

**A
STUDY
IN THE
BOOK OF REVELATION**

**BY
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Forward

This study in the Book of Revelation was originally done for a class that was taught in the Nixa Church of Christ many years ago. At that time I did not worry about noting all of the sources that were used. At times I took direct quotes and included them in my class notes. Therefore, there are probably some direct quotes included in this material where no credit was given to the original author. For that I apologize. However, at this time it would be impossible to determine all that material. Therefore, just consider it all as being from someone else and no original material from myself.

I hope that people can get some information from the work that I have done. If someone can get half as much as I have received from doing the work then it will worth the effort.

There is much to understand in the Book of Revelation. There will always be discussion about some of the points. As you read the material, please offer any suggestions that you have concerning what it meant by some of the passages.

Thomas E. Allen

REVELATION – INTRODUCTION

The book of Revelation holds much mystery. Just mention the word "Revelation" to people who study the Bible and they immediately become concerned. In many cases they don't know where to start in the study of the book.

The book is not a series of random items but rather an orderly and continuous narrative. The purpose of the book was to help the Church as they faced the problems that lay ahead. They would be able to see, that in the end, the Church will triumph.

E. P. Cachemaille said in his book *The Vision of Daniel and of the Revelation Explained*, that "It is a revelation, not a mystery, though in symbolical language. Such prophecies are simply history written beforehand, and in hieroglyphics or ciphers, which conceal while revealing, and reveal while concealing, but which are gradually made plain as the time of their accomplishment draws near." (Page 137)

In the study of Revelation it is helpful if the person also has an understanding of the prophecies recorded in the Book of Daniel. Daniel chapter two records the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's interpretation. It was an image whose head was gold; its chest and arms were of silver; its middle and thighs were of bronze; its legs of iron and its feet out of iron and clay.

Daniel says (2:38) that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of Gold. He then continues with information about the other kingdoms that would follow Babylon. They would follow in order starting with the head of gold and moving down the body to the feet and toes. We know from history that Mede-Persia followed Babylon; that Greece followed the Mede-Persians; and that the Romans followed the Greeks. In addition, the Roman Empire was ultimately divided into ten kingdoms.

Daniel also made a prophecy that the Messiah would come during the time of the last kingdom mentioned. (2:44) There is a record that Christ did come during the Roman rule just as Daniel predicted.

In chapter seven, Daniel has a dream. He sees four great beasts. There is a lion with eagle wings, a bear, a leopard with four wings and four heads and a fourth beast with iron teeth and ten horns. Then another little horn grew out of the midst of the ten horns. The little horn had the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke great things.

This vision has the same meaning as the one in chapter two. Here Babylon is represented by the lion; Mede-Persia is represented by the bear; Greece is represented by the leopard; and Rome is represented by the fourth beast. The ten horns represent the ten European kingdoms that come out of the old Roman Empire. The little horn which spoke against God's true people would be the Papacy.

In chapter eight of Daniel, he has another vision. In this vision he sees a ram with two horns, one of the horns being higher than the other. He also sees a male goat with one great horn between its eyes. The one horn is then broken off and four horns take its place. In verses 20-22 it is recorded that the Ram was the Mede-Persian Empire and that the goat represented Greece. The four horns represent the four divisions of Alexander's kingdom after he died.

The little horn mentioned in verse 9 of chapter 8 is not the same as the little horn that is mentioned in chapter 7. In chapter 7, the little horn comes out of the fourth kingdom rather than the third, which is the case in chapter 8. The little horn in chapter 8 grows out of one of the four horns that appeared after the great horn was broken off. Alexander the Great would be the great horn; the four generals that divided the empire, after his death, would represent the four horns. Most think that Antiochus Epiphanies would represent the little horn. He was the man who set up an image of Jupiter in the temple of God.

Let's begin by examining the time the book was written and the conditions of the Roman Empire during that time. Most scholars think John wrote the Book about 95-96 A.D. (However, some think it was written as early as 65-68 A.D. during Nero.) If the later date is correct, Domitian would have been Emperor of Rome at that time. During his reign, he tried to restore the old standards of Rome, including their religion. He had people from other religions executed, including both Jews and Christians. If we think about the persecution at that time we can see why John may have used symbols in his writing. He could get his message across to those who he wanted to without letting the Roman officials know what he was talking about. (Parables were sometimes used, by Jesus, for the same purpose.) This might be similar to what someone would do if they lived in China or some other country which did not allow free expression of ideas.

The Church would have been about 66 years old and had already endured periods of persecution. The first persecution occurred during the reign of Nero, (54 to 68 A.D.) when Peter and Paul were killed. The Church then endured the persecution of Domitian, who reigned from 81 to 96 A.D. There would be more persecutions to come and with this prophecy that God gave to John, the Church could be sure that it would survive.

Bible scholars have a number of different ways to interpret the prophecy of the Book of Revelation. I will list three different ones so we can get a comparison. Most groups fall into one of these three ways in their interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

PRETERIST

In general people using this method of interpretation think that the events listed refer to events that happened by 70 A.D. People using this method would use the early date when telling when the book was written. However, some that believe this method use the later date. They would apply the events to the Jews and the Pagan Rome Empire.

The origins of this system can be traced back to Jesuit Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613). However, there were people who used a form of this method as early as the sixth century. Many of the reformers of Alcazar's period thought the Jesuit created this method to take the focus off the Papacy as the being the Anti-Christ.

The "Preterists" are divided between the "Left-Wing" and "Right-Wