for his lost brother. The obligation could not be forced upon him. Like Boaz, Jesus Christ was willing to be a redeemer.

"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written Of Me), to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7).

In the garden Jesus testified, when praying to His Heavenly Father, "***Not My will, but Thine, be done.***"

Hebrews 12:2 states of Jesus, "***Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.***"

The third requirement was that He must be able, that is, He must be able to pay the price of redemption. The Levitical law and the case Boaz involved money...silver money... the price of redemption. [Silver, in Scripture, speaks of blood, and points forward to the great "anti-type redemption" of sinners, and the world, Jesus Christ, Whose perfect, sinless, blood, paid the price for man's sins.] There was only one who could pay this price, even the Lamb of God.

1 John 1:7 states, "*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

1 Peter 1:18-19 states, "*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*"

In Revelation 5, the King sits on His throne. In His hand is a seven-sealed scroll containing the terms for the redemption of the world, the entire creation. One who meets the conditions of the kinsman redeemer must break the seals, and Jesus Christ is the only One Who can meet these requirements. He steps forward and takes the scroll and begins to open the seals as recorded in the remainder of the book of Revelation. As He does, the tense silence of heaven is broken and the hosts of heaven, the 24 elders, burst forth into song. Listen to them in verses 9-10: "*And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."*

Notice that the first part of this song (verse 9) is in the **past** tense, as the 24 elders sing of something that is already accomplished. They *have* been redeemed. However, the last part of the next verse (verse 10) is in the **future** tense: "*And we shall reign on the earth.*"

The Church, raptured in chapter 4, has its redemption completed, however, the **earth** on which the redeemed are destined to reign still lies under the curse and must also be redeemed before it is fit to be a dwelling place for the glorified saints of God.

The scroll in the hand of Him on the throne contains the terms of redemption, which our Redeemer is well able to meet, However, Satan refuses to relinquish his power over the earth, and, so, the Lamb opens the seals and awful judgments pour forth upon the earth under the seals, trumpets and vials, until, at last, the judgments are complete...the devil is bound and cast into the pit...and...the Lord returns with His redeemed bride to reign **upon** the earth!

In Revelation 5, the Church has been caught up in the Rapture (chapter 4); however, creation has not been delivered from the curse brought upon it by the sin of man.

Romans 8:19-22 states, "*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*"

Creation must also be delivered from the curse of sin! There is no mistaking these words of Paul written by inspiration. He tells us plainly that creation today is "*groaning and travailing*" in pain under the curse, however, it will be delivered at the manifestation of "*sons of God...*" (that is, Christians)...which will occur when Jesus returns after the Tribulation to set up His kingdom upon the earth.

Romans 8:23 states, "*we are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*" The "*redemption of our body*" will occur at the coming again of Christ, at the Rapture of the Church, according to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The Tribulation period...which most of the book of Revelation is all about...takes place after the Rapture of the Church and, then, Christ will return to this earth **with** His saints to set up His Kingdom, the entire creation will have been redeemed. That is what the book of Revelation is primarily all about, *the redeeming of creation!*

When Christ died on the Cross-, He died, not only to save man from going to hell, but, also, He died to save man to *reign with Him on earth*. Jesus, not only died to save sinners, but He died to redeem the entire creation. It, too, must be redeemed from the curse.

It seems significant that, when Christ was crucified on the Cross-, He wore a crown of *thorns*. Genesis 3:18, mentions thorns in God's curse as a result of man's sin. Christ's crown of *thorns* seems to be related, reminding us that even creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

Scripture abounds with statements to confirm this truth of creation being *redeemed* from corruption. For instances Isaiah 35:1,7 states: "*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.*"

God never made a desert, but, rather, pronounced His creation "*good*," and Isaiah states that God created the earth not to be a void, but to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). Deserts are the result of the curse upon the ground, however, when Christ, the Redeemer, comes, the entire earth will become once more like the Garden of Eden. So productive will the earth be in that day that the Prophet Amos describes it as follows: "*Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt*" (Amos 9:13).

The curse **will be** removed! The earth will bring forth her increase and there will be plenty for all. There will be no more want, no more poverty, no more rent to pay, for then, "*shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree*" (Micah 4:4).

Even the animal creation will share in the deliverance of the Redeemer Who opens the seven-sealed book. The Old Testament prophet, in describing that day says in Hosea 2:18, "*And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beast of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground.*"

Ezekiel, describing this same day, says, "*And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit,*

and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land" (Ezekiel 34:27).

Isaiah declares in his prophesy, "*The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord*" (Isaiah 65:25).

Many other Scripture references states, that, not only will *man* be redeemed, but, also, the *entire realm of God's creation*, which fell under the curse of Adam's sin, will be redeemed.

When Jesus reigns, this earth will be like Paradise was before the fall. It is to redeem this creation that the Lamb, spoken of in Revelation 5, steps forward and takes the scroll out of the hand of the One Who sits upon the throne. **The scroll contains the terms for the redemption of creation!** The Lamb...the Lord Jesus Christ...has met the conditions and the scroll is given to Him, however, Satan refuses to relinquish the claim he has upon the earth, as a result of man's sin. Even through the price of redemption has been met, Satan, still, refuses to give up his power, so Christ...the Lamb, slain, and the Lion of Judah...takes all creation from him by right, and, by force!

- Christ tears opens the first seal and a white horse of artificial, false, peace dashes forth.
- Christ tears open the second seal and a red horse dashes forth and the earth is plunged into the bloodiest war in all its history.
- Christ tears open the third seal and a black horse rides out with famine and death and destruction upon the earth.
- Christ breaks open the fourth seal and there rides forth a pale, or livid, horse, called death; disease and pestilence, together with famine, war and hunger, sweep the earth until a third of its population has perished.

Still, Satan, and his followers, will not acknowledge the rightful King of earth by virtue of His redemption, so the Jesus Christ...the Lamb...opens the fifth seal, and we see the saints under the altar in heaven crying for deliverance.

These saints under the altar are those who have been martyred and slain and are the justification for the awful judgments to follow upon the earth.

The sixth seal of the scroll is opened, and anarchy, and revolution, is rampant. Earthquakes and terrifying sights in the heavens cause men to hide in caves and pray for the rocks to cover them and the hills to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb as He prepares to open the last seal.

When Christ, the Lamb, opens the seventh seal, in Revelation 8, seven trumpeters step forth and as the first trumpet sounds, hail and fire fall to the earth. The second trumpet sounds and a volcanic eruption hurls a flaming mountain into the sea and kills a third of the creatures in

the sea. The third trumpet sounds and a giant meteor hits the earth, destroying a third of the supply of drinking water on the earth.

The fourth trumpet sounds and the sun is darkened in the heavens; the fifth sounds and the bottomless pit is opened and out of it come supernatural demon-being like locusts tormenting the wicked upon the earth unto they cry for death but cannot find it.

The sixth angel sounds his trumpet and we behold the preparations for the Battle of Armageddon and the marshaling of an army of two hundred million soldiers for the last great battle the world will see.

When the seventh trumpet sounds, seven vials of the wrath of God are poured out, fulfilling all the judgments, and when the last vial is poured out the end will come and Christ will return with His saints to set up His Kingdom on earth.

These seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials of God's wrath, occupy only about seven years between the Rapture of the Church and the coming again of Christ to the earth to rule and reign in His Kingdom.

The period, which the book of Revelation is primarily speaking of, is called "***The Tribulation Period***" and is divided into two parts of three and one-half years each. The first is called *the Tribulation*, during which time the seven seals are opened and the seven trumpets blown, and the last half is called *the Great Tribulation*, and during this period the seven last vials of God's wrath are poured out upon the earth.

All this is implied in the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation 5

Understanding this scroll is the key to the remainder of the book of Revelation. As Christ opens the seals, the judgments which will purify the earth, redeem Israel and produce a new earth in which even the creatures are redeemed, will be poured out, until it appears that all humanity will perish from the earth, and then suddenly, after the last vial has been poured out, the Lord will return, as we read in Revelation 19:11-16,

Immediately upon the return of Christ, *with His saints*, the beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire. Satan will, then, be bound and cast into the pit, and then will follow a thousand years of peace, blessing and prosperity under the rule of the Kings of Kings and the Lord of Lords. In chapter 20 of Revelation is the account of the loosing of Satan, the end of the thousand years, his doom, and the lake of fire, the final judgment of the wicked dead at the Great White Throne and a description of the eternity, which lies beyond.

After the revelation has been completed, the purpose of God will have been accomplished and His program fulfilled!

Revelation 2 and 3 tell us that the present age of *professing* Christendom will end with Laodicea. Revelation 4 describes the Rapture of the Church and chapters 4 and 5 show us what happened in heaven after John, representing the Church, arrived. In chapter 5 we read of the seven-sealed scroll, which contained all that, followed the Rapture of the Church. Revelation 6 to

19:11 tells of the Tribulation and Revelation 19 speaks of the return of Christ to reign, with His saints, on earth. Then will follow the Millennium and the final judgment of the wicked.

Consider what happens when Christ takes the scroll and is about to open the first seal: ***"And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints"*** (Revelation 5:8).

All the occupants of heaven know what the breaking of these seals, and opening of this scroll, means, and, as the Lamb steps forward, they all burst into praise, and song, and pour out the prayers of the saints.

For thousands of years the saints have been praying, ***"Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven,"*** and, now, finally, at long last, their prayers are answered and Christ is about to wrest the power from Satan's grasp.

They sing a new song of redemption: ***"Thou has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."***

The saints will reign on the earth - reign with Christ, over, and upon, the earth which now rejects Him and rejects our testimony concerning Him.

Then the angels take up the song: ***"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"*** (Revelation 5:11-12)

After the angels have joined in praise with the *"four living creatures"* and with the 24 elders...(that is, all the saints)... the entire creation joins in the chorus:

"Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: `To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!' The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped" (Revelation 5:13-14).

Read Revelation 6

The Four Horseman of Revelation

When the student of Revelation comes to chapter 6, he enters the strictly *"prophetic"* part of the book. In chapters 4 and 5, he has witnessed the things in Heaven, he has been privileged to glance into the secret of God's presence and has observed the preparation of coming judgments upon the earth, and however, now, his attention is directed back to earth. Christ, the Lamb, has taken the scroll of redemption in His right hand and, as He breaks open the first seal, He is assuming His right of purchase...***the right of redemption***... taking control of all creation, evicting and dispossessing, Satan from all the universe!

The earth, as well as all the saints, has, also, been redeemed, however, Satan refuses to relinquish his claim, and the first seal is broken and a *white horse* goes forth conquering, and to conquer. the breaking of this first seal is the beginning of the Tribulation Period.

The First Seal - The White Horse –

The white horse is a symbol of peace and victory. The rider upon this white horse is the Antichrist, the false messiah.

[He is not to be confused with the white horse and its rider of which we read in Revelation 19:11, who is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself in His glorious triumphant return to bring true peace.]

The Antichrist is the only one prophesied to go forth "*conquering and to conquer*" at the beginning of the Tribulation Period. He comes as the false Messiah of Israel (Matthew 24:4-5; John 5:43; Daniel 9:27). The Antichrist, who seeks to imitate the true Christ, comes on a white horse. He comes promising peace. For a brief period after the true Church is taken up there will be peace on earth. The nations will federate and end all war. The churches, which are left behind, will unite under one great system, since all true believers will be gone. They will not meet with any opposition from those "*fanatical*" Christians because they will all be with the Lord in glory!

A period of false peace, a mock millennium, will ensue, and when the Antichrist upon the white horse has convinced the world that the golden age of peace has come, he will unloose his fury upon the unsuspecting nations and plunge the world into war. This is revealed when the second seal is opened.

The sudden shattering of this spurious peace and the plunging of the entire world into the greatest war of all time, a war that will culminate in the Battle of Armageddon, follow the brief false peace of the Antichrist.

The Second Seal - The Red Horse - The rider upon this red horse is pictured as having a *great sword* with which to take peace from the earth and cause murder and wars and bloodshed among men. There is no doubt what is symbolized here, war is the natural result of the Antichrist going forth "*conquering and to conquer.*" The "*sword*" is a general symbol of war, bloodshed, and national, civil and class conflicts of all kinds.

After a brief period of what appears to be peace on earth, the Antichrist will unloose his fury on an unsuspecting world and, by some "*great sword*" ...a terrible power...and plunge all nations into war. All of the past wars are but forerunners of this terrible war!

2 Thessalonians 2:7 states, "***For the mystery of iniquity...(that is, Satan's work)... doeth already work: only he who now letteth...*** (that is, the working of the Holy Spirit through the body of Christ, the Church)...***will let, until he...***(the Holy Spirit through the Church's influence)...***be taken out of the way.***" The Holy Spirit is, presently, holding in check the blood-thirsty forces of Satan, however, when the Rapture of the church takes place, this power will be taken out of the world, and then Satan will give the world a blood bath.

The Third Seal - The Black Horse - As the third seal is broken by the Lamb, and there is

the appearance of a horrible, black horse and rider. The description of this horse makes it easy to identify. The black horse typifies the scourge that always accompanies and follows war. It is the black horse of *famine*. The rider is carrying a balance in his hand, for the purpose of measuring food, indicating that because of the scarcity of food, it must be weighed. The scene...of wheat and barley being measured...speaks of famine. It is a scene of severe rationing, and grim austerity, where everyone receives only a meager allowance, hardly enough to keep body and soul together.

Verse 6 states that, "*a measure of wheat will sell for a penny,*" (A measure of wheat is approximately a quart.) *A penny was a day's wages for the average laborer of those days,* indicating that the entire daily wage for the working man (Matthew 20:1-16) will be required to buy one quart of wheat (about two pounds).

Ordinarily, one could buy eight measures of wheat, or twenty-four measures of barley, for a penny, however, when this third seal is opened, only one measure of wheat, or three measures of barley, can be purchased for a penny, making food eight times higher than usual.

Lamentations 4:9, which states, "*Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of famine; racked with hunger, they waste away for lack of food from the field.*" will surely be fulfilled.

The picture drawn, with the breaking of the third seal, is one of mitigating severity, with man barely having enough for one day's scant allowance to maintain his own life, not counting his family!

The phrase, "*see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine*" in verse 6, has reference to that fact that, it will be the poor, and the middle class, who will suffer indescribably at this time. "*Oil and wine*" in Scripture has reference to *the luxuries of the rich* (Psalm 104:15; Proverbs 21:17; Jeremiah 31:12). Only the wealth will have sufficient food at this time, however, their time of depravity is coming...they will be dealt with...in chapter 18, when they will bewail and lament over their loss.

The Fourth Seal - The Pale Horse - This fourth horse, and rider, are not as recognizable as the first three, therefore we are given their name, "*Death and Hell.*" Death and hell...killing *one-fourth* of the world's population...will be the result of the conquering rule of the Antichrist, his great war, followed by such severe famine.

As one reads these passages from God's Word, he begins to understand why this period is called "*The Tribulation*" and why Christians, who understand God's Word, rejoice in the fact that they will be taken out of the world before this great and terrible "*Day of the Lord*" comes.

The Fifth Seal - The Slain Tribulation Martyrs - The breaking of this fifth seal gives us a glimpse into heaven. Under the altar in heaven...(there is a temple in heaven)...John sees the souls of those martyred during that intense period described under the opening of the first four seals. *There will be people saved during the Tribulation*, who will be martyred for their faith. At this point in

time, they are assured that they have not died in vain, but, they are to be patient and wait until the indignation of the Lord is past.

They are slain because of their belief in the Word of God, and for the testimony which they hold, and they cry out for vengeance on their enemies on earth. However, they are told that they must wait until all who are to be slain during the Tribulation are killed, then they will all be raptured together in one body at the end of the Tribulation.

To be able to better understand the order of prophecy, it would be well to consider the comparison of Jesus' "*Olivet Discourse*" and what we see in Revelation, chapter six.

Matthew 24:1-35, "Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 'Do you see all these things?' He asked. 'I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.' As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Christ answers the disciples' first question, "***When will this happen?***"

[***1st Seal*** - False Christ] - ***Matthew 24:4-5***, "*Jesus answered: 'Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.'*"

[***2nd Seal*** - War] - ***Matthew 24: 6-7***, "*You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.'*"

[***3rd Seal*** - Famine] - ***Matthew 24:7***, "*There will be famines.'*"

[***4th Seal*** - Pestilence & Death] - ***Matthew 24:7-8***, "*...and pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.'*"

[***5th Seal*** - Martyrdom] - ***Matthew 24:9-13***, "*Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.'*"

Matthew 24:14 states, "*And this gospel of the KINGDOM will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.'*"

The Gospel **now** being preached is the "*Gospel of the Grace of God.*" (Acts 20:24)

Christ answers the disciples' second question, "***what will be the sign of your coming?***"

<p>Matthew 24:15 <i>"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel - let the reader</i></p>	<p><i>The Sign of the Desolator</i></p>	<p>Daniel 9:27, <i>"He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven,' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And one who causes <u>desolation</u> will place abominations on a</i></p>
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<i>understand - - "</i>		<i>wing of the temple until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."</i>
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The Great Tribulation - Matthew 24:16-22

"...then let those who are in Judah flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take in place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."

Christ answers the disciples' third question, "***What of the end of the age?***"

Matthew 24:29-30, *"Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."*

The "Fig Tree" Sign - Matthew 24:32-35, *"And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth; this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away."*

The Sixth Seal - The Wrath of God - Physical changes on earth
(Prophesied, also, in the Old Testament)

With the opening of the sixth seal we note an alarming increase in the tempo and intensity of the judgments falling upon the earth after the removal of the true Church, the body of Christ (Revelation 4). The first four seals concerned war on earth but with the opening of the sixth, judgments from heaven are poured upon the earth. We have revealed for the first time the wrath of God. ***No wrath of God is contained in the first five seals for they reveal things that are only the natural results of the rise of a conqueror and the persecution of God's people.*** However, evidently, because of the terrible persecution of God's people, God begins to reveal His great wrath and judgment upon those persecutors. This outpouring of God's wrath will produce physical changes in the earth and heavens and distress among men.

An important feature in understanding the book of Revelation is the fact that the ***seventh seal*** flows into, and includes, the seven trumpet judgments, and, the ***seventh trumpet*** flows into, and includes the vial judgments.

Like a telescope, made up of three sections...(the outer section contains the inner

two)...each section expanding out of the previous section, until the telescope is expanded to its full length to give a clear view. Likewise, the three *sections* of judgments...the seal, the trumpet and the vial...all extend out of the previous set of judgments.



The seventh seal includes the seven trumpet judgments, that is, out of the seventh seal, the trumpet judgments issue, and, out of the seventh trumpet judgment the vial judgments issue.

We have considered chapter six, and have seen six seals broken, as the Lamb redeems creation from Satan's dominion. The Antichrist is revealed, first, with his promise of peace... [which turns out to be false, and brief]...under the symbol of the white horse, followed by the red horse of war, the black horse of famine and the pale horse of pestilence and death.

The fifth seal reveals that amid all this tribulation there is a faithful remnant who will be martyred for their faithfulness and who will share in the kingdom glory. The sixth seal gives a graphic picture of the awful time of sorrow and death upon the earth when a *fourth of the population of the earth* will perish by the war, hunger and pestilence.

Understanding the Parenthetical periods of Revelation

Read Revelation 7

The seventh chapter of Revelation is the first "*parenthetical passage*" of the book. It is inserted, here, between the sixth and seventh seal and contains explanatory matter about things, which will transpire during the time that the six seals, however, this information was not contained in the giving of the seven seals.

The seventh chapter of Revelation is parenthetical. Instead of the natural order of events, the seventh seal does not follow the sixth seal immediately, instead, an explanation of two companies of redeemed people are given...breaking into the thought of the seals... explaining certain things that are transpiring in, and between, the main order of events.

To understand the book of Revelation, one must be aware of seven "*parenthesis*" throughout the book of Revelation. Chapter seven is **the first of these parenthesis**, coming between the sixth and the seventh seals and reveals other things that are happening during this period of time. They are:

- (1) The ministry of the 144,000 (Revelation 7:1-8)
- . (2) A multitude, saved during the Tribulation Period (Revelation 7:9-17).

The second parenthesis, coming between the sixth and the seventh trumpet judgments, reveals what else is happening during the period of time of these trumpet judgments.

- (1) The "*small scroll*" (Revelation 10:1-11)
- (2) The Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:1-14)

The third parenthesis, coming between the seventh trumpet and the vial judgments, reveals **seven personages**:

- (1) The Sun Clothed Woman (Revelation 12:1-2)
- (2) The Dragon (Revelation 12:3-4)
- (3) The Man Child (Revelation 12:5-6)
- (4) The Archangel (Revelation 12:7-12)
- (5) The Jewish Remnant (Revelation 12:13-17)
- (6) The Beast out of the Sea (Revelation 13:1-10)
- (7) The Beast out of the earth (Rev. 13:11-19-18)

The fourth parenthesis, also, coming between the seventh trumpet and the seven vial judgment, reveals certain events, which take place during this period of time that, are not included in the telling of the "trumpet-judgments."

- (1) The Lamb on Mt. Zion (Revelation 14:1-5)
- (2) The Three Angels (Revelation 14:6-12)
- (3) The Blessed Dead (Revelation 14:13)
- (4) The Harvest and Vintage (Revelation 14:14-20)

The fifth parenthesis, coming sixth and seventh vial judgments, reveals what else is happening during the period of time that these judgments are being poured out.

Three unclean spirits (Revelation 16:13-16)

The sixth parenthesis, coming between the 2nd and the 3rd doom.

The seventh parenthesis, coming between the 4th and the 5th doom reveals:

- (1) Satan bound (Revelation 20:1-7)
- (2) The First Resurrection (Revelation 20:4-5)
- (3) The Millennium (Revelation 20:6)
- (4) Satan loosed for a little while (Revelation 20:7)

These parenthetical passages, simply, contain explanatory matters about things which will transpire, nevertheless, they are not contained in the revealing of the seal, trumpet and vial judgments, therefore, these interruptions are necessary in order to bring the reader up to date on what else is taking place during the sharing of these judgments.

Let's review up to this point of our study. After the introduction of Christ...as He is today...in chapter 1, and the messages to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3, we see the saints and the scene, which they behold in Heaven (chapter 4). In chapter 5 there is a diligent search made to find One who is worthy to break the seals of the scroll containing the record of redemption. Chapter 6 shows the breaking of the first six seals, and their consequences upon the earth. Chapter 7 is a parenthesis, before the breaking of the 7th seal, revealing other events that are taking place during this same period of time.

These four angels will be given power to hurt the earth and the sea and the trees. (A comparison of these four angels with the first *trumpet* angels in Revelation 8:7-12, will reveal that they may well be the same.) However, before these judgments are fulfilled, there is the "**sealing of the 144,000**

Jews."

Revelation 7:4-8, states that during the Tribulation Period God will remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Solomon, and all the promises of Israel's restoration in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and all the other prophets, and, before the Antichrist can destroy the nation of Israel, God is going to save a remnant of twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of the sons of Jacob and seal them for Himself - seal them to escape destruction of the Antichrist and seal them to become His witnesses...***His missionaries*** ...during the Tribulation whereby a great multitude will be saved because of the testimony of this redeemed remnant from the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel.

These 144,000, all Israelites...the physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob...will become God's missionaries during the Tribulation Period. As a result of their preaching and testimony there will be a great number saved, as Revelation 7:9 states, "***of all nations, and kindred's, and people, and tongues.***"

Great masses in the world will hear the message during the Tribulation Period from the lips of these 144,000 Israelites, and, as a result, a great number will be saved, many of whom will be martyred, and will be raised at the close of the Tribulation Period, as the final gleanings of the First Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:23--24a). There is no question regarding their identity, verse 14.

Here is the picture! After the sixth seal, and before the seventh, God, who knows what lies ahead, seals and saves 144,000 missionaries from Israel who preach the Gospel during the remaining of the Tribulation Period. As a result, a great multitude is saved, who are martyred for their faith and will be added to the glorious company of the Church when Jesus returns, which we read about in Rev. 19:11.

These martyred, Tribulation, saints, are safe in Heaven from the awful day of the Lord and awaiting the coming of Christ in power...(their bodies awaiting the *end-time*" resurrection) ...In the meantime they are before the throne of God in perfect bliss...the "*gleanings*" of the Gospel harvest. How marvelous in the final description of their bliss in verses 15-17 of chapter 7.

What a picture of peace, joy and quietness! Contrast this with the chapter, which follows when the judgments of the seven trumpets begin as the seventh seal is opened. Here we have the resumptions of the awful judgments of the Tribulation, but, far removed from them are God's redeemed saints who because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are in the place of eternal bliss and peace.

The seventh seal includes all that happens during the sounding of the seven trumpet judgments.

An illustration to help us to understand how the trumpet judgments come out of the seal judgments...and, the vial judgments come out of the trumpet judgments...would be to imagine, at a fourth of July fire works, a rocket is fired into the air, bursting into seven stars, then, one of the stars bursts into seven other stars, finally, one star, of the second group of stars, bursts into a

third group of seven stars.

Read Revelation 8

After the sixth seal there is "*silence in Heaven*" for half an hour. Heaven is known for its celestial sounds and continual shouts of praise and adoration. Heaven is a scene where Heavenly hosts pay homage and bring glory to Jesus Christ our Lord.

However, now all the redeemed saints, represented by the 24 elders, and the angels all hush their voices. All Heaven is silent! The silence is mentioned because it is unusual for Heaven to be silent! It is the silence of an awesome expectation, like the nerve-breaking tension of wondering what will happen next, the calm before the storm, an awful hush before the battle.

The occasion for this silence is the opening of the last seal. As the seals were opened, one-by-one, increasingly terrible judgments fell upon the earth until six had been opened. War, famine, pestilence, death, earthquakes, hailstones and fire had taken a toll of fatalities that swept a fourth of the people of the earth into judgment and death.

One more seal remained to be opened and the hosts of Heaven realizing it was the last and the most terrible, stood in awe and expectation. They knew something of what lay ahead, though they may not have known all, but this they knew: they knew that there had been a gradual rise of intensity of each succeeding seal judgment, and, that now, God's wrath was about to break loose, and they were about to witness the greatest time of sorrow that the world had ever seen. This expectation accounts for the silence in Heaven for half an hour.

It is as if Heaven "*held it breath*" as they awaited the sounding of the first of the seven trumpets which followed the breaking of the seventh, and the last, seal of the scroll. Expectation and suspense can be so intense that one dares not breathe. We often describe such a situation thus: "*It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop.*"

Imagine the suspense you would feel of hearing a story of a mad villain pursuing an innocent young girl. He has escaped from a prison for the criminally insane and, with a knife between his teeth and a gun in each hand, sneering and cursing, he pursues the innocent victim of his rage. He is gaining on her, inch-by-inch, foot-by-foot. the path leads to the edge of a great precipice, which drops hundreds of feet to jagged rocks below. Closer and closer the slayer comes to his victim. His hands reach out to seize her as she reaches the end of the cliff. She hesitates, she wavers for a moment, and then, just as the villain lunges at her . . .

That is suspense! If this were an account of an actual experience, you would be holding your breath when the maiden reached the cliff. There would be silence - *the silence of suspense*.

This illustration - weak though it is - helps us to understand the silence in Heaven. The Heavenly hosts have been following the rapid unsealing of the scroll and, no doubt, have witnessed the fast-moving events of war, famine, pestilence and death.

Men, hiding in caves and rocks, are crying for the mountains to fall on them, and, this is

the result of the events that occurred during the opening of the first six seals. The seventh is coming, and it is the most terrible all. Consequently, as the Lamb opens this seventh seal and before the first angel-trumpeter of judgment sounds his trumpet, all heaven is in suspense as they await the awful judgments of God. They are breathless... silent for half an hour.

The Seven Trumpets

The awful suspense is occasioned by the events, which were about to take place under the seven trumpets. You will recall that the entire Tribulation Period consists of a trio of sevens: seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials of wrath.

The seventh seal are the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet are the seven vials of God's wrath.

Generally speaking, the first half of the Tribulation includes the seven seals and the first six trumpets. The last half of the Tribulation, called the Great Tribulation, is discussed in chapters 15-19 under the seven vials. Between the first half of the Tribulation and the last half of the Tribulation are four chapters...(11, 12, 13 and 14)...which give a preview of the coming **Great** Tribulation and introduces to us the major characters of the last half of the Tribulation Period. The sounding of the first six trumpets concludes the **first** half of "*the Day of the Lord,*" the Tribulation Period.

Before the first angel blows the trumpet we have the assurance from God that in spite of all the dire judgments which are about to fall, God has not forgotten His people, and their prayers... through long delayed...will be answered by Him. For nineteen hundred years the saints have been praying "*Thy kingdom come Thy will be done,*" and yet it seems that the man of sin, the Antichrist, will yet prevail. Before the terrible time under the trumpets, God gives the vision in which Christ adds the efficacy of His own blood as the acceptable incense, together with the prayers of all saints, to assure them that, come what may, their prayers for the return of Christ, and the establishment of the kingdom, will be answered.

Following the seven angels and their reception of the seven trumpets "*another*" angel came to the golden altar to minister, as clearly stated, which, together with Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:20-7:28; and 13:15, seems to indicate that this angel is, none other than, Christ, in His present ministry as our High Priest. The "*censer*" is always mentioned in connection with the High Priest. (Leviticus 16:12; Hebrews 9:4; [See the results of intruding into this office, Leviticus 10:1; Numbers 16:1-19; 2 Chronicles 26:19 and Ezekiel 8:11]. This angel offers up prayers of the saints as do the living creatures and the 24 elders in Revelation 5:8-10.)

As the seventh seal is opened, seven angels with trumpets make their appearance:

As each trumpet is blown certain judgments and events will transpire on the earth.

THE FIRST TRUMPET - The first angel sounds the trumpet and there falls upon the earth and its wicked inhabitants *hail and fire mingled with blood...and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up* (Revelation 8:7).

This judgment destroys a third of all growing vegetation on the earth! During this plague agricultural progress will be impossible.

THE SECOND TRUMPET - This mountain is evidently a large meteor ablaze with fire, which falls into the sea. John says, "*as it were*" a mountain.

Business on the sea will be crippled and men will begin to realize these judgments are of God!

THE THIRD TRUMPET - This judgment falls in the form of a star from heaven burning "*as it were a lamp*." This is no doubt another meteor whose gaseous vapors will be absorbed by one-third of the waters of the rivers and fountains. They will become bitter as wormwood, and cause many men to die. Wormwood is a perennial herb, very bitter, and is used in the manufacture of absinthe, also, formerly used as a vermifuge.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET - This verse seems so plain as to what will happen under the fourth trumpet, that little more needs to be added.

The first four trumpet judgments have to do with plagues affecting vegetation, seas, rivers, and planets, as indicated in the message to the first four trumpet angels in Revelation 7:1-3. The last three affect, not the material, but, rather, the moral creation.

Read Revelation 9

THE FIFTH TRUMPET - The context shows that the reference is to an *intelligent being*, rather than to a literal star. Personality is ascribed to him, "*And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.*" Only an intelligent being can be given a key and a command to open the door of the pit. Satan's "*angels*" are referred to as stars in Revelation 12:4-9, when John sees, in his vision, one of Satan's angel fall from Heaven.

He opens the bottomless pit and a great swarm of locusts issued forth to torment men upon the earth. Here again the context tells us that in this instance the locusts were not literal insects but fallen demon-beings

These creatures from hell have wings and will look like war horses with crowns of gold, faces of men, hair of women, teeth of lions, breastplates of iron, and stinging tails of scorpions. They will be innumerable and make a thunderous noise as they fly.

THE FIRST WOE will be a literal plague of demon creatures whose outward appearance is like that of a locust. The length of this plague is five months, the same length of time that the flood prevailed (Genesis 7:24) and the same length of time natural locusts appear...from May to September.

These demonic creatures could well be the "*fallen angels*," called in Genesis 6, "*the sons of God*"...(or, "*ones originally created by God*")...who corrupted the human race by an unholy union until God was compelled to destroy the whole race except one family who had escaped this demon corruption.

Jude 6 states, "***And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he... (God)...hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon....or Satan himself!***"

A comparison of Revelation 8:13, 9:12 and 11:14 will show that the 5th, 6th and 7th trumpet judgments are the same as the "Three Woes" and that they are more severe than the first four trumpet judgments. The angel of Revelation 8:13 proclaims these three woes as the ultimatum of heaven's wrath.

THE SECOND WOE is the **SIXTH TRUMPET** (Revelation 9:13-21) The four angels "loosed" in verse 14, which are "bound in the great river Euphrates," are fallen angels, as the "locusts" mentioned in verses 3-11. These angels are leaders of the two hundred million (200,000,000) demon horsemen who will be loosed out of the abyss after the plague of the demon locusts is finished. Each of these four angels will command 50,000,000 of these infernal cavalry. They will go in four directions "to slay the third part of men."

Euphrates is connected with the judgment in the Tribulation period as is clear from this second woe. It is also mentioned in "the day of the Lord," at Armageddon, (Revelation 16:13-16, and, Jeremiah 46:4-10.) The literal reading of Revelation 9:15 is, "***And were loosed the four angels who had been prepared for the hour, and day, and month, and year, that they might kill the third part of men.***"

The description of these demon creatures is given to us in verse 17. The language proves these locusts to be demon spirits...literal demonic creatures...who receive commands to hurt *those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads* (vs. 4). They will torment these men in the same literal and physical manner as natural scorpions do (vs. 5).

When the fifth angel sounds his trumpet, the prison of the bottomless pit is opened and there issue forth super- natural spirits beings to torment men five months. These demonic locusts are objects of sight because men will flee from them and will seek death in preference to contact with them. These demon spirits are a class of especially wicked demon-beings who because of their viciousness were not permitted to be at large until now.

Why the river Euphrates?

It was here that Satan made his first skirmish in his attempt to win mankind away from God, Almighty. It was here, at the Euphrates that the first murder of mankind took place. It was here that Satan's great apostasy against God began at the tower of Babel. It was here that Israel's captivity took place. This place...Euphrates...where all these seemingly great triumphs of Satan's happened, will be the place where God's final victory over the powers of darkness will be revealed.

Verse 15 states, "***And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year...***" showing that God, indeed, is working on a time-clock.

He has everything planned exactly on time!

WILL THESE GREAT "WOES" BRING MEN TO THEIR SENSES?

These verses are a commentary on the corruptness of unrepentant man

Like Pharaoh of the Exodus, chapters 5 through 11, that, when the heat was off, his willful heart returns to its original intention of rejecting God, so, these men of the Tribulation period return to their blasphemous conduct, saying, "*Every- thing that has happened can be explained by natural causes.*"

Read Revelation 10

With the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the first half of the Tribulation Period is over.

One more trumpet remains to be sounded and with this 7th trumpet, the pouring out of the seven vials and the fulfillment of the last three a half years of the Great Tribulation will occur. When these seven vials of God's wrath are poured out the Tribulation will conclude with the battle of Armageddon and the glorious *public* return of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Remember the interlude between the 6th and 7th seal, which is given to bring the reader up to date on what else is happening during this same period of time? Well, chapter 10 is an interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpet, given for the same purpose, the main order of events in the judgments of God are interpreted, in order to introduce to the reader other important information necessary in understanding God's revelation.

Just before the return of the Lord in glory...when He returns with His saints...there will be the greatest concentration of military power the world has ever seen, under the leadership of two fierce dictators: the *political* head of the federated nations...(the first beast of Revelation 13)...and the *religious* dictator, the Antichrist...(the second beast of Revelation 13). This army is being prepared in the middle of the Tribulation Period. In Revelation 9:13-21 we have a description of an army of two hundred million horsemen.

In olden times a conqueror placed his foot on the neck of his vanquished enemy and raised this hand in triumph! That is exactly what is taking place here! The angel "*placing His foot on the earth*" is an act of possession! The "*mighty*" angel can be none other than Jesus Christ, Himself. Not only does the description prove the mighty angel to be Christ, but also He is the only One found worthy to hold, and open, the scroll. Also, in verse 13, this mighty angel refers to the two witnesses as "*My* two witnesses."

One hundred and fifty times in Scripture, "God" is mentioned in connection with clouds. In Revelation 10:1; 14:14-16 it is the Son of Man who is mentioned with clouds. Never in the Bible are common angels mentioned with clouds. The rainbow is never used in the Bible apart from God so this angel here must be the Son of God.

This angel, connected to a "*Lion*," no doubt is referring to "*the Lion of the tribe of Judah*" (Revelation 5:5). Other passages in Scripture speak of Christ roaring in wrath as a lion in the day

of the Lord (Isaiah 31:4-5; Jeremiah 25:29-36; Hosea 11:10-11; Joel 3:16; Amos 3:8).

Christ is the only One with the authority exhibited by this mighty angel!

When the seventh trumpet is sounded and the seven vials of God's wrath are poured out, Christ's glorious millennium will be set up. These judgments, in the last half of the Tribulation, gain in momentum and intensity during the seven vial judgments.

Before this period...the last half of the Tribulation...is revealed, Christ is seen with the "little scroll" (the scroll of redemption that was seen "sealed" in Revelation 5:5, has **now** been opened...the seals broken). Remember, Christ's purpose in taking dominion of the earth is that He might give it to His saints!

What Christ uttered by "seven thunders" is not stated, and, for any one to attempt to guess would be unproductive. If God, for reasons of His own, did not reveal this message of the seven thunders, any speculation on man's part to ascertain that hidden message certainly would be presumption at its height

However, when John does reveal what else Christ said, he states, "***Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, 'There will be no more delay.'***"

Four chapters are placed between the description of the first and the last halves of the Tribulation Period. The last half of the Tribulation is described in chapters 15-19. In the intervening (11 to 13) the reader is introduced to seven principle characters...***The two Witnesses...The Woman, clothed in the Sun...The man-child...The Dragon...and the two Beasts.***

Chapter 14 takes us to a scene in Heaven, showing the 144,000 has been raptured ...three angels with last warnings for the earth, and a view of the harvest of the earth

There is an interesting fact in chapter 10, verses 9 and 10, John is commanded to "eat the little scroll," and John states that, "it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

TASTING THE WORD OF GOD

The phrase, "***eat the little scroll,***" is a Hebraism...("An expression distinctive of the Hebrew language") for the reception of knowledge.

Remember that this "little scroll," from Revelation, chapter 5, contains the glad news of creation's coming deliverance, however, it also contains the doom of the wicked. Ezekiel chapter two will help us to understand this analogy, it states, "*He said to me...(God said to Ezekiel)... 'Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.' As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. He said: 'Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have*

been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' And whether they listen or fail to listen--for they are a rebellious house--they will know that a prophet has been among them. And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house. You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.' Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe."

Note that Ezekiel is commanded to preach to the nation of Israel the word of the Lord and, the word is, as it is in every other instance, a two-edged sword. It is both a message of salvation and one of damnation. (Jeremiah has a similar experience in Jeremiah 15:16 and 20:7-9.) David, too, said, "*How sweet are your promises to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth*" (Psalm 119:103). The Gospel sword always has these two edges, a fact which is too often forgotten today, when many feel preacher should **not** preach judgment, hell-fire, and brimstone, but, rather, they are preach only on the love of God, His mercy and His goodness. The people of Isaiah's day made a similar request, when they said, "***Do not prophesy the truth to us, but tell us flattering things***" (Isaiah 30:10).

Strangely, verse seven makes the statement, "***when he...***(the seventh trumpet angel)... ***shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He has declared to His servants the prophets.***"

What is that mystery?

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 tells us, "*For the **mystery of iniquity** doeth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.*"

[See Pastor Mitchell's notes on this passage of Scripture in his study on the subject: "*Reason for believing that the Church will **not** go through the Tribulation Period.*"]

Suffice it to say here, that this "*One*" holding back the wickedness, is none other than the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the Church of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Paul states in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, "***Let no man deceive you by any means for that day ...***(the Day of the Lord, when Christ comes back *with* His saints)...***shall not come, except there come a falling away first...***(that is, a departure from this earth, or the rapture of the Church) ... ***and that man of sin...***(the Antichrist)...***be revealed, the son of perdition.***"

To keep everything in proper perspective, the "*mighty angel*" (evidently Jesus Christ, Himself) stands upon the sea and the earth, lifts up His hand to heaven and cries out, "*There will be no more delay!*" It is now in the middle of the Tribulation Period. There is only one more trumpet judgment, covering the seven vial judgments. The last phase of the Tribulation ...the last

three and one-half years...and the entire program of God will be completed and the glorious millennial kingdom set up!

The last part of the Tribulation is described in chapters 15 to 19. In the intervening chapters (11-14) we are introduced to seven principal characters in the last half of the Tribulation, the Great Tribulation.

Read Revelation 11

Notice that this chapter opens with a scene in the city of Jerusalem, which, for centuries has been under the dominion of Gentile rule, however, John is told to take a reed, or a measuring rod, and measure the Temple and the altar. Evidently, by this time, the Temple has been rebuilt in Jerusalem under the false promise of the false Messiah before he shows his true identity and turn viciously upon those whom he has promised to defend and befriend.

Remember, that a "*rod*," in Scripture, is an instrument of punishment Here, during the Tribulation, God is dealing with Israel again *as a nation!*

John is told not to measure the court because "*it was given unto the Gentiles to be trodden underfoot for another three and one-half years.*"

Remember this figure, "*three and one-half years*," sometimes referred to as *forty-two months*," or, at other times as, "*one thousand two hundred and sixty days*." This same period is also spoken of as, "*a time, and times, and half a time*." This is the length of the last half of the Tribulation, giving the exact limit of "*the Day of the Lord*" from this point (chapter 11) and corresponds to the last half of Daniel's seventieth week.

The temple, mentioned in Revelation 11:2, is one built by the Jews (either just before Tribulation begins, or, during the **first** three and one-half years of the Tribulation, and will be destroyed at the end of the Tribulation, either by the earthquake under the seventh vial (Revelation 16:18-19), or by the armies of Antichrist at the taking of Jerusalem, (Zechariah 14:1-5). Both the Old and the New Testaments are clear that there is to be such a temple where sacrifices will be offered for at least three and one-half years. Then it will be made desolate for three and one-half years and will be polluted by the Antichrist and the Gentiles (Daniel 9:27; 12:7-12; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:2-4).

There, of course, will be the Millennial temple as described in Ezekiel chapters 40 to 48. The Old Testament temple, built by Solomon, the one in Jerusalem when Jesus was on earth, was destroyed in 70 A.D. John was writing Revelation in 95 A.D.

The reason for the temple being measured, here, in the middle of the Tribulation Period, is that everything about the Jewish part of the temple and the worship of the Jews will pass under the rod of judgment and desolation for the purpose of chastening Israel and bringing them to the place of accepting Jesus Christ as their true Messiah.

[A study of Romans 11:21-25, showing God has "*set aside*" Israel during this present

Church Age, and will again turn to Israel to deal with her as a nation, would help, also, Luke 21:24, which speaks of Israel's judgment]

The court of the Gentiles was not measured to be trodden down of the Gentiles, for it was already in their possession, and was considered by the Jews as being polluted and fit only for Gentiles. this course is to be cast out in the sense that there will be no more worship there by the Gentiles, who will have worshipped there before entering into the temple itself to worship Antichrist, and his image. Not only will the temple be given to the Gentiles to trod under foot, but also the city itself will be in their possession for forty-two months.

The word which is translated, "**Gentiles**" here, is from the Greek word "**ethnos**" which occurs twenty-three times in the book of Revelation and is translated "**nations**" every where else.

Daniel's seventy weeks

While, I want to stay in the book of Revelation, since we are studying that book, however, in order to understand fully what is happening at this point in the book of Revelation, it would be well to refresh our mind concerning Daniel's seventy week.

Daniel 9:24-27 states, "**Seventy `sevens'** (or, *weeks*) **are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.** (Vs.25) **Know and understand this: From the issuing to the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler comes, there will be seven `sevens' and sixty-two `sevens.'** **It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.** (Vs.26) **After the sixty-two `sevens' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end and desolations have been decreed.** (Vs.27) **He will confirm a covenant with many for one `seven,' but in the middle of that `seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And one who causes desolation will place abominations on a wing of the temple until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.."**

Remember, God is dealing with Israel *as a nation*, during the Tribulation Period. Daniel 9:24, God declares to His prophet, Daniel, "**Seventy `sevens' are decreed for your people...**" God also states that this period in which He is dealing with Israel, from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, would be a period of "**seventy sevens.**" (The Jewish people counted seven **years** as a "**week**".) Note that these "**seventy `sevens'**" are divided into three periods:

1. "**Seven-sevens**" (or, 49 years) to rebuild Jerusalem
2. "**Sixty-two sevens**" (or, 434 years) until the *Anointed One will be cut off.*"
3. "**One seven**" (or, 7 years) "**to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.**"

History records that Jerusalem, from the command for Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem, until it was completed was exactly 49 years (*seventy sevens*) and, exactly 432 years later...(sixty-two sevens, from the command to rebuild Jerusalem)...the "*Anointed One*" was cut off"...(Christ was crucified).

The first sixty-nine sevens (7 and 62) are **past!** There remains one more "*seven*" (or, seven years) to be fulfilled.

This present Church Age...from Calvary until the Rapture...God has "*set aside*" His dealing with Israel **as a Nation** and is dealing with **all** mankind on a "*whosoever will*" basis.

The Age in which we now are living...the Church Age...fills the interval between the time when "*the Anointed One*" is cut off and the **last** seven is fulfilled!

See Daniel's Prophetic diagram in the study of Daniel, chapter 9

Daniel prophesied that, first, "*From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem would be 49 years (seven sevens) and, second, that, until the Anointed One would be cut off would be another 434 years, (or, sixty-two sevens).* That is **exactly** what happened.

From the command to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1) until the building was complete was exactly forty-nine years (or seven `sevens') and, then 434 years later (62 sevens) Jesus, the Messiah was cut off. There remains **seven more years** (1 seven) left to fulfill this prophecy!

Verse 27, plainly, states, "*And he (that is, the "prince of verse 26...the Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many (of the Jews) for one week (7 years) and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate...*" Jesus makes reference to this "*abomination of desolation*" in Matthew 24:15.

Revelation 11:3 (as well as Revelation 13:5) establishes the fact that the Antichrist will persecute the Jews for the last half of the seven-year period, which, of course, will be three and one-half years.

Keeping in mind exactly what is happening in Revelation 11, Christ is setting the stage for the end. He claims possession by surveying the city of Jerusalem, where He is to reign over Israel. then we are told of two witnesses who are to prophecy for three and one-half years.

Who are the Two Witnesses?

Any theory of their identity must harmonize with the statements made of them in Revelation 11:3-13:

- 1, Christ said, "***they are My two witnesses***" (verse 3).
2. They will be given power by Christ in the future (vs 3).

3. They will prophesy 1,260 days or during the same period of time that the Antichrist reigns supreme, the Holy City is trodden down of the Gentiles, and the woman flees into the wilderness for protection (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6; 13:5).
4. They "*are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth*" (Rev. 11:4).

Interestingly, Zechariah 4:3-12 speaks of "*the two olive trees and two candlesticks*," representing two prophets who are "*anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth*."

Scripture declares that, "*It is appointed unto men once to die*," leading one to conclude that, since Enoch and Elijah were the only two men in Scripture who never died, they must be the two witnesses of whom Revelation 11 speaks.

Malachi 4:5, certainly, seems to indicate that ***Elijah***, indeed, will be one of these two witnesses.

Whom ever these "*two witnesses*" are it seems that, once again, God pleads with Israel in the days of travail...the coming three and one-half years. As the 144,000 Jewish ministers of God had proclaimed God's message during the first half of the Tribulation Period.

These two witnesses will prophesy for 1,260 days, being protected by God from those who would desire to harm them. They will have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain, turn water to blood, and bring plagues upon the earth, however, after they have finished their testimony, they will be placed at the mercy of their enemies. The beast that will ascend out of the abyss will make war on them and will overcome them, and will murder them (verse 7) and their corpses will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half **days**. Men will not suffer them to be put into graves. They will gloat over their death and make merry because these two prophets who tormented them are dead. After three and one-half days the Spirit of life from God will enter into them and they will stand upon their feet and ascend into heaven before their enemies. This will produce paralyzing fear upon their enemies and in the same hour a great earthquake will strike Jerusalem and seven thousand men will be slain and one-tenth of the city destroyed. The rest of men will give glory to God (verses 8-13).

The Third Woe - Revelation 11:14 announces the third woe, which is the last of the three woes announced by the angel in Revelation 8:13 that were to take place under the fifth, sixth and seventh trumpet judgments.

Revelation 11:13 ends the parenthetical passage and verse 14 announces the third woe in the same way that the second woe was announced just before this parenthetical passage began in Revelation 9:12.

The seventh trumpet is a period of time (10:7) and embraces the passage given in 11:14-19, also, the seventh trumpet judgment covers the period of time of the sun-clothed woman, the manchild, the dragon, the remnant, the war in heaven and the two beasts, etc. (All these mentioned from Revelation 11:14 to 14:18).

What happens under the seventh trumpet...includes the seven vial judgments...is Christ bringing final redemption to all creation, casting Satan out of the heavenlies, making it possible for God to become Supreme over all the world. God will become absolute Ruler over the world by defeating all Satanic powers in the heavenlies in order to carry out His original purpose for the earth.

In Revelation 11:16-18, the 24 Elders cry out

After this, John sees the temple of God in heaven opened where the ark of His testament was located. The temple is the same as is seen in Revelation, chapters 4 and 15.

The ark is not the one Moses made, but the Heavenly ark, from which Moses patterned the earthly Ark of the Covenant.

The catching up of the manchild, the casting out of Satan from heaven, the flight of the woman into the wilderness, the persecution of the remnant, the rise of the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth, will all happen and will all be completed under the seventh trumpet.

The 11th chapter opened with Christ setting the stage for the coming end, which is very near, now! He begins claiming His possession by having the city surveyed. The city where He is to rule over Israel. Then, the two witnesses, who are to prophecy for three and one-half years, are introduced.

Remember, the seventh trumpet covers the rest of the Tribulation Period, embracing the passage given in Revelation 11:14-19, and covers the period of time of the sun-clothed woman, the manchild, the dragon, the remnant, the war in heaven and the two beasts, etc. (All these mentioned from Revelation 11:14 to 14:18).

As one reads Revelation 11:15-19, he sees that the seventh trumpet includes all that happens down to chapter 20.

The seventh trumpet...including the seven vial judgments...is Christ bringing final redemption to all creation, casting Satan out of the heavenlies, making it possible for God to become Supreme over all the world. God will become absolute Ruler over the world by defeating all Satanic powers in the heavenlies in order to carry out His original purpose for the earth.

In Revelation 11:16-18, the 24 Elders cry out, "***We give thanks to You, Lord God Almighty, Who is and Who was, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and Your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding Your servants and prophets, and Your saints and those who reverence Your Name, both small and great - and for destroying those who destroy the earth.***"

After this, (verse 19) John sees the temple of God in heaven opened where the ark of His testament was located. The temple is the same as is seen in Revelation, chapters 4 and 15. The ark is not the one Moses made, but the Heavenly ark, from which Moses patterned the earthly Ark of the Covenant.

The catching up of the manchild, the casting out of Satan from heaven, the flight of the woman into the wilderness, the persecution of the remnant, the rise of the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth, will all happen and will all be completed under the seventh trumpet.

I do not wish to get too detailed in this study, however, I do feel it is important that one realizes that the above statement...*that the seventh trumpet covers all the Tribulation down to the end...*is accurate.

1. Revelation 10:7 makes the statement, "*In the days... (plural)... of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall **begin** to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to His servants the prophets.*"
2. Revelation 11:15 includes the inauguration of the reign of Jesus Christ.
3. Revelation 11:18 includes the destruction of "*them that destroy the earth,*" which takes place in Revelation 19:20.
4. Revelation 11:18 also includes the giving of rewards to prophets and saints
5. Revelation 11:19 includes the "*opening of the temple*" and we see in Revelation 15:5-6 that this "*opening of the temple*" is to permit the seven angels with the seven vials to come forth.
6. Revelation 11:19 includes the appearance of the "*ark of His testament,*" showing that God has not forgotten His covenant with Israel (signified by the *Ark of the Covenant*), which will take place **after** Israel turns to Christ as her Messiah!

"In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to His servants the prophets"
(Revelation 10:7)

We see the voices of Heaven (10:8) burst forth in celebration and utter their pure delights (11:16-17). We, who have been praying for centuries, "*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done...*", will enter in the spirit of rejoicing too, because, this prophetic account is of that blessed day long awaited for.

The last verses of chapter 11, paint a scene that is soon to come to pass, certainly, a reason for rejoicing!

When Christ reigns there is a five-fold result, all mentioned in verse 18:

1. Nations, hating Christ's divine control, will be angry
2. God's wrath, postponed for so long, is, now, come
3. The time of the dead, that is to be judged, has come
4. The time for Christ to give His rewards has come
5. Christ will destroy them that destroy the earth

Read Revelation 12

Who is this woman of extraordinary appearance, clothed with the sun, the moon under

her feet and crowned with twelve stars? John refers to her as "*a great and wondrous sign.*" The Greek word used here, refers to something very significant, imposing and majestic, indicating something very remarkable and momentous. It is no trifling object, which John sees. No *ordinary* event could fulfill the majesty of this marvelous vision.

The woman symbolizes something on earth **during the Tribulation Period**, for her "*manchild*" is caught up to heaven, she flees to the wilderness on earth (12:13-16).

In Bible Prophecy there are only three classes of people, namely, (1) the Church, (2) the Jews and (3) the Gentiles.

The only class of people ever spoken of as a "*married*" is **Israel!**

Genesis 37:9-11 will help in understanding this symbol, it states, "*The he (Joseph) had another dream, and he told it to his brothers, 'Listen,' he said, 'I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.' When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, 'What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?' His brothers were jealous of him and his father kept the matter in mind.*"

These signs...the sun, moon, and stars...were signs of Israel, because she is often spoken of as a woman, "*married*" to God

Look up: Isaiah 54:1-6, Jeremiah 3:1-14 and Hosea 2:14-23,

The Church is not once symbolized as a "*married*" woman, nor is she mentioned in connection with these last day events, how- ever, **Israel** is spoken of as a "*married*" woman, and, is primarily dealt with in Revelation, chapters 4 -19.

Israel is spoken of as going through "*travail*" in the last days: Look up: Isaiah 66:7-8, Jeremiah 30:6-9, Micah 5:3, Zechariah 12:10-13:1 and Matthew 24:8.

Note that the same predictions of this "*woman*" in Revelation 12, are, also, found in connection with the nation of Israel. Look up: Daniel 7:21; 8:9-14, 24-25; 9:27; 11:36-45; 12:1, 7; Hosea 2:14-23, the 3rd chapter of Joel; Zechariah 12:1-9; 13:8-9, and chapter 14; Isaiah 16:1-5; 26:20-21; 42:11-13; 63:1-3; Ezekiel 20:33-44; Psalms 60:9-12, and 108:10-13.

I have taken a great deal of time to find these Scripture which show that Israel flees into the wilderness during the time of "*great trouble*," and, it is also, predicted that God protects her from her enemy during this time.

Her Manchild

The "*woman*" produces a "*manchild*," which, necessarily, must be "*of her own kind*" (Genesis 1:21-18), therefore, the "*manchild*" must also be *Jewish*.

This "*manchild*" cannot be Christ, as some teach, simply, because this "*birth*" takes place in the

middle of the Tribulation Period. How could John see the historical ascension of Christ as happening among the things, which take place in the middle of the Tribulation? Nor, could this "manchild" be the Church, as some believe, because she was raptured in chapter 4.

The *manchild*" represents a company of living people during the Tribulation Period, who will be translated without seeing death, caught up alive unto God.

A careful study of the following Scriptures in Revelation of the 144,000 will give a complete revelation of this group of Tribulation Jewish ministers. (See Rev 7:1-8; 9:4; 12:5; 14:1-5).

Note, God protects the 144,000 during the first six trumpets and, then, we see them in Heaven immediately *after* the catching up of the manchild during the seventh trumpet.

The only company in heaven, translated from earth, besides the Church and the tribulation saints, is the 144,000 and the only place for their being caught up to heaven is in Revelation 12:5!

If 144,000 is not the manchild, then who is the manchild, how, and when, did the 144,000 get to Heaven? If the 144,000, and the manchild, are not the same company, then there are two translations in the middle of the week...one revealed and the other not...the history of one being translated to heaven and the other not...the identity of one clearly stated and the other not?

Mystery after mystery appears if these two companies are not the same.

Both the manchild, and the 144,000 represent a *small* company...both the manchild and the 144,000 are caught up to God in the middle of the Tribulation Period...both are *delivered from the wrath of the dragon* (Satan)...and...both are a "*heavenly people*."

They must be the same!

Isaiah 66:7-8, speaking of Israel, states, "***Before she...(Israel)...goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.***"

Here, in Isaiah, we have a prediction of Israel bringing forth a "*manchild*."

How could anything be plainer than that?

Note, that in verse 3, "***another*** sign appeared in heaven an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads." We do not have to wonder who this dragon is because verse 9 makes it clear that it represents Satan, himself, by simply stating, "*The great dragon...called the devil or Satan.*"

The "*seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns*" are all described and explained in the

17th chapter of Revelation and, so, we will study the phrase more closely when we get to chapter 17, however, suffice it to say, now, that these seven heads symbolizes seven world kingdoms which God uses to judge Israel, namely, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medio-Persia, Greece, Rome, and one yet to come. The one to come will be made up of ten kingdoms, and are here represented by ten horns. The crowns show that Satan has reigned over the first six and will reign over the seventh, which is yet to come.

[I realize that all of this may sound very strange, however, Revelation 17:9-12 will make it all clear.]

Note verses 4-6, "***His... (the dragon's)...tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth...*** (probably referring to Satan's rebellion against God, when one-third of the angels in heaven followed him). ***The dragon stood in front of the woman... (Israel)...who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child... (the 144,000)...the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to throne. This woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.***"

Satan attempts to destroy the manchild... (the 144,00 Jewish ministers, who have prophesied during the first half of the Tribulation Period)... however, God catches them up into heaven, so, Satan turns upon the "woman"... (Israel) ...who flees into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God.

The travails of Israel have been numerous in her past history as is clearly revealed in her bandages and deliverance, which began with Israel in Egypt and in the period of the judges and kings. They have continued, more or less, and will finally culminate in the worst period of travail she has ever known. (See Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:15-26).

Passages of Scripture which show some of the travails of Israel in the past are Exodus 18:8; Jeremiah 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:22-23 and Micah 4:9-10.

Revelation reveals that there is to be a **future**, continued, travail of Israel in the Tribulation Period with a twofold result:

1. The deliverance of the "*manchild*" in the middle of the Tribulation (See Revelation 12:2-5; Jeremiah 30:6-9; Daniel 12:1 and Isaiah 66:7-8).

This, deliverance of Israel, will be the result of the terrible anguish and sorrow of Israel in the middle of the seven years covenant as a guarantee of her protection from the great whore... (the *religious* power of end time)... and the ten kings of the end time, how ever, they will have break this covenant and determine to completely destroy Israel. At this time of travail the "*manchild*" is to be delivered, because that, company will not be deserving of the Great Tribulation, which will follow immediately.

The Antichrist will be defeated in his purpose of destroying Israel at this time by the "*tidings out of the north and east*" (See Daniel 11:44-45).

Evidently, the northern and eastern European and Asiatic nations will league together against

Antichrist to put a stop to his superhuman successes in his conquests. This will keep him occupied during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation Period, after he has gained the whole of ten kingdoms, and thus cause him to let Israel alone for the time being or until he conquers his new enemies. Then all nations, which he has conquered in both parts of the Tribulation Period, as well as other co-operative nations in the rest of the world (Revelation 16:13-16) will be gathered against Israel to destroy them as he intended to do in the middle of the Tribulation Period. then Christ suddenly comes to save Israel. (See Zechariah 14).

The result of the travail of Israel at this time will be that God will undertake by catching up the manchild. After that He will supernaturally protect the woman in the wilderness and the remnant in Palestine by occupying the attention of the Antichrist through the threatenings of the northern and eastern nations.

2. The Second result of Israel's travail during the Tribulation Period will be the deliverance of the woman (Israel) herself at the end of the seven year period when the Antichrist with many nations tries to destroy her. (See Isaiah 66:7-8; Micah 5:3; Zechariah 12:10-14:21; Zechariah 14 and Joel 3).

The result of this travail will be the conversion of Israel and the defeat of the Antichrist by the return of Christ to the earth with the saints and angels to exalt Israel and set up His own kingdom. (See Romans 11:26-27; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 and Revelation 19:11-20:6)

The Persecution, Flight, and Protection of the woman...[Israel]

To keep in your mind what is happening, read verses 6 through 13 with these verses

This great war, between God and Satan, began when Satan, as a mighty angel in heaven, attempted to exalt his kingdom above the angels of God and to *dethrone* God, Himself (Isaiah 14:12-14). Satan was cast out of heaven to earth, however, he was not deprived of his great power, and, he still has access to heaven (Revelation 12:10; Job, chapters 1 and 2).

Here, in the middle of the Tribulation Period, *"there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not: neither was there place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

The result is great rejoicing in heaven (verses 10-12), but persecution of Israel on the earth (verses 13-17).

Satan bitterly persecutes the woman (Israel), however, she flees into the wilderness. (This is also mentioned in Matthew 24:15-24 and Daniel 11:40-45.) She is aided by God, *"given wings that she might fly into the wilderness into her place."* Satan when he learns of her flight, will *"cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman,"* however, *"the earth will open its mouth and swallow the flood."*

This whole passage is symbolic, according to verse 1, which states, "*There appeared a great sign in heaven...*" The "*dragon*" is symbol of Satan (verse 9), the "*woman*" is a symbol of Israel, the "*manchild*" is a symbol of the 144,000, therefore, the "*flood*" is, with all probably, a symbol.

Floods, often, in Scripture, symbolize armies. (See Jeremiah 46:7-8; 47:2-3; Daniel 9:26-27 and 11:21-22.)

God's Word, actually, identifies the place where Israel will be protected from the Antichrist during the last half of the Tribulation Period! (See Isaiah 16:1-5).

Here, in Isaiah 16, we have the first prophecy of importance concerning the flight of the woman (Israel). It names the very place to which she will flee. It is the rock-hewn city of *Sela*, or *Petra*, as it was called by the Romans. It is in Mount Seir, near Mount Hor, in the land of Edom and Moab. This prophecy states that "*as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon*"...(which is a little stream of the north border of Moab)...to welcome the Israelites as they flee into this wilderness city and country.

The next verse speak of Israel as being "*outcasts*," and, also, a command for Moab to welcome, hide, and be a cover to them from the "*face of the spoiler* (Antichrist) and "*to betray them not*" to the Antichrist. Verse 5 states that after this the throne of David will be re-established. This, as well as the latter part of verse 4...relative to the end of the oppressor and the spoiler has never been fulfilled...therefore, clearly shows a latter-day fulfillment to this passage.

The city of Petra is located in Edom proper, however, the prophet speaks of Moab as being the protector of Israel at this time. this country forms part of the great wilderness mention so often in Scripture where Israel wondered for forty years. *Petra* was a commercial center in the days of Solomon and was taken by Amaziah, king of Judah (2 Kings 14:7; 2 Chronicles 25:11-12).

It is mentioned several times as "*the rock*" because Sela means rock or stronghold (Judges 1:36; Isaiah 42:11; Jeremiah 48:28; 49:16; Obadiah 1:3). The ancients gave it the name of "*Bozrah of the Rock*."

In 105 A.D. the Romans conquered this country and called it Arabia-Petra. When the dominion of the Roman Empire waned, this territory fell back into the hands of the Arabians and was completely lost to the civilized world in the seventh century. Burckhardt rediscovered it in 1812.

The city lies in a large valley and is reached only by one narrow passageway, so narrow, at places, that two people on horses cannot ride abreast. the sides at the top of this passage are so close to each other as to shut out the light of the sun. The mountains that form the wall of the city on all sides are from two hundred to one thousand feet high. The sides of this canyon are lined with temples, houses and tombs, all hewn out of the rock with great skill and look as fresh as if they had been cut yesterday. An idea may be had concerning the scale by which the work was done from the size of the temple, which furnishes an accommodation for three thousand people.

The next passage, concerning Israel's protection during Tribulation is found in Isaiah 26:20-21, which states, "***Come my people (Israel) enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a moment (three and one-half years) until the indignation (great tribulation) be over past.***"

The setting of this passage is positively identified as being fulfilled in the last days for the next verse states, "***The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.***"

Another passage, which gives a vivid picture of Christ coming to earth to destroy the nations at Armageddon, is found in Isaiah 63:1-5.

Christ comes to earth, with His saints, to set up His kingdom, evidently, He will pass over Petra, descending from the east (Matthew 24:27), and the Jewish fugitives who are hiding there in the mountain fortress will see Him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory! Then the words of Isaiah 42:11-12 will be fulfilled, "***Let the wilderness and the cities lift up their voice...let the inhabitants of the rock (Sela) sing, let them shout in the top of the mountains...The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man...He shall cry like a man of war...He shall prevail against His enemies.***" This passage together with Joel 3, Zechariah 9:1 to 14:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 14:14-20 and 19:11-21, picture Armageddon with Christ delivers Israel from Antichrist!

In the 60th Psalm, David encourages himself with the promises of God to give Israel the whole of Canaan and speaks of Moab as being "*my wash pot*"...that is personal property to be treated contemptuously as a vessel in which the conqueror's feet are washed. He continues, "*upon Edom I toss my sandal*" this is an idiom of taking possession. David speaks of this when he had conquered these countries and made them his servants in 2 Samuel 8:12-14. This passage, in Psalm 60, prophetically shows their subjugation to Israel in the last day. Especially verses 9-12, which states, "***Who will bring me to the fortified city? (Petra) Who will lead me to Edom? Is it not you, O God, you who have rejected us and no longer go out with our armies? Give us aid against the enemy, for the help of man is worthless. With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.***"

Ezekiel 20:33-44 records another prophecy that God will bring Israel back from the nations in the last days and then will bring her "***into the wilderness of the people, and there I will plead with you face to face. LIKE AS I PLEADED WITH YOUR FATHERS IN THE WILDERNESS OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, so will I please with you, saith the Lord God, And I will cause you to pass under the rod (judgment) and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me...and ye shall know that I am the Lord.***"

In Daniel 11:11:36-45, God reveals that at the time of the conquests of Antichrist "***many countries shall be over thrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab, and chief of the children of Ammon.***" If Edom and Moab are to "*escape out of his hand,*" it seems to be the only local place where the Israelites in Judah can flee during the Great Tribulation. God will reserve these countries from Antichrist to use them as a place of refuge for

His people, and to show further the "*place prepared of God, that they* (these countries) *should feed her there*" for three and one-half years. This shows that the feeding is not necessarily supernatural, but that the inhabitants of the wilderness will feed her.

Hosea 2:14-23 speaks of Petra or a place in the wilderness to which Israel will flee for protection from Antichrist, saying, "*I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her...at that day...thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband);and shall call me not more Baali (my Lord)...and I will betroth thee unto me forever.*"

In Matthew Jesus predicts that at the time the abomination of desolation to set up, that is when the Antichrist breaks his seven years covenant with Israel and does away with their daily sacrifices to God in their temple and sets himself and his image in the holy of holies to be worshipped during the last half of the Tribulation Period, that the Jews will flee into the mountains and "*there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be,*" (Matthew 24:15-22; Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; Revelation 13:1-18).

Thus we have many passages speaking of the persecution, flight and protection of the woman in the wilderness. They all refer to Israel, not to the Church, Christendom, or Gentiles, as is clear in each passage. Where in Scripture do we find one passage speaking of anyone else going into the wilderness besides Israel? Therefore, we conclude that National Israel is the one symbolized by the sun-clothed woman of Revelation 12.

Read Revelation 13

When we arrive at the 13th chapter, it reminds us that the number **13**, from time immemorial, has been associated with disaster, and, while chapter divisions are not inspired... (they are not in the original manuscripts of Scripture)... however, what a striking coincidence that the 13th chapter of Revelation describes the two greatest rebels, against all that is good, and Godly, in all of history!

In this 13th chapter of the book of Revelation, we have detailed for us, a description of the two great powers during the Tribulation Period...the *political*, and the *religious*.

Remember that this 13th chapter is a part of the parenthesis between the sixth and the seventh trumpet judgments, describing the chief characters of the last half of the Tribulation Period.

Satan, making a last attempt to defeat God's program, institutes two great powers. These two great powers...two great movements...are headed up by two men, who seek to set up a world federation...one governmental, the other religious.

There are two performers who are brought before us in this 13th chapter, a "*Beast out of the sea*" and a "*Beast out of the earth.*" The "*Beast out of the sea*" is the Antichrist, arising out of the people. (Revelation 17:15, simply states, "*The waters you saw...are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.*")

[The "*seven heads and the ten horns*" of this Beast out of the sea are interpreted for us in chapter

17, and so, we will deal with them when we get to that chapter of Revelation.]

John, relating his vision in the book of Revelation, beholds a monstrous beast, rising out of the masses of people. This beast is a horrible, dreadful, grotesque, figure, "*like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion.*"

The man, Antichrist, pictured as a "*seven headed*" beast rising out of the sea...(or, out of "*peoples, multitudes, nations and languages*")...is given "*power, a throne and great authority*" by the dragon.

[Revelation 12:9 states that the "*dragon*" is Satan, himself.]

Satan must embody an earthly agent...a man...in order to accomplish his devilish program.

Here, in Revelation 13, God makes known to the Bible student what Satan's plan is. How will the enraged "*dragon's*" program be executed? God states that the, "*The dragon...* (Satan) *...will carry out his blasphemies, deceitful and bloody spite by a counterfeit Christ*" ...(Antichrist).

The world has never seen a man like the Antichrist. Bad, and infamous, men has lived on the earth, however, none so completely the embodiment of wickedness as this one will be. The thought of Satan, incarnating himself in a human body, is not pleasant for us to contemplate, however that is exactly what Scripture teaches.

The dragon presents this beast with a throne, great power and authority, until he reaches a place of absolute power over the nations of the world.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 also refers to this, when it states, "***And then...***(after the rapture of the Church)...***the lawless one***...(King James says, "*that Wicked one*")...***will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of His mouth and destroy by the splendor of His coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.***"

Notice that verse 3, states, this world-wide ruler will be "*fatally wounded*...(King James Version states, "*wounded to death*")...and, then, he is "*healed!*" It seems that this Antichrist dies and then raises from the death - ***an attempt to produce a blasphemous counterfeit of the resurrection of Jesus Christ!***

The Satanic trinity

- **Satan**, a counterfeit God;
- **The Antichrist**, counterfeit Christ;
- **The false prophet**, a counterfeit Holy Spirit.

"... and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon, which

gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:3-4).

"The beast...(the Antichrist)...was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander His name and His dwelling place and those who live in Heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints...(the Tribulation saints)... and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. all inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast - all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world." (Revelation 13:5-6)

John, amazed at the greatness of this "*beast out of the sea*," beholds the whole world wondering after him, and, seemingly, unable to withstand his charm...worshipping, both the beast and the dragon, who gives him power!

The Beast out of the earth - This "*Beast out of the earth*," described as a ***lamb, speaking as a dragon***, is referred to as "***the false prophet***" in Revelation 16:13, 19:20 and 20:10. This "*Beast*" is the counterfeit, false, imitation of the Holy Spirit in Satan's devilish trinity of the end-time. As the Holy Spirit "***will not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak ...he will glorify Me***, (that is, Jesus), John 16:13-14, just so this Beast out of the earth (See verses 12-15).

Matthew 24:15-21 seems to be a parallel passage to this one.

As a result of the "***Beast out of the earth***" causing the image of the Beast out of the sea to come to life, the world will pledge their allegiance to the Antichrist (See verses 16-17).

While the first section of chapter 13 (verses 1-10, anticipates the rise of a world ***political*** power...a united nations of the world, ruled by the Antichrist...the second section of this chapter (verses 11-18), anticipates the rise of a world ***religious*** power...a world-council of apostate churches.

The description of each beast, given to us in these verses, is couched in symbolic language. It is clear that these "*beasts*" are symbolic, and should be treated as such, however, there is no need for confusion, if one allows the Holy Scriptures explain itself.

The first four verses of chapter 13, provide for a ***world*** government, which then becomes personified in an individual, the Antichrist.

This "*beast*" is fully explained in chapter 17. God clearly states in 17:7, "*I will explain to you the mystery...of the beast.*"

This first "*Beast*"...the Antichrist... is a ***man*** (Revelation 13:18 calls this beast "*a man*" and in 19:19-20, again, the beast is referred to as "*a man.*") He receives his power from the Devil (13:2).

[His "*seven heads and ten horns*" will be explained when we get to chapter 17 in our study]

Beginning with verse 11 John begins to describe a *religious* world power. The first beast, as we have seen, is the Antichrist and, this second beast is known as the "*false prophet*." The Antichrist dominates the governments of the world, while the false Prophet dominates the religions of the world.

While the first beast comes "*out of the sea*"...(the masses of humanity according to 17:15)...referring to the political-economic system, which produces this world-wide dictator, this second beast comes "*out of the earth*,"...(the ecclesiastical system of the world according to Matthew 13:38)...referring to the religious bodies, which produces the "*lamb-like beast, who speaks as a dragon*."

This *false prophet* will deceive the masses of humanity into accepting the Antichrist as deity incarnate (verses 12-17). Without this second beast, heading a religious system, the Antichrist could not sway the masses of people and keep them under his magic spell.

The Antichrist will carry this "*world-church*" much like the governments of Europe have, for centuries, carried the state churches of their respective countries. Riding into power, with the Antichrist, will be the apostate super church of the end-time, symbolized by a "*harlot woman*." Chapter 17...(which, we will deal with when we come to it)...contains a vivid description of this false religious system.

Let's review and bring our studies, thus far, up to date. In previous lessons we have studies concerning the Rapture of the Church, the first half of the Tribulation Period, God's Two Witnesses and Satan's Two witnesses...(the two Beasts in chapter 13).

Chapter 11, 12 and 13 introduce the actors that play such an important part in the last half of the Tribulation Period, now, chapter 14 gives a brief outline of the coming events...the plot...the frame work for this period...is laid out before us. We get a glimpse...a preview...of what will take place upon the earth during the last half of the Tribulation Period.

God's Word often uses this method of stating briefly the facts and then, going back over the same information, giving a more detailed account of the events taking place. [This what happens in Genesis, chapter 1 and 2.]

That is the purpose of chapter 14, to give a frame work of things to come, then, beginning with chapter 15, God give a more detailed account of what is to take place in the last half of the Tribulation.

Read Revelation 14

First, God assures us that "*His servants*"...(the 144,000 Jewish ministers of the Tribulation Period)...which we were introduced to in chapter 7 and saw *raptured* in chapter 12, under the symbol of the *Manchild*, however, they are now safe in heaven, *at the time of the beginning of the second half of the Tribulation Period*, "*redeemed*," with the Lamb, God's name written on their foreheads, singing a song of "*redemption*" before the four living creatures and

the 24 Elders.

In the 14th chapter of Revelation there are seven snapshots of scenes of the coming events in the last half of the Tribulation Period:

1. The 144,000 in heaven - verses 1-5
2. An angel, flying through the skies, preaching to the earth's inhabitants of the coming judgments - verses 6-7
3. An angel proclaiming the fall of the great city of Babylon - verse 8
4. An angel warning of the mark of the beasts - verses 9-11
5. A voice from heaven proclaiming the blessing of those who die in the Lord - Vs 13
6. The harvest of the earth - verses 14-16
7. The vine of the earth, harvested - verses 17-20

Against the awful state of things, which is brought on by the Antichrist in chapter 13, chapter 14 reveals the rapidly approaching judgments of God, which is soon to take place upon the earth.

Literal angels will fly through the skies and warn mankind of the coming judgments!

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, `Fear God, and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come and worship Him what made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the foundations of waters.” Didn't Jesus predicted that *"this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations: and **then** shall the end come"*?

The "Gospel" that is being preached during this present Church Age is the Gospel of Grace - *"Be ready for the rapture of the Church, press forward toward the prize of the high calling"* - however, here in chapter 14, the "Gospel" is one of *"Fear God, give Him glory, and seal your faith with your blood."*

A second angel, flies through the skies and warns of the coming judgment of the great city, Babylon, which is described in chapter 17 and 18.

A third angels flies through the skies and warns mankind not to take the mark of the beast. Some of earth's inhabitants, no doubt, will reject the mark of the beast at first, then, hesitating, vacillating, strongly tempted to take the mark of the beast, in order to provide for their families, however, this angels warns, in no uncertain terms, that to do so, means, the results stated in verses 10 and 11!

We have here, a message from this angel flying through the heavens above, of solemn awfulness of the coming Tribulation Period. Judgment is never a popular subject, however, in the midst of warning, comes a special promise to those who are being martyred!

This shows the difference in the "Gospel" which will be preached during the Tribulation Period and the Gospel, which is being preached
--

now. Today, it is better to **live** for God than to die, however, during the Tribulation Period it will be better to **die** than to live!

These saints, mentioned in verse 13, will face the horror of the Antichrist and given their lives. They have triumphed over all the efforts of the Antichrist to brainwash, and torment them into submission, and, now they have sweet rest. Verses 14-16 picture two harvests...[at the battle of Armageddon]...when Christ comes back **with** His saints to set up His kingdom on the earth. There will be the judgment of the *nations*, as they are judged according to their treatment of God's people, the Jewish race and, also, their rejection of Jesus Christ.

Note the similarities of this passage Revelation 14:14-16 with Matthew 24:29-31:

1. Christ coming in the clouds
2. Jesus referred to as "the *Son of man*"
3. Both take place *at the end of the Tribulation Period*
4. Matthew states, "*they shall gather together His (God's) elect,*"
- while Revelation states, similarly, "*gather the clusters of the vine.*"

Matthew 3:12 states, "*Whose fan is in His hand and he thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His went into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*"

Matthew 13:30 states, "*Let both grow together unto the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn.*"

Matthew 13:37-40 states, "*He (Jesus) answered and said unto them...(His disciples, who had asked for an explanation of the parable of the sower)...He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fires; so shall it be in the end of this world.*"

Revelation 14:14-20 is the fulfillment of these prophecies.

First, there is the gathering of "*the vine of the Lord,*" (14:15-16) then, secondly, there is the gathering of "*the apostate vine of the Antichrist.*" (14:17-20).

While Christ is gathering "*His elect*" out from the world (verses 14-16), verses 17-20 shows the dark side of the story, the terrible fierce battle that is described by many of the Old Testament prophets.

Blood will flow to the height of a horse bridle for 180 miles long!

The unpleasant responsibility of warning

Many, today, shrink in unspeakable horror at the thought of God permitting man to be

punished. Man's, super-sensitive, delicately-cultured, mind revolts against such a description of the wrath of God being poured out, as described in Revelation 14:19-20, however, if he could only understand the nature of sin, and, his rebellion against a holy God, then, perhaps, he would be able to comprehend the awful, coming, judgments of God upon the earth.

Note the two groups in chapter 14:

- (1) The **unbelievers** who meet God's wrath, and
- (2) the **144,000**...(the Jewish ministers during the first half of the Tribulation Period)...who are before the throne of God.

These 144,000 are the "*first fruits*" of the Tribulation Period (14:4), that is, they are the first victors over the Beast (the Antichrist).

Before the outpouring of the terrible vial judgments, God gives a picture of "*those who have triumphed over the Beast.*" These 144,000 give God the glory for keeping them "*pure,*" for giving them victory over all temptations (14:4-5). They have passed through the fire of tribulation...(the first half of the Tribulation Period)... and now stand upon the crystal sea, celebrating their deliverance.

The last time we saw "*the crystal sea before God's throne*"... (compared to the Old Testament Tabernacle laver)... was in Revelation 6:10-11, where it was **empty**, now the 144,000 are standing upon it, and it is "*mingled with fire.*" The fire, evidently speaks of those who have come **through** tribulation.

Read Revelation 15

No one can read these verses...and understand what is taking place...and not be profoundly moved! This occasion, which will take place at the half way through the Tribulation Period, reminds us of the time Moses and the children of Israel, celebrated after the overthrow of Pharaoh in Exodus 15.

Interestingly, these judgments are referred to as "... Thy (*God's*) works (15:3) ...or, as one translations states it, "*God's righteous acts*"... and verse 4 states, "*Thy (God's) judgments are made manifest.*"

In verse 5 the "*temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven*" is opened. (This is the heavenly Tabernacle, which Moses' Tabernacle was patterned after) We are here on Old Testament ground, as God is fulfilling His "*covenant promises*" toward Israel.

With the pouring out of the 7 vials, it will be the end of God's judgments. The pouring out of these last vial judgments will be the signal for Christ's return **with** His saints to set up His Kingdom on earth.

God, having introduced us to the company who will not be overcome by the terrible judgments ... (that is, these 144,000, standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire)...now resumes His account of what will occur when the vial judgments are poured out.

Read Revelation 16

The Seven Vial Judgments

The First Vial - A noisome and grievous sore . . . (*foul and painful ulcer, or, severe and malignant*) . . . upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

The Second Vial - *The sea became as the blood of a dead man... (turned into blood like that of a corpse [thick, corrupt, ill-smelling and disgusting])...and every living soul died in the sea.*

The Third Vial - The rivers and fountains of waters became blood.

Men find fault with God for sending these terrible judgments because they still do not understand the awfulness of their sin, nor the absolute righteousness of God. As long as man minimizes sin, and continues to rebel against an infinite God, he will continue to find fault.

The Fourth Vial - The sun scorches men with a great heat.

The Fifth Vial - Darkness, so terrible, it causes men to gnaw their tongues in agony and curse God.

Swiftly following the fifth vial...like horses, racing into the last lap of the race...the world quickly heads toward Armageddon!

The Sixth Vial - The great river is dried up to prepare a way for the kings of the east toward Megiddo.

These verses give the details of the last days, which end in violence and war. When all hope, for mankind, is gone, Christ returns...He stops man's reign of terror ...and sets up His Kingdom of righteousness and peace.

There are two important events, which occur when this sixth angel pours out his vial upon the great river Euphrates:

- (1) The Euphrates dries up to prepare a path for the kings of the east toward Megiddo
- (2) The gathering of the armies of the world for the last battle of all time, *Armageddon!*

The Euphrates River is mentioned in two historical accounts: The Garden of Eden and the city of Babylon. Satan won the first skirmish when he deceived our first parents, Adam and Eve, thus, plunging the whole human race into judgment and death.

The Euphrates...one-thousand, five hundred miles long, 10 to 30 feet deep, and several miles wide in many places...will become a dry riverbed, making a great super highway, playing an important role in bringing together the armies of the world for the last battle of all time.

This river, Euphrates, has been a formidable, natural, barrier between the east and the west.

Daniel tells us that there will be at least four great armies, which will meet in the valley of Jehoshaphat...(a valley just north of Palestine, in the hills of Megiddo).

These four armies are, simply, called "*the king of the north...the king of the south... the king of the east...the king of the west.*"

1. The "*king of the north*" is, probably, the empire of Russia
= and those countries surrounding her.
2. The "*king of the south*" is, undoubtedly, the African nations.
3. The "*king of the east*" is, without doubt, the areas of the yellow races
4. The "*the king of the west*" is, what is referred to, as, the Old Roman Empire

In order, to make way for the "*kings of the east*" to reach the battle- field, the Euphrates is dried up, making a natural road.

Here we have the Satanic trinity...the Devil, the Antichrist and the False Prophet... deceiving the kings of the earth into preparing to fight in the Battle of Armageddon. Three evil spirits (fallen angels), which have been kept bound (Jude 6), are now loosed to go out and to deceive the nations of the world in initiating the last desperate rebellion against Almighty God.

No nation will be neutral in this war, because verse 14 states, "*of the whole world.*"

How are these three evil spirits like frogs?

1. They come forth out of the pestiferous...
(that is, "*carrying infected diseases*) ...quagmires of darkness.
2. They do their devilish work in the evening shadows of their dispensation.
3. They *creep* and *croak*" and fill the ears of the nations with their noisy demonstrations.

The battle, between God and the Devil, started back in the Garden of Eden when God declared war on the Serpent (Satan) and his seed. For almost 6,000 years the battle has been raging. At Calvary, "*the seed of woman was bruised*" and, now, "*the seed of woman crushes the head of the serpent.*" Armageddon, the hill of slaughter, is at hand and, the events which take place when the battle occurs is given in verses 17-21.

The Seventh Vial

This will be a terrible time for men who reject Jesus Christ...a day when the air explodes and earthquakes split the earth. So great will be the convolutions of the earth... (perhaps the release of atomic energy)...that mountains disappear, islands are submerged and, one hundred pound, hailstones fall from heaven to earth.

This great battle brings us to the time when Christ returns to earth **with** His saints to rule

and reign in His earthly Kingdom - in chapter 19.

Between the 16th chapter, and the 19th chapter, are two, explanatory, chapters, which deal with Babylon and her doom.

When we arrive at the 17th chapter of Revelation, we have nearly reached the end of the Tribulation Period. We saw in chapter 16 a glimpse of the Battle of Armageddon, however, the Battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ **with** His saints to set up His Kingdom is described in the 19th chapter, and between chapters 16 and 19 we have one great topic, ***God's final judgment upon Babylon.***

Because of the important role, which "*Babylonianism*" plays, two entire chapters are devoted to this subject, that is, chapter 17 and 18.

Read Revelation 17

The angel clearly tells John, "*I will show you...*(reveal to you the mystery of the great harlot)...the great punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many water. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."

We saw this seven-headed, ten-crowned, Beast, which this "*great prostitute*" is riding, back in chapter 13, coming up out of the "*waters*" [Verse 15, of this chapter 17, reveals that the "*many waters*" which this great prostitute sits are "*peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.*"] The leaders of the earth commit fornication with her and the inhabitants of the earth will be made drunk with her wine...(verse 6 says, "*drunk with the blood of saints.*")

This, "*bride of the Antichrist,*" is an utterly loathsome creature. Scripture refers to her as a "**Harlot**"...a symbol, which expresses the attitude God has toward this apostate religious system of the end-time.

Is it any wonder that Bible believing Christians, who understand what God says concerning the end-time religious system, look with suspicion upon a "*World Church Movement*"?

I confess poverty of descriptive language in attempting to portray the blasphemous character of this "**Great Harlot.**"

God, to a sensuous, lewd, woman, having external beauty, likens this religious system, and alluring appeal, however, her rotten soul is the habitation of demons and her body is full of disease and moral metrification.

"*Glamorous*" is the word for this harlot of Babylon! Even, John, was caused to look with admiration upon her poise, gracefulness and charm. He states in verse 6, "*When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*"

This "*great harlot*" will enjoy a large traffic in "religious prostitution, as all churches, left

on earth after the rapture, will be apart of this world federation of false religions.

There seems to be method in the madness of all churches getting together for public pow-wows.

Scripture, of course, is for unity between all groups of **true** believers, those who are a true part of the *Body of Christ*, Christ prayed that we all might be "*one*." However, this unity, which Christ prayed for, is **not** dependent upon any central ecclesiastical authority, but, rather, by the fact that we are one body in Christ Jesus. All true Christians are linked together by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

However, there is, today, the reality of an ecumenical fever that would have sounded farfetched only a few years ago. It is not difficult to see the formation of this "**world federation of churches**." It's development is so fact, and furious, that it leaves one dizzy with all its implications as to the nearness of time.

Many leaders seem to be obsessed with the idea of a "*world federation of churches*." They enthusiastically support and advocate the union of all churches into one movement.

As one witnesses this "*bundling up*" of religious groups...this merging of all churches into one...it, certainly, has deep prophetic significance to the Bible student. When one stops to realize that the machinery...(the church structure)...through which the Antichrist will exercise world-wide control over the peoples of the world, is already formed, and needs only a little time for its completion, it is alarming, indeed!

The message for the "*federation of a world-church*" is couched in such flowery language calling for world peace, brotherhood, tolerance and good will, that is, certainly, a persuasive instrument in cementing the peoples of the world into a solid, cohesive, mass, however, all this "*sweet talk*" has but one end...that all the world will worship the image of the Beast.

Many are only faintly aware of the extent to which the prophecies of God's Word are being fulfilled today and, that the world is rapidly moving to embrace all of Christendom into one giant system. Extensive propaganda pours through the mail urging all churches to be "*one*." The "*birth*" of this system has already taken place, and we are seeing the formation of this World-Church, today.

The stage is being set for the rapture of the true church, which occurs **before** this ecclesiastical church comes to a climax.

Satan's masterpiece of deception

The "**Babylon Cult**" began in Genesis 11:1-9, where we find the very, first, great apostasy...the first organized, rebellion against God. Babylon, according to Genesis 10:10, was built by Nimrod.

The Babylonian Cult continued in Babylon until the fall of the Babylonian Empire in 487 B. C., when Xerxes took Babylon. The Babylonian priesthood was then forced to leave Babylon, and move to Pergamos, which was its headquarters for some time When Attalus, the

Pontiff and King of Pergamos, died in 133 B. C., he bequeathed the headship of the Babylonian priesthood to Rome. When the Etruscans came to Italy from Lydia (the region of Pergamos) they brought with them the Babylonian religion and rites and set up a Pontiff who was the head of the priesthood and had the power of life and death over them. Julius Caesar was made the supreme Pontiff of the Etruscan Order in 74 B. C. In 63 B. C. he was made supreme Pontiff of the Babylonian Order, thereby becoming heir to the rights and titles of Attalus, who had made Rome his heir by will.

The Antichrist supports her in her long dream of being a "*universal*" church, however, when he has used her for his purposes, he will turn on her and destroy her (verses 16).

There is no need for anyone to speculate on the meaning of these symbols in Revelation 17 because the angel clearly tells John, "***I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the best she rides, which has seven heads and ten horns***" (verse 7).

The "***seven heads***" are seven kingdoms (verse. 9)

Of the seven kingdoms, verse 10 states, "***five have fallen***"...history shows them to be Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece..."***one is*** (that is, one was in existence at the time of John's writing, which, of course, was the Roman Empire)..."***and the other has not yet come, but when he does come, he must remain for a little while.***" Verse 11 states, "***The beast***...(the Antichrist)...***who once was*** ...(that is, his kingdom once existed)...***and now is not***... (his kingdom no longer exists)...***is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven***..(that is, the Antichrist is one of the 10 kings who make up the seventh world-wide kingdom)...***and is going to his destruction***...(he is headed for Armageddon)."

Thus, the first Roman emperor became the head of the Babylonian priesthood and Rome became the successor of Babylon with Pergamos as the seat of this cult. In 218 A.D. the Roman army in Syria, having rebelled against Macrinus, elected Elagabalus emperor. This man was High Priest of the Egyptian branch of Babylonianism. He was chosen shortly afterward as Supreme Pontiff by the Romans, and, the two Western branches of the Babylonian apostasy centered in the Roman Emperors who continued to hold this office until 376 A.D. when the Emperor Gratian, for Christian reasons refused it because he saw that by nature Babylonianism was idolatrous.

This "***Babylonian Cult***," which began in Nimrod's day, progressed through history... infiltrated into "***professing***" Christendom...becoming the super church of the end-time, is the religious-apostasy, "***bride***" of Antichrist, and comes into power with him.

Verse 12 states, "***The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast***," that is, the ten horns on the Beast represent ten kings who will receive their kingdoms for a short while. These ten kingdoms, together, make up the seventh world-wide power.

Verses 13 to 14 state, "***They***...(the ten kings)...***have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the Beast***...(the Antichrist, making the eighth world-wide kingdom).

They will make war against the Lamb ... (Jesus Christ)...but the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings - and with Him will be His called, chosen and faithful followers."

Verses 16-18 state, "***The Beast... (the Antichrist)...and the ten horns... (the ten kings... you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish His purpose by agreeing to give the Beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled. The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."***

Read Revelation 18

John, very clearly states, in verse 1, "***After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven...***" Here is **another** angel with **another** message for John. What is prophesied in chapter 18 takes place **after** the destruction of the religious system mentioned in chapter 17. Chapter 18 speaks of something entirely different than chapter 17. Chapter 17 speaks of the "***Babylonian Religion***" and its destruction, while chapter 18 speaks of a Babylonian empire ruled by the Antichrist.

The Babylon of chapter 17 is referred to as a "*mystery*" (symbolic) while the Babylon in chapter 18 is never said to be symbolic. The angel of chapter 17 explains the mystery, however, the angel of chapter 18 does not explain, because no explanation is needed. The "*mystery* Babylon" ... the religious ecclesiastical system of the end-time... of chapter 17, has been destroyed, therefore. John, now, comes to another prophecy of another Babylon.

Just look at the prophecies concerning Babylon, which, to this day, have never been fulfilled.

1. Babylon will be overthrown as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 50:40. This has never been fulfilled.
2. Babylon will never be inhabited after its final overthrow, Isaiah 13:20; Jeremiah 50:39-40; 51:29, 37, 43.
3. Arabs, nor any shepherds, will never dwell there again, Isaiah 13:20
4. The final overthrow must be immediately followed by blessings on Israel, Isaiah 13:6-17; 14:1-7; Jeremiah 50:4-7, 17-20, 33-35; Revelation chapters 18 to 20.
5. The stones of Babylon were not to be used for building purposes again, Jeremiah 51:26 (They are being used today to build with.)
6. Babylon must be in existence in the future "*day of the Lord*," Isaiah 13:6-13; Revelation 16:17-21; 18:1-24; 19:1-3

7. Babylon must be destroyed under the seventh vial and at the second advent of Christ or in the "*day of the Lord*" by a supernatural destruction, Isaiah 13:6-13; Jeremiah 50:20, 40; 51:8; Revelation 16:17-21; 18:8, 10, 17, 19, 21.
8. Babylon is to be destroyed at the end of the Great Tribulation when the planets are affected, Isaiah 13:9-13; Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 16:17-21.
9. Babylon is to be totally desolate and all sinners destroyed out of it forever, Isaiah 13:9, 19-22; Jeremiah 50:3, 23, 39-40; 51:26, 29, 37, 43; Revelation 18:19, 21-24; 19:3.
10. Babylon is to be destroyed at the time the world is punished for its sins at the Second Advent, Isaiah 13:11; Revelation 18:1-24.
11. Babylon is to be destroyed when Christ comes with the armies of heaven to fight at Armageddon, Isaiah 13:1-5, 11-13; 14:5, 25-27; Rev. 16:17-21; 18:8; 19:1-3, 11-21.
12. The site of Babylon is to be one of the openings of hell on earth where men will see the wicked in everlasting burnings - then, the site of both the first and the last great apostasy against God, as well as all rebels of all ages, will be everlasting monuments of God's wrath, Isaiah 14:9-17; 66:22-24; Revelation 19:3.
13. On the desolate edges of this hell-hole will dwell the wild creatures of the desert, Isaiah 13:21-22.
14. Babylon is to be destroyed in the day of Israel's final restoration and blessing at the second advent, Isaiah 13:12; 14:1-8; Jeremiah 50:4-7, 19-20; 51:50; Revelation 18:25-29.
15. Israel is to rule over her oppressors in the day of Babylon's final destruction, Isaiah 14:1-4.
16. The generation of Israel who enters the Millennium will sing a triumphant song over the future king of Babylon, the Antichrist who will have persecuted them, Isaiah 14:3-27.
17. Babylon is to be "*suddenly*" and in "*one hour*" destroyed, Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 50:40; 51:8; Revelation 18:8, 10, 17, 19.
18. Babylon is to be a world commercial center after the rapture of the Church (Revelation, chapters 4-22 will all be fulfilled after the Church is gone) Zechariah 5:5-11; Revelation 18:3-19. The thirty items of commerce mentioned in this verse cannot be figurative.
19. Babylon must again be a world political center, Revelation 18:3-10.

20. Babylon must again be a world religious center, Revelation 18:2-10.
21. Babylon's latter-day sorceries will deceive much of the world, Revelation 18:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-15.
22. Orders for the martyrdom of saints during the Great Tribulation will be from this city, Revelation 18:24.
23. Babylon must be burned with fire, Revelation 18:8-10; 19:3.
24. Babylon must be destroyed by an earthquake, Revelation 16:17-21.
25. Babylon must be thrown down with violence, Revelation 18:21.
26. Babylon must never be found after her destruction, Revelation 18:21.
27. Babylon must sink into the earth, Jeremiah 51:62-64; Revelation 16:21.
28. Babylon must be destroyed by God, not by man, Revelation 18:20.
29. Babylon's destruction must be followed by the Millennial reign of Christ, Revelation, chapters 19 and 20.

I have taken a great deal of time to look up, and share several Scriptures concerning the city of Babylon, none of which have been fully fulfilled, therefore, they must refer to Babylon's *future* destruction.

We have a prophecy of the *rebuilding* of Babylon in Zechariah 5:5-11. In this passage, the prophet sees a bushel-basket...(or, a great barrel)...which was "going forth," containing a woman called "wickedness." Then, the prophet saw a flat weight of lead...(about 158 pounds)...lifted up and, this disk was cast into the basket, with the woman, who was attempting to get out of the basket. However, a "stone-lid," then, covered the mouth of the basket, forcing the woman back into the basket.

The basket, the lead-disk, the woman, and the lid, were all carried off by "two women" who had wings like a stork...(an unclean bird)...and the wind was in their wings carrying them along with the basket.

The prophet asks, "Where are they taking the basket?" The answer is, "To the land of Babylon to build the woman...[wickedness]...a house, and when it is finished, to set the basket upon the place prepared for it there."

What is symbolized in this passage, seem clear, and, since it has not been fulfilled, it must refer to something future. It cannot refer to the destruction of Babylon because the whole thought is that of restoration. At the time of this prophecy...[in Zechariah]...the Medes had taken

Babylon, however, it was not destroyed. Since this prophecy speaks of restoration, it must be yet future, because Babylon has never been restored from that day to this.

The basket, evidently, speaks of commerce "*going forth*" throughout the whole earth; the lead must symbolize the heaviness of the traffic and the richness of the business. The woman is explained to be "*wickedness*"...a word which is translated from the Hebrew word "*rashe*," meaning the "*wickedness of the restless fallen nature of man as manifested in all of its lawlessness, and unrestrained*," (Job 3:17; Isaiah 57:20-21). The house is representative of the restoration of a "*literal*" Babylon as the center of this lawless commerce and traffic of the nations. The wings of the unclean bird...the stork....and the wind bearing its wings, and carrying the woman, evidently, speaks of a speedy accomplishment by supernatural powers of the restoration of Babylon as a commercial center of the world.

All of this takes place, in preparation for the final and sudden judgment, spoken of in Revelation, 18, as well as other prophecies of the Bible. The two women must symbolize the infernal powers, thus causing a condition of wickedness in the lives of men. This corresponds with the supernatural power of Satan in the lives of the Antichrist and false prophet and other men at the end of the age, who will want a place where no restraint is possible to hinder them in their wickedness. We do know this much about this passage; that is, that the theme is the rebuilding of Babylon in Shinar as the seat of the lawless activities of men in the last day. If this were true, then undoubtedly Babylon is the site Satan has chosen as the center of his activities in the last days that he may with advantage operate against Jerusalem and the Jews.

Revelation 18:1-3 states, "*After this...*(after the events of chapter 17)...*I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted: `Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich for her excessive luxuries.*"

The *cause* of the fall of Babylon is given here. She will "*become a home for demons and a haunt...*(literally, `a **prison**)...*for every evil spirit, a haunt for ever unclean and detestable bird.*" This passage pictures Babylon as the headquarters of the demon world and the concentration of all wickedness. Besides this, she will play the whore and make all nations drunk on the wine wherewith she is drunk, so that they will partake of the wrath of the fornication wherewith she will partake. The kings of the earth will commit fornication with her and become partakers of her sins, and the merchants of the earth will wax rich through the abundance of her luxuries. Thus, we have Babylon as a literal city whose inhabitants, in general, will be spiritists, unclean and vile in their living, in the very depths of degradation, and subject to demon possession so that no true and righteous God can endure the sight of them.

This passage is spoken by a voice different from that in the first four verses. This is probably the voice of God, Himself, because it speaks of certain people in the city as "*My people.*" the command for God's people is come out of Babylon is the same as that in Jeremiah 50:4-9; 51:5-8, 45. The purpose of their leaving the city is that they may not partake of her sins

and plagues. The word for "*sins*" means falling aside from prescribed law, and always in a moral sense, showing the terrible corruption of the morals of Babylon.

The cup of destruction of which she will make others drink, she will receive, and to the extent that she has lived in luxury and glory she will receive torment and sorrow. [Also Jeremiah 51:24; Isaiah 47:8-11].

The cup of destruction of which she will make others drink, she will receive, and to the extent that she has lived in luxury and glory she will receive torment and sorrow.

[Also Jeremiah 51:24 and Isaiah 47:8-11]

The plagues will "*come in one day*." The Greek word which is translated "*come*" in verse 8, is the same Greek word which is as "*come as a thief*" in 2 Peter 3:10, and the meaning is, "*an event that takes place suddenly*," thus indicating the manner of Babylon's destruction. The suddenness and completeness of Babylon's destruction and disappearance from the face of the earth are the prominent features of this prophecy, proving that such a judgment has not yet come and that Isaiah 13:19-22; Jeremiah 50:13, 39-40; 51:29, 37, 43, etc. have not been fulfilled.

Three worlds lament Babylon's destruction:

1. The Governmental world - Revelation 18: 9-10

The kings of the earth are to be the instruments of the destruction of Mystical Babylon and vent their wrath on her in chapter 17, however, these kings live in luxury with **this** literal city of Babylon, and, when she is suddenly destroyed by God, they "*weep and mourn over her*."

2. The Commercial World - Revelation 18:11-17a

The merchants of the earth, also weep over Babylon's destruction. A list of 30 different kinds of merchandise, which they bought and sold, is given.

The "*urge to merge*" is alive today in the commercial and financial world as they seek to be linked together in some central way. When they have found a way, the demand for a central place will not be far off. That place will be Babylon!

3. The Maritime world - Revelation 18:17b-19

The maritime see Babylon's burning, and, they too, weep and wail because her riches have been brought to ruin in "*one hour*."

"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye the prophets; for God did judge your judgment upon her" (Revelation 18:20).

The angels, all redeemed mankind, and all creatures in heaven sanction this

judgment of God upon Babylon and rejoice because He has done it in His own justice.

Revelation 18:21-24 gives the cause and utter doom of literal Babylon. She is pictured as being cast down in such violence that she will "*never be found again.*"

It is not to be taken that Babylon, has existed from the beginning of the human race, simply, because, "*in her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth,*" it merely shows that Satan's power in Babylon will be the final concentration of martyrdoms and reigns of terror. Therefore, Babylon's destruction will culminate the wrath of God, under this seventh vial.

Read Revelation 19

The downfall of religious, and political, Babylon, will be the signal for the end of the Tribulation and brings an outburst of praise from the saints of God. Listen to their exultation at the downfall of Satan's control over the earth.

The rejoicing has a double motivation: first, because Babylon, the persecutor of the saints, has been destroyed, and, second, because the time of the earth's redemption has finally come.

Revelation 19:1-10 is parenthetical, explaining what takes place in heaven just before Christ comes back to earth with the saints to rule and reign.

This witness to Jesus inspires all prophecy! It is the spirit of prophecy!

The Wedding of the Lamb

While God has been bringing judgment on the earth to prepare the earth for the saints' reign, the saints themselves are in heaven being prepared to reign upon the earth. During the Tribulation Period the Church is in heaven at the judgment seat of Christ being made ready to come back with Him to reign upon the renewed earth.

Sad to say; when Jesus comes for His Church, all the saints will not be ready to meet Him. There will be some who will be ashamed at His appearing (1 John 2:28). Some will have an abundant entrance (2 Peter 1:11)...with confidence...whereas others will be saved so as by fire (1 Corinthians 3:15).

Before the saints are ready to reign with Christ, certain difficulties must be righted. The carnal Christian who has led a careless life will have to give an account before the judgment seat of Christ, and as a result of his record he will be given his place in the kingdom reign. Some will reign over two cities, others over only five; some will barely enter and receive no rewards (Luke 19:12-27). These rewards will be determined at the judgment seat of Christ, which will take place in heaven while the Tribulation is taking place upon earth. While God is preparing the earth for the saints, He will also prepare the saints for the earth.

Every Christian will give an account of his deeds and, on the basis of that record, the rewards will be distributed. That is why immediately preceding the account of the return of the Lord...(of which we read in Revelation 19:11)...is this account in verses 7-9.

Remember, in our studies of the book of Revelation we have reached the end of the Tribulation Period and have been occupied almost exclusively with the awful judgments of God upon the wicked of the earth. *After* the Rapture of the Church...and during the Tribulation... we have temporarily lost sight of the true Church, which was caught away in chapter 4.

In Revelation 4:1-2, the Church is caught away from the earth and does not appear again in the book of Revelation until she is seen in this passage, beginning with Revelation 19:11...immediately before the description of our Lord's glorious return...when He comes back again with His saints to set up His glorious reign on earth.

In chapters 6-19, God's judgment are described on the earth...the earth is undergoing its judgments as God judges Israel and the nations...however, He is also concerned about the Church. There is, at the same time, a judgment taking place in heaven among the believers who had been caught away at the beginning of the Tribulation. This judgment Scripture calls "*the judgment seat of Christ*," at which only believers will appear.

Notice the statement, "*His wife hath made herself ready*." After the cleansing is complete, she reappears clean and white. The clean white robe is her righteous acts.

At the beginning of the Tribulation Period, the Church is raptured to be with the Lord, and immediately after the Tribulation, she returns with her Lord to rule, and reign, upon the earth.

There is a period of preparation at the judgment seat of Christ where the bride will be given an opportunity to prepare herself, be cleansed of her filth, and the believers will receive rewards according to the record of their works.

Sadly, there are many carnal Christians who live worldly, and indifferent, lives who will have to pass through the fires of the judgment seat of Christ before they are ready to return with the Lord to reign upon the earth.

This may not be a welcome truth, but it is the clear teaching of Scripture. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians Church, says: "*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?*"

(1 Corinthians 3:11-16).

This passage indicates clearly that there will be a judgment of believers. Paul speaks of

them as having built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ...(that is, they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior)...however, they are warned to take heed how they build upon that foundation, because every man's work will be tried by fire, and the rewards in the Kingdom Age will be given on the basis of the results of that judgment of the believer's works.

This judgment has nothing to do with one's salvation, but concerns *rewards* in the kingdom reign. This Judgment takes place between the Rapture and the time Christ will return to earth **with** His saints to rule and reign...at the same time that God is judging the wicked on earth during the Tribulation Period. That is why the wedding is mentioned in Revelation 19, before the discussion of the end of the Tribulation and the return of Christ with His prepared, and purified, Church...His bride!

The judgment seat, which follows the Rapture, will not be a pleasant experience for every Christian. There will be suffering and rebukes, cleansing and confessions which should have been made here on earth, but, faithless Christians have refused to do so, therefore, they will now be judged for their lack.

Some will be rewarded, while, others will suffer loss as they see the "*hay, wood and stubble*" disappear in smoke, and realize that they are "*scarcely saved.*" Many, who have refused to cleanse themselves while living on earth, by the washing of the Word, will have to endure the purifying fires.

In olden times, it was a custom that the bride makes her own wedding dress. The bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, too, will have a part in making her own wedding dress. Of course, we know that every member of the bride is already clothed in the garments of the Lord's righteousness. The moment we believed on Him He imputed to us His righteousness and we were saved! However, there is also another robe of righteousness which will be worn on that glad day mentioned here in Revelation 19 This righteousness is the garments we make while here below and it will consist of the "*good works of faith*" which we have laid up, adorned with the gold, silver, and precious stones of our service that will abide in that day.

Let no Christian think that because he is saved, the way he lives his life is of no importance. For Christians who believe thus, the judgment seat of Christ will be a sad, sad reckoning. "***Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.***"

In Ephesians 5:26 we are told that Christ will sanctify and cleanse His Church by the washing of water by the Word. The two words used, "*sanctify*" and "*cleanse*," are interesting words. These two words show two different methods God uses to purify His Church.

1. One way is by "*sanctifying*" by the washing of water by His Word. This is what God desires to do in every Christian's life while they are living their life down here on earth.

However, they refuse this method:

2. God will give him a "cleansing" The Greek word, which this word is translated from, is "katharizo," from which our English word "cathartic" is derived, and has the meaning of purging.

Christ will have His bride clean, therefore, if they will not be cleaned by His "sanctifying" work of the Holy Spirit while on earth, they must then be cleaned by His purging fires at the judgment seat of Christ.

How much better to take the gentle course now than to wait until the judgment seat of Christ and be purged by fire!

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" - (Revelation 19:7).

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place before the coming of the Lord, when He comes to set up His kingdom on earth (19:11). The Church is raptured in chapter 4. Chapters 6-19 describe the seven years of Tribulation on earth. During Tribulation on earth, the bride is in heaven, preparing for the wedding. There are alterations to be made, and this time is occupied with this task, which should have been completed on earth here below, before the Rapture took place.

Finally, each garment is in readiness. The spots and stains have been washed out, the hay, wood, and stubble have been burned, and we read: "*The marriage is the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.*" This word, "righteousness," in the original, is *plural* and, is not here, referring to the righteousness of Christ, but, rather, to "*the righteous acts*" of the saints.

She will be adorned by her good works, which remained after the testing at the judgment seat of Christ. Everything, which was in the interest of self and of the flesh, will have been burned, and only that which was done for the love of Christ will remain. That which remains of the precious stones will be worn as the garment for the wedding.

Oh, Christian, there needs to be a burning out in our lives, and if it is not done here, it must be done there!

*Only one life, `twill soon be past
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

The next event, after the judgment seat of Christ, will be the wedding supper, which will take place after all things have been prepared, the table has been set, and the bride is ready and fit to take her place with her Lord at the table:

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Revelation

19:9).

At this wedding supper we shall see the consummation of all our hopes and desires and all the hopes and desires of our Blessed Lord. As at any well-ordered wedding, every group will be represented. First, of all, God will be the Host at the wedding. The Father will be there to smile His benediction upon the participants. There will also be the Son as the Groom who went through death to gain His precious bride. Next to Him will be the bride, who, though unworthy in herself was made worthy by Him who gave His life for her. Finally, there will be the guests. One cannot have a wedding without guests. These are called in Scripture "*the friend of the bridegroom*" and consist of all the Old Testament saints who were raised at the first resurrection with the Church. They are not the bride; they are the guests, the *friends* of the Bridegroom. In the Song of Solomon they are called the "*daughters of Jerusalem*." John the Baptist was one of the Old Testament saints who died before the Cross-, and he calls himself a friend of the bridegroom.

That is implied in the verse "*Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb*." There are not the bride, but they are guests who are invited to the marriage of the Groom and the bride. They are the Old Testament saints who will also be raised at the Rapture and be with Christ in the Kingdom Age of the Millennium. They are the ten wise virgins of which we read in Matthew 25.

When the bride is ready and the guests have assembled the wedding of the Lamb will take place. The honeymoon of course, follows the wedding, and the record which follows immediately in Revelation 19:11 is the account of the coming again of the Lord Jesus *with* His bride to put down His enemies, to bind Satan, to destroy the Antichrist, to establish His kingdom on the earth and reign with His bride for a thousand blessed years. This glorious event begins in Revelation 19:11.

In this brief, but highly descriptive and clear passage, we have the pointed account of the consummation of all the ages, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in glory to set up His kingdom upon the earth. In this chapter we approach not only the climax of the entire book of Revelation, but the climax of the entire Bible, as well. All the prophets looked forward to this event. When Jesus was here upon the earth, the disciples asked Him, again and again, concerning this event. It is the hope of Israel, the theme of all prophecy, the consummation of the ages, and the vindication of the humiliation of Christ's first coming.

The discussion of the Tribulation is concluded in Revelation 19, the wedding of the Lamb has occurred, and the time has come for Christ to return to take the kingdom of this world and to make them His own. This is the event for which believers have been praying for two thousand years: "*Thy kingdom come Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*." This is the event of which believers have sung throughout the centuries of the history of the Church as they lifted their voices in happy anticipation.

This great day has finally come and we read the thrilling account (Revelation 19:11-21)..

This coming of the Lord Jesus is not to be confused with His coming **for** the Church.

Here he comes in awful judgment upon His enemies. There are two phases of the Second Coming of Christ. First, He will come *for* His Church to take all believers out *before* the Tribulation. Then, He will come again (seven years later, corresponding to Daniel's seventieth week) at the end of the Tribulation *with* His Church to set up His kingdom upon the earth. The first event, called the Rapture, is described in Revelation 4:1-3; we read in this passage, Revelation 19:11, of the second event. It is of the utmost importance that we differentiate clearly between these two events! There are two classes of passages in the Bible, which concern the return of the Lord. some speak of a secret coming as a thief in the night, whereas others speak of His coming as public, when every eye shall see Him. these two groups of passages can never be harmonized unless we distinguish between the two events, the *secret* Rapture before the Tribulation and the *public* appearing at the close of the Tribulation.

The Old Testament prophet saw the glory of His public Second Coming only, and knew nothing about His secret coming in the Rapture. The truth concerning the Rapture is taught in the New Testament, and was unknown in the Old. The reason for this is evident when we remember that the Rapture concerns the Church, whereas the Second Coming is the time of Israel's deliverance. Hence, in the Old Testament, when there was no Church there was no mention of the Rapture (though it was foreshadowed in type and in figure), but when we study the New, we find many references to the blessed hope of His return *for* the Church *before* the awful day of the Lord.

The Vision of the Victorious Christ

The description of this 19th chapter of Revelation is one of the clearest pictures in the Bible of Christ in the majesty and glory of His Second Coming. No one can mistake His identity. He is called "***Faithful and True.***" His eyes are as a flame of fire, revealing every- thing. He is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called "***the Word of God.***" Dreadful indeed will it be for those who have rejected Him and made light of His work on Calvary to meet Him as the all-powerful, irresistible Judge of all the earth.

It is significant that we have no picture in Scripture of the physical appearance of the Lord Jesus when He came to earth the first time to suffer and die. Though you search throughout the Bible, you will find no details concerning the appearance of Christ. Isaiah tells us that He was "*marred more than any man.*" We are told that He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but beyond the fact that He was a man of sorrows we know little. There is no hint in Scripture regarding the color of His hair, His stature, the color of His eyes or other details of His physical appearance. The portraits of the Lord Jesus and the pictures, which appear in our Bible-story books, and Bibles are merely the products of the artists' imagination and have no foundation in Scripture. The fact is that God has been pleased to keep from us all records of the appearance of Christ in His humiliation except the tragic description of the bloody sweat, the bruises and the nail-prints.

However, we are given complete details concerning His Second Coming. We have not one but many pictures of Christ in the glory of His coming again. Isaiah saw Him and describes Him as follows: "***Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? `It***

is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.' Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? 'I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come'" (Isaiah 63:1-4).

Remember, John's picture of Christ in this graphic manner: "*Among the lamp stands was Someone 'like a son of man,' dressed in a robe reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.*" (Revelation 1:13-16).

Isaiah tells us that when Christ comes again, He will stain His raiment with the blood of His enemies. This may shock you, but it is the clear teaching of the Word of God. Jesus Christ is not a weakling. He is not only a tender and compassionate Savior to all who believe on Him; He is also the righteous and eternal Judge of all those who reject Him.

To be sure He is love, but He is also justice, and while He deals in infinite mercy with those who believe in Him, He deals also in infinite justice and righteousness with those who turn their back upon Him. for this reason Isaiah tells us in that chapter which speaks of His glorious Second Coming that He will wreak vengeance upon the wicked. Here is the record again: "*Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? 'I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing"* (Isaiah 63:2-3). The next verse tells us when He will do this: "*For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come"* (Isaiah 63:4).

THE ARMIES OF HEAVEN

When the King comes, at the end of the Tribulation Period, He will not come alone: He will be attended by the redeemed company of resurrected and redeemed saints as well as the hosts of angels who constantly attend Him. John declares:

The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean."

These armies are the members of the bride of Christ, the purified Church which was caught up in the Rapture. They are said to be clothed in the linen, white and clean, and we have already seen that this is the wedding garment of the Lamb's wife, the glorified purified Church (Revelation 19:8).

ARMAGEDDON

The next event will be Armageddon, the last great battle of the ages. The kings of the

earth are gathered about the city of Jerusalem, ready to make the last great effort to destroy God's earthly people, and it seems as though their end has come when suddenly the heavens open and the King comes forth. so great is the slaughter of the enemies of the Lord that it is described in the following graphic account:

Suddenly, a battle-cry is heard, as the clear notes of a victorious bugle will herald the appearance of a new Ally. Thousands of saints will accompany Him. His irresistible power will shine forth in dazzling brilliance. The sun-bright light will blind the confederated Antichrist's armies, and, the mighty Antichrist, himself, will be paralyzed before the majesty of the victorious Christ. The battle will not be prolonged, because the victory will be instantaneous. The forces of the Antichrist will be destroyed and he will be taken alive. His disgrace will be complete. His fighting machine will crumble under the gaze of the righteous King of kings.

Not only does the word of God clearly predict these events, but also history and current events unite in their testimony that we are rapidly approaching the end of the age, the judgment of God and the day of final reckoning.

Never will there be a more glorious event or a more beautiful sight than this spectacle of all the hosts of heaven, clothed in spotless white and in perfect order and rank, following Christ on white horses, anxious for the fray, to take vengeance on the enemies of God.

The last part of chapter 19 is devoted to the Battle of Armageddon or "*the supper of the great God.*" This battle is to follow the fulfillment of all the Revelation down to chapter 19.

The Place Where Armageddon Will Be Fought

The word "*Armageddon*" occurs only once in Scripture. It is the name of a place where the greatest battle of all times will be fought. The battle itself is mentioned many times in Scripture. The place is where the three unclean spirits will gather the nations together to battle (Revelation 16:13-16). Armageddon is called "*the valley of Jehoshaphat*" in other places, which identifies the location of the battle from Mount Carmel southeast to Jerusalem, (Joel 3).

The word "*Armageddon*" is from two Hebrew words, "*har,*" meaning "*a mountain, or range of hills, hill country,*" and *Megiddo*, meaning "*rendezvous.*" The two words put together (*Har-Megiddon*) refer to the Hill of Megiddo on the south side of the valley of Megiddo or Esdraelon (2 Chronicles 35:22; Zechariah 12:11) southeast of Mount Carmel. "*Megiddo*" was the capital of a portion of Canaan that fell to Joshua (Joshua 12:21; 17:11; Judges 1:27). It is at the entrance to a pass across the Carmel mountain range, on the main highway between Asia and Africa, and the key position between Euphrates and the Nile. It was the battle field of many ages and peoples. Thothmes III, the founder of the old Egyptian empire, said, "*Megiddo is worth a thousand cities.*"

This place will no doubt be the headquarters of Antichrist when he comes down from the north, after having conquered Russia and the countries of the north and east of the old Roman Empire. Revelation 16:13-16 says, "*And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*" There he will await the return of Christ who is expected to come

from heaven to set His feet on the Mount of Olives and deliver Israel when half of the city of Jerusalem is taken (Zechariah 14:1-5). The devil "*knoweth that he hath but a short time*" (Revelation 12:12). and it will be common knowledge to the Antichrist and others that Christ is expected at the end of the 1,260 days of Revelation 12:6, 14 and 13:5.

The Antichrist will have been personally directing his armies against the countries of the north and east and, evidently, loses control of Jerusalem toward the last part of the Week. It seems clear from Zechariah 14 that the Antichrist comes back from the north and gathers the nations against the Jews and Jerusalem by the time Christ comes back to earth.

2. The Time Armageddon Will Be Fought

1. At the time Antichrist has completed his conquest of the countries of the north and east of his ten-kingdom empire (Daniel 11:44).
2. At the second coming of Christ to deliver the Jews and Jerusalem from the armies of the Antichrist (Joel 3; Zechariah 14; Isaiah 63:1-6; Jude 14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).
3. Immediately after the Tribulation (Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-46).
4. After the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:1-21).
5. At the time Satan is bound for the one thousand years (Revelation 19:11-20:3).
6. At the time Jerusalem is surrounded by the armies of the nations and half of the city is taken (Zechariah 14:1-15; Revelation 14:14-21; 16:13-16).
7. Just before the Millennium (Revelation 19:11-20:3).
8. At the end of this age (Matthew 13:40-43; 25:31-46).
9. At the time God sets up His Kingdom on earth (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14, 18-27).
10. When the first resurrection has been completed (Revelation 19:11-20:6).
11. At the end of Daniel's Seventieth Week (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 13:5; 19:11-21).
12. Forty-two months after Antichrist is given power over the ten kingdoms (Revelation 13:5; 19:11-21).
13. When men will think there will be universal peace because Antichrist will have conquered much of the world (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3).
14. At the beginning of the day of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Revelation 19:11-21; 20:1-3).

3. The Combatants at Armageddon

The battle of Armageddon will not be an ordinary battle between two sets of earthly nations, but, rather, it will be a battle between the armies of heaven under Christ and the armies of earth under the dragon, the beast and the false prophet.

On the side of Christ there will be:

1. Earthly Israel (Zechariah 14:1-15),
2. The angels of God (Matthew 25:31-45; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10), and
3. The resurrected saints of all ages (Zechariah 14:1-5; Jude 14; Revelation 19:11-21).

On the side of Antichrist there will be:

1. The Devil and his angels and demons (Rev 12:7-12; 16:13-16; 20:1-3)
2. The ten kings and their armies (Revelation 17:14-17; Daniel 2:44; 7:19-27)
3. The countries of the north and east of the ten kingdoms who will have been recently conquered by Antichrist (Daniel 11:44; Revelation 16:12)
4. And many other nations that will cooperate with the Antichrist through the ministry of the three unclean frogs (Rev. 16:13-16; Zech. 14:1-5 and 16)

4. The Purpose of Armageddon

The purpose of God will be to deliver Israel from total destruction by the Antichrist and the many nations under him (Zechariah 14; Isaiah 63:1-10) to punish the nations for their persecution of the Jews (Matthew 25:31-46), to set up a kingdom on earth with Christ as its head (Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 1:32), to rid the earth of all rebellion and restore God's dominion on earth as before the fall (1 Corinthians 15:24-29; Ephesians 1:10), and to give man one more dispensational test before destroying every rebel on earth and establishing the eternal perfect state (Ephesians 1:10; Revelation 20:1-10; 21:1-22:5; 2 Peter 3:10-13). **The purpose of man and Satan** will be to stop God's plan in taking over the earthly governments, and to avert their own impending doom, should they be defeated (Revelation 12:12; 19:19-21; 20:1-10; Zechariah 14:1-5).

5. The Length of Armageddon

According to Zechariah 14:1-14, the battle will only be one day long: *'The Lord my God shall come and ALL THE SAINTS WITH THEE. And it shall come to pass IN THAT DAY, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be ONE DAY which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.'*

6. The Results of Armageddon

1. There will be total defeat of the armies of the earth and the spirit forces under Satan (Isaiah 63:1-6; Revelation 19:19-20:3).
2. The vast armies of the nations will be destroyed (Rev. 19:19-21; Zech. 14:1-15).
3. The armies will make carcasses for the fowls of the heavens to eat (Revelation 19:17-21; Matthew 24:27-28, 40-42; Luke 17:34-37; Job 39:27-30).
4. The beast and false prophet will be consigned to the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20; Daniel 7:11; 8:25; 11:45; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9).
5. The Devil and his angels will be consigned to the bottomless pit (Rev 20:1-7).
6. Blood will flow up to the horses' bridles (Revelation 14:14-21).
7. Israel will be delivered and vindicated and God's eternal kingdom will be set up (Matthew 25:31-46; Daniel 2:44; 7:18, 23-27; Rev 11:15; 20:1-10; 21:2-22:5).

God will make a supper for fowls of the air because of the necessity to cleanse the land of all refuse, as a result of the Battle of Armageddon. The need of cleansing the land will be so great that the fowls will be called upon to assist. (Revelation 19:17-20).

In this 19th chapter of Revelation we read of the establishment of Christ's millennial reign upon the earth, but it is necessary first of all that He take care of His enemies who have opposed His program up to this time. You will recall that Satan has two chief representatives during the Tribulation Period, described in detail in Revelation 13. These are called the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth. The first is the *political* dictator of the end-time, the despot who will manage to gather all nations into one mighty international bloc to destroy God's people, Israel, and establish a mock millennium and a false kingdom. Associated with the Antichrist is the false prophet, the head of the religions federation of that day. When Christ returns, these two men - for they are men - will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. This is the Biblical description of hell. Until the events spoken of in the 19th chapter of Revelation, hell will be empty; it will have not even one occupant. These two, "*the beast and the false prophet*," therefore, are the first two individuals to be cast into this horrible place.

[See study on "*What is the difference between Hell and Hades?*"]

In Revelation 20:1-15, we have the expulsion of Satan from the earth, the Millennial Reign of Christ and His saints, Satan's post-Millennial career and doom, and the final judgment.

1. The Expulsion of Satan from the Earth

Read Revelation 20

This passage is a continuation of the Scripture on the Battle of Armageddon of

Revelation 19:11-21 and shows the confinement of the dragon in the abyss. After Armageddon an angel will come down from heaven having the key to the abyss, he will "lay hold" on Satan, overpower him by actual combat, "**bind him**" with a great chain, cast him into the abyss where he is to be for a thousand years and "**set a seal upon him,**" or, literally, **seal the abyss over him to keep him here so that he cannot deceive the nations until the Millennium is over.**

We saw in Revelation 12 where the dragon... (Satan) ...and his angels will be cast out of heaven to the earth in the middle of the Week, where they will remain until the Battle of Armageddon when they will fight against Christ and His angels and saints. It is not stated whether Satan's angels will be cast into the abyss with him or not. It may be that they will be confined there and loosed with him after the Millennium to help him deceive the nations again.

2. The Millennial Reign of Christ and His Saints

Revelation 20:1-3 shows that the tribulation martyrs will also have a part in the reign of Christ in the Millennium and forever.

[See study on "*The Millennium*" in "*God's plan for the Ages*"]

3. Satan's Post-Millennial Career and Doom

A question which arises naturally in this connection is: "*Why must Satan be loosed for a little season after the Millennium*" We believe that there are two reasons: to prove the incorrigibility of Satan himself and, second, to show the absolute justice of God in casting the wicked into the lake of fire forever. For a thousand years the devil will be bound, and therefore during that time men will be free from his wicked influence. More over, during those thousand years Christ will reign in person on the earth. However, at the end of that thousand years there will be a great multitude of men who have given only *lip* service to the King, whose hearts had never been changed, and, who as a result, are ready to follow Satan the moment he is loosed.

Remember that during the Millennium the population of the world will increase tremendously. Death and sickness will be uncommon. People will live a thousand years. Countless children are born during this time when men will have to obey the command of God, "*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*" But all these children will have to be born again just as they do today.

Everyone who lives during the Millennium will have to do homage to the King, Christ Jesus, even those who are not saved. Failure to do so will result in sudden death. Open rebellion will be summarily punished by death. In that age truly every knee shall bow to Him, however, all will not be saved. This becomes immediately apparent from the fact that when Satan is loosed out of his prison, he will instantly find a tremendous host ready to follow him and forsake the Christ. Consider carefully the brief record as John gives it in Revelation 20:7-9 above.

God is going to prove that the human heart is corrupt beyond help and only through personal faith in Jesus Christ can men be saved. He is going to let man prove that "*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*" That is why God gives us the revelation that the unregenerate heart has not improved even after a thousand years of blessing and prosperity.

Jesus taught that, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" The devil tries to tell us that we need merely better our environment, improve the physical quality of the race by eliminating the weak and mentally unfit, and promote education, reformation and better social understanding, and consequently man will become better and better until we have a world of perfect peace and perfect people. God is going to prove *twice* that this is the devil's lie. He proved it once in the Garden of Eden. He placed two people in a beautiful garden with perfect heredity and environment. By heredity they had been created in the image of God. They were pure. They had no inherited taint of sin. Their hearts were not corrupt. God placed them in a perfect environment. There were no evil associates to influence them; they were not beset by the corruptions and evils, which menace us today. Yet these two, although their environment and heredity were perfect, fell. They sinned, broke with God and rebelled against Him.

At the end of human history God will once more prove man's need of Him, for after one thousand years of ideal environment, in which he basked in the indescribable blessing of the beneficent King of kings, the unregenerate man will remain the same, and when the opportunity comes, he will be ready to rise up against God and defy his Benefactor and Creator.

This will prove the need of the injunction, "*Ye must be born again*" and also vindicate God in His righteousness when He condemns those who have spurned His love and salvation.

The Great White Throne Judgment

This passage gives to us the teaching on "*the second resurrection.*" You will remember that the "*first resurrection*" has three sections. Just as the Jewish harvest had, first, the *first fruits*, which was gathered in first, then, there was the *main harvest*, after which followed, the *gleanings*.

The clearest teaching in the Bible on the subject of the resurrection is found in 1 Corinthians 15, and verses 20-25 state, "*But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the first fruits; then when He comes, those who belong to Him. Then the end will come when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all his enemies under His feet.*"

The first resurrection consist of three sections:

- (1) **The first fruits** - Christ
- and those who rose with Him at His resurrection (Matthew 27:50-53)
- (2) The **main harvest** - "*those who are Christ's when He comes back again*"
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16
- (3) The "*end ones*," or the gleanings - 1 Corinthians 15:24

Revelation 20:6 states, "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the **first** resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*" Verse 4 and 5 shows who the first resurrection consist of, "*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: **and**...*(The Tribulation saints, who are 'the gleanings,' are included)...*I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead...(the wicked dead)...lived not again until the thousand years were finished.* (Referring to what is said in verse 4)...***This is the first resurrection.***"

Then, coming to verse 11, we see the **second** resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked!

These verses hardly need any explanation, they speak for themselves.

In our studies of the book of Revelation we have reached the end of time and the beginning of eternity. We have traced the course of the history of the Church, the nations and the nation of Israel through this present age and also through the Tribulation Period. The Millennium is over, Satan has been judged, the wicked have all been raised and cast into the lake of fire, and only eternity remains. Every trace and vestige of sin and its curse is not to be removed, and everything will be made new.

The first of these new things mentioned is the new heavens and the new earth. The word "*heavens*" in this connection refers, of course, to the atmospheric heaven. In Scripture there are three heavens mentioned, First, the atmospheric heavens of gas around the earth; second, the planetary heaven of the stars and sun and moon; third, the heaven of heavens, the dwelling place of God Himself. It is the atmospheric heavens that John refers to here. This is evident from the other passages, which mention the new heaven. In Isaiah 65:17 we read:

For, behold I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

Everything, which has been defiled by sin and Satan, will be purified by fire and made new. Since the earth was defiled by sin, it will be destroyed, and since the atmosphere, the air, is the present domain of the "*prince of the power of the air*," this also will be purified by fire.

The Apostle Peter in his second epistle gives us what probably is the most thorough description of how the Lord is going to create the new heavens and the new earth. Here we have one of the most advanced and scientific statements of the composition of the earth and its final destruction found anywhere in Scripture. He says: "***But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men***" (2 Peter 3:7). A free literal rendering of this verse is as follows: "*But the present heavens and earth are held in check by the same word of God, stored with fire, and reserved unto the day of judgment and perdition of the ungodly.*"

Peter says that the earth is "*stored with fire.*" We know this to be scientifically true, but, how did Peter know this two thousand years ago, or Isaiah three thousand years ago? Simply, because God always knew it, for He is the One who made the earth.

The earth on which we live is approximately twenty-five thousand miles in circumference and eight thousand miles in diameter. It is formed like a hollow ball with an outer crust and a core, which is liquid, consisting of molten elements, seething and boiling in the heart of the earth. The thickness of this crust, or shell, is variously estimated and varies in different parts of the earth, however, science tells us that the crust compares in thickness, or depth, with its super heated liquid content as the shell of an egg compares with its viscous interior. On this outer solid crust man lives, builds homes, conducts warfare and shakes his fist in the face of the Creator, while he walks on a boiling, seething firepot, which God Himself has made.

We are told that the temperature in the core of the earth becomes unbelievable hot. In some places of the earth's crust the molten, super heated elements are near the surface and the pressure becomes so great that suddenly a piece of the crust blows away, usually at some mountain whose roots reach into the caldron of fire, and millions of tons of rock and earth are blown away, shooting flames hundreds of feet into the air, and emitting a stream of glowing, burning lava down the mountain side, inundating whole cities and causing tens of thousands to perish in the river of fire. All this is history! Suddenly a great part of the earth reels with the internal explosion, the earth trembles and cracks open, rocks are hurled into the air, and the ash from the spewing volcano drifts for a thousand miles to be deposited upon some ship in the middle of the ocean, while the tidal wave caused by the upheaval on the ocean floor hurls waves twenty feet high on shore a thousand miles from the explosion.

How can anyone doubt God's Word when He said that someday this old world would be destroyed by fire? After all, astronomers tell us that during the last few hundred years dozens of worlds have burned out before the very eyes of scientists. Worlds that once traveled their majestic way through the heavens suddenly exploded and disappeared, and all over this old earth are these volcanoes, hot springs, rivers, and spouting geysers of steam to remind us that inside the old earth is a sea of fire and that Peter knew whereof he spoke when he declared by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "***But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are reserved, (stored with fire), against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.***"

One wonders, when he considers these facts both from the Scriptures and from science, why this old world hasn't blown up before now. It certainly should make one shudder to think of the precarious place in which he lives. However, there is no fear for those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word, who created these elements, for He has promised that this disaster will never occur while we, His people, are here on the earth. When that happens, only the wicked will be there. By that time we will have been with the Lord Jesus for a millennium, and after the world has been destroyed by fire, He will make a new heaven and new earth which will be the abode of His people forever and forever.

You may ask, "*What is keeping this bombshell, eight thousand miles in diameter, from blowing up?*" Again the Word of the Lord gives the answer in 2 Peter 3:9: "***The Lord is not***

slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

GOD IS LONG-SUFFERING

The world crucified His Son. Men have brought death and destruction upon women and children...they have attempted to tear Christ from His throne and set themselves up as God. They have scrapped the Bible and substituted pagan tradition and mythologies. The entire world has been drenched in blood...nations have defied God and shaken their puny fists in His face. They curse Him, revile, challenge Him and yet God does not plunge them into perdition.

One wonders, in view of the events of recent years, with the increase of violence and the hell-bent programs of man, why God has not yet rent the heavens and poured out His judgments upon the wicked. There is but one answer: **God is indeed long-suffering.**

In spite of the delay and the long-suffering of God, there is a day coming when this world will be destroyed. Consider the words of Peter: **BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME** *as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"* (2 Peter 3:10).

This coming cataclysm will be confined, according to Peter, to three realms, all part of this earth, but its effects will be felt even in the sun, ninety-three million miles away, and the stars, some of them countless billions of miles distant. The heavens will explode. The elements will burn and the earth will melt. The heavens here referred to are the atmospheric heavens, the capsule of air surrounding the earth. this heaven, says Peter, will at the end of time explode with a great noise or detonation.

If this seems fanciful to you, listen to the evidence. The atmospheric heaven is composed of several gaseous elements, but the two predominating substances are **nitrogen** and **oxygen**. These two substances are two of the most combustible gases in existence. Oxygen is a basic necessity for all combustion. In fact, burning is merely the oxidation of matter. Without oxygen there can be no combustion. Whether in the slow combustion or metabolism in our bodies or the immediate violent combustion of gas in a motor's cylinder or in a bomb, oxidation is essential. When you want more heat, you open the draft in a stove, admit more oxygen and thus speed combustion. when you want less heat you close the draft and shut off the supply of oxygen. The air about us is composed largely of this combustible gas. The other element in the air is nitrogen, the basic element is more of our high explosives such as dynamite and T.N.T. The word "*nitroglycerin*" tells its own story.

OXYGEN AND HYDROGEN

Besides these two highly inflammable and combustible gases there is present in the atmosphere a large amount of water, and water consists of oxygen and hydrogen. Hydrogen is the highly explosive gas once used for inflating dirigibles, but because of its combustibility it has been replaced by less combustible gases. Think of the air you breathe as consisting of these

various gases, every one of them a combustible element if the proper combinations and conditions are present.

When Peter tells us that the heaven will pass away with a great noise, is he fanatical and fanciful? Up until a few years ago many would have thought so, however, on the contrary, Peter is thoroughly scientific. The atmospheric heaven about us is a veritable storehouse of fire, ready to explode with God gives the signal. Then, indeed, we can understand the expression "*with a great noise.*" What a noise a firecracker makes! We are told that the fire of one twelve-inch shell can be heard for fifty miles. Imagine the deafening roar when the air, containing countless billions of square miles of nitrogen, oxygen and hydrogen, suddenly explodes, as we read in Scripture. Yes, it will be "*a great noise.*" So tremendous will be the explosion that stars millions of miles from the earth will be jarred out of their courses and fall from the heavens. No wonder, then, that Isaiah describes the effect of that explosion in these words in Isaiah 13: "***Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger. And it (the earth) shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up***" (Isaiah 13:13-14).

In view of the facts above, it is not difficult to believe that the Lord will destroy this earth by fire and then make the new heavens and the new earth. This destruction of the earth and the atmosphere does not mean its annihilation, but, rather, its purification by fire and the recasting of these purified elements into a new, more beautiful, sinless and perfect earth to be the dwelling place of a sinless and purified people forever and ever.

The passages of Scripture here in Revelation 21:1, and in 2 Peter 3:10-13, do not convey the idea that the present heaven and earth will be *annihilated*. Fire does not cause anything to cease to exist, but, rather, fire can merely change something from one condition to another or renovate and cleanse, as the case may be. Peter shows that there will be a renovation of the earth by fire and that the future renovation will not blot out the earth any more than did the destruction of the world by water in the beginning.

This renovation will end "*the day of the Lord*" and begin the day of God, 2 Peter 3:10-13, "*In which (in the day of the Lord) the heavens shall pass away.*" The word "*pass away*" is from the Greek "*parerchomai*" and means "***to go by, in the sense of, from one condition to another.***" It never means cessation of existence. It is used over 75 times as follows:

1. The passing of time (Matthew 7:28; 9:10; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; etc.);
2. of events coming to pass (Matthew 24:6; Luke 21:7; John 14:29);
3. of the infallibility of the Word of God, showing that it would be easier for heaven and earth to be changed than for the Word of God to fail (Matthew 5:18; 24:34-35; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; 21:32-33);
4. of people passing by certain places (Mark 6:48; Luke 18:37);
5. to denote passing over or neglect (Luke 12:37; 17:7).

Thus, we see from the various uses that this word never conveys the idea of passing out of existence. As used in 2 Peter 3:10, it means passing from one condition to another, as clearly expressed in Hebrews 1:12 and 12:28-29.

The correct understanding of Revelation 21:1, hinges upon the right understanding of the word "**new**." The Greek for this is "*kainos*," meaning "*renewed or new*," especially in freshness and character, however, it never has the meaning of new in existence.

The expression "***new heaven and new earth***," has reference to this present heavens and earth being made new in character, renewed and loosed from the old curse.

Read Revelation 21

This New Heaven and New Earth are the result of the renovation by fire! The complete destruction of all wickedness and the old order of things under the curse will make them new in freshness and character. This destruction will terminate the last time in all eternity that they will be marred by sin and rebellion of the creatures therein

From this point onward, John was shown only those things, which belong to the new order of things after the curse is removed.

These, mentioned here, are those who have lived through the Millennium without rebellion against the kingdom at the revolt of natural men, led by Satan. These, instead of becoming a glorified people...as the saints of the Old and New Testaments so...will simply remain in a natural imperishable state as God intended man to do when He created him.

From Psalm 8 we understand that man was supposed to have dominion over "***all the works of God's hand***." This would include the planets. It seems, therefore, logical to believe that in the future restoration, when man comes into full possession of his rights, that he will have access to these planets which are a part of God's handiwork.

On the earth itself, after the restoration, it will be possible for vast multitudes of people to live. Think of the possibilities of production when the ground is freed from the curse and again yields abundantly.

Possibly a few figures in connection with the area of the earth and the many people it might be capable of holding will be interesting here. It is said that the total area of the earth is about 196,950,000 square miles. There are now 1,000,000 square miles of lake and river surface, not counting, of course, the area of the oceans. Granting that there will be no oceans in the New Earth, let us suppose that 4,650,000 square miles will be necessary for sea, rivers, and lakes and that 2,250,000 square miles will be necessary for the site of the New Jerusalem. There will leave 190,000,000 square miles for man and his activities. If one acre were given to one person there would be room for about 121,600,000,000 people on this earth, or about 115 billions of people more than what is on the earth now.

[See study on "God's Plan For The Ages"- Natural men will inherit the earth]

We have studied about the new heavens and the new earth, which God will prepare for the redeemed after the Millennium, and after He has destroyed and purified the old earth and heavens by fire. Let us consider the description of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the Lamb's wife.

Some have wondered at the fact that the angel exclaims to John, "*Come, I will show you the **bride**, the wife of the Lamb.*" and then the angels shows John "*the Holy **City**, Jerusalem.*" How can the New Jerusalem be a city and at the same time be the wife of the Lamb, the bride of Christ? The answer is simply that the city and its occupants are one! This chapter of Revelation concerns a *literal* city of inexpressible beauty. It is the New Jerusalem. The redeemed Church of Christ, the bride of the Lamb, is to dwell in that New Jerusalem. The city and its inhabitants are one.

Today we speak in the same manner concerning cities. When I mention a certain city, for example, Rome, New York, I may mean either or both the material city and its buildings or the inhabitants of Rome. From one point of view Rome is a city. However, Rome is also a company of people who live here. For instance, if I say Rome is a beautiful city, you know that I refer to its beautiful location and its beautiful surroundings. However, if I say that Rome is a friendly city, you know immediately that I am referring to the people of Rome and not to its buildings, streets and trees. The term "*Rome, New York*" may refer either to the city itself or to the people who live there. In the same way God speaks of the New Jerusalem. The term indicates both a literal city and also the occupants of that city; it is a city and the bride, the building and its occupant. That is why God calls it both "*the Holy City*" and "*the wife of the Lamb.*"

A LITERAL CITY

Remember, first of all, that this description of the New Jerusalem is of an actual, material, literal city in which the Church of Jesus Christ will dwell and reign over the earth... the new earth...for ever and ever.

This literal city is specially prepared by God and comes down from heaven. So huge is this city that John was carried away to a very high mountain in order that he might catch a glimpse of its transcendent beauty. The city itself was a cube equal in length, breadth and height. The dimensions of the city, as given to John, were as follows: *it was fifteen hundred miles long, fifteen hundred miles wide and fifteen hundred miles high.* It is a city...a literal city...containing one billion eight hundred and seventy-five million cubic miles, and is prepared to be the habitation of the redeemed of the Lord of all ages. This implication, of course, is that there are streets running like blocks in all directions, and the streets are superimposed one above the other, while through the middle of the streets runs the river of life, bordered on either bank by the tree of life, originally placed in the Garden of Eden, but from which man was barred after he had sinned.

A great and magnificent wall with twelve great gates, which were never shut, surrounded the city and on the gates were the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The wall itself rested upon twelve foundations and on the foundations was written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The entire city, therefore, is connected with, and rests upon, the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This is the teaching of Paul as well in Ephesians, where he tells us that the Church, the body of Christ, is - ***built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.***

This great city, which comes down from heaven, was so huge that if you can imagine a city stretching from Boston to Miami and from New York City to Denver, Colorado, and towering fifteen hundred **miles** into the air, you can visualize the dimensions of that place of mansions which is being prepared for our eternal abode. The wall of the city is made of jasper,

I believe that this passage in Revelation is to be literally interpreted! Whenever anyone attempts to *spiritualize* this passage, making the description of this city merely figures of speech, and change its meaning, confusion results.

"*Spiritualizing*" the book of Revelation is the very reason we have a legion of interpretations and explanations which serve only to confuse the Bible students and frighten them from this blessed book of Revelation. Read Revelation and believe it as God expects you to do because it is a description of your literal future home - if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

The foundations of the city are garnished with all manner of precious stones. The twelve gates of the city are twelve huge pearls, and the streets are paved with pure gold, a special kind of gold, transparent and clear as glass. John says he saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is the temple of it.

The Tabernacle and the Temple in the Old Testament were the rallying points for the worship and adoration of the children of Israel. Every part of the Tabernacle and Temple pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The gate pointed to Him as the door. The altar pointed to the Cross-, the laver pointed to His cleansing Word. The table of shewbread spoke of Him as the Bread of Life; the candlestick pointed to the Light of the World; the altar of incense spoke of Him as the interceding High Priest. The Ark of the Covenant was a picture of Christ who by His blood redeemed us from the curse of the law. The linen in the Tabernacle spoke of His righteousness, the brass spoke of the judgment He bore; the gold spoke of His deity; the silver spoke of His blood; the wood spoke of His humanity. Every part of the building revealed a special aspect of glorious relationship to His people.

When we reach the New Jerusalem, we will not need all these, for there we will have Him! He will be with us forever. We shall follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Yes, we shall have Him, and we shall be like Him.

Revelation 21:23-25 speaks of the lighting of this city. This passage tells us, "*The Lamb is the light thereof.*"

Can you imagine this glorious sight will be? Picture a new earth on which dwells the restored and redeemed nation of Israel, and around them are literal nations of redeemed people, consisting of the saved of the nations before the Cross and the nations which came through the Millennium. All dwell on the new earth. Hanging over that new earth, suspended in the sky, is this gigantic city, the New Jerusalem, the habitation of the bride of Christ.

Christ is the light of the New Jerusalem, and this light streams forth over all the earth, dispelling all darkness forever. Remember that the city is made of transparent gold, so that the light from the Person of Christ dwelling with His bride in the new Jerusalem streams forth from

this lamp, fifteen hundred mile cube, lighting the entire earth.

When the Lord makes the new earth, He, of course, makes it to be inhabited. There will be people living here in a perfect and sinless world. Israel will be in the land of Palestine under their own King David of old. The saved nations will inhabit the earth, while the church dwells with Christ and reigns over this new earth from her glorious place in the New Jerusalem.

Read Revelation 22

We shall reign forever and ever! There is the heritage of the saints of God. Those of us who believe the Word of God and the old way are, often, ridiculed, but listen, friend, someday, when Jesus comes, we despised believers will judge angels. In the millennium we shall rule the nations with a rod of iron and throughout all eternity we shall dwell with Him in the New Jerusalem and reign over the earth and the nations forever and ever. Let the foes of Christ despise us now and even persecute us; we can wait for that glad and glorious day when we shall reign with Him not for a few brief years, but forever and ever.

One more interesting fact is mention concerning this wonderful city in verses 1-2.

In the midst of the city will be the throne of God and of the lamb. Out of the throne flows a river of life and beside the river, on either side, is the tree of life. Since Adam was driven out of Eden we had lost sight of that tree. You will recall that there were many trees in the garden, but two are mentioned in particular: the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life.

After Adam sinned by eating of the fruit, God drove him out lest he eat also of the tree of life and live-forever in his sinful lost estate. When sin is gone and the redeemed are all at home, the tree of life will again appear - the tree, which will stay alive forever. Actual literal fruit grows on these trees - twelve kinds, and at one time. There will be twelve crops yearly, so that there will be plenty for all. Remember again that these are *literal* trees. As we believe the tree of life in the Garden of Eden to be literal, so, too, we believe that this is a literal tree.

The leaves are for the healing of the nations. As the eating of the fruit gives eternal life to the saints in the city, so the leaves are used to give undying bless and joy to the nations dwelling upon the new earth. In the beginning God created the earth for man to dwell in and enjoy. Sin entered, but God will not abandon His original purpose. He will not allow Satan to thwart His plan to have an earth full of people worshipping Him. Through all eternity, therefore, there will be people dwelling upon the earth while we reign with Christ over the earth.

The twenty-second chapter of Revelation is a continuation of the preceding chapter which speaks of the New Jerusalem, the eternal home of the saved. It is the final description in the Bible and concludes God's revelation. The first five verses present five facts concerning this New Jerusalem, the abode of the saints:

1. THE RIVER OF LIFE

Mentioned first in the chapter is the river. It is described as pure, clear as crystal, and is

said to proceed out of the throne of God. The water supply of a city is of utmost importance. Throughout human history man has been concerned about, and influenced by, the source of water. Ancient cities were built where there was a sure and pure supply of water. Man can live longer without food than without drink, and water is indispensable both for refreshment and the life of men. In the New Jerusalem the source of refreshment is the throne of God. He is the source of life, and therefore the river is called the river of life. It is pure water because of its source. It is clear as crystal because it is free from all impurities and contamination. There are those who would make this water spoken of in Revelation 22 symbolic of something else, but there is no reason for doing so. This passage undoubtedly refers to literal water to be enjoyed by literal human beings in a literal New Jerusalem. undoubtedly refers to literal water to be enjoyed by literal human beings in a literal New Jerusalem.

2. A TREE OF LIFE

The same is true of the second thing mentioned in the chapter: the tree of life. We believe that the tree of life mentioned in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, was a literal tree, in a literal Paradise, for literal human beings, Adam and Eve. Why, then, should we view the tree differently when it is referred to again in the last book of the Bible? You have already noticed, I am sure, that the description of this New Jerusalem follows closely the description of the first abode of mankind in the Garden of Eden. There, too, was the literal river with its three heads, and there, too, were trees, and in the midst, the tree of life. On this tree grew literal fruit and literal leaves.

The tendency to spiritualize is the result of a wrong conception of the life hereafter, of heaven and the New Jerusalem. We are liable to think of heaven as a place with golden streets, where angels and the saints play golden harps all day long. This is, however, wholly erroneous. When we get to glory, after the resurrection, we will still be human beings. Our resurrection bodies will be literal human bodies and we shall eat and drink and act like human beings. Scripture seems to indicate that we will not have to eat, but we will be able to eat. After His resurrection, Jesus ate literal food, and here we can believe that the tree of life is for our pleasure and enjoyment. We will be higher than the angels. They will be our ministering servants, appointed of God to wait upon us as our servants, ministering to us, the heirs of salvation.

How glorious it will be to see that river flowing through the city lined with these beautiful trees - trees bowed down with twelve kinds of fruits for our pleasure and enjoyment. Furthermore, Scripture tells us that the leaves will also have a ministry: they are for the healing of the nations. There will be nations of people on the earth throughout eternity.

This may be a rude shock to many who have conceived of eternity as a time when all men will be the same and dwell together in heaven as spirits or, at least, angels, but such is not true!

The Church will be the bride of Christ forever. Believers will be literal human beings in perfect resurrection bodies, but there will be other peoples also. There must be, for it is said of us, the saints of God that we shall reign with Him forever and ever.

Note the words, "***reign with Him.***" If we are to reign, there must be subjects over which we are to reign. You cannot reign over nothing. A king implies a kingdom. All the details may not be clear, but the teaching of Scripture seems clearly to indicate that there will always be nations upon the earth, even the new earth, and we shall reign over them. We are told that while the bride of Christ feasts upon the fruit of the tree of life, the nations will partake of the leaves for the tree of life. They, too, will live forever, and the leaves will be for their eternal sustenance. How the leaves will be applied I do not know, but I believe what the text says: "*and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*"

3. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY

This passage, Revelation 22:1-6, describes also the government of this eternal city, for John sees the throne of God in the midst. Out of it precedes the river, and the river supplies the trees, and the trees supply the saints and the nations. The throne of God is the source of all. There will be only one ruler, one governor - the Lord Jesus Christ - and only one throne, the throne of God. so perfect will be that government that we read, "***And there shall be no more curse.***" Again we must refer to the first book of the Bible, which tells us when the first curse was pronounced upon the first human sin. Since then, the trouble, pain, suffering, distress and death in the world have been caused by the curse. The last book of the Bible tells of the removal of the curse because its cause, sin, has been removed.

4. THE ILLUMINATION OF THE CITY

A city must have pure water, an adequate food supply, and efficient government, proper lighting and security. These five requirements are mentioned in the Scripture passage, which we have been considering. We are told repeatedly that there shall be no night there, and no need of sun or any other light, for the Lord Jesus, He who said, "*I am the light of the world.*" shall Himself be the light.

5. THE ETERNAL DURATION OF THE CITY

The passage speaks, finally, of the city's security. "*They shall reign for ever and ever.*" Men scoff and make light of this truth, but God says in Revelation 22:6: "***These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.***"

Revelation 22:6 to the end of the chapter constitutes the conclusion of the book, the final summary. Three times the expression "*I come quickly*" occurs in this section.

In verse 7 we read: "***Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.***"

In verse 12 we read: "***Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.***"

The promise is repeated in verse 20: "***He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.'***"

Isn't it strange that man, with an open Bible before him, can deny the return of the Lord Jesus Christ when God has placed such emphasis upon this truth? three times our Lord stresses this final message of the Bible: "***surely I come quickly.***" He says, as it were, "***Men will deny this truth and scoff at it, and those who believe it will be sneered at and despised, but do not worry, I am coming again.***"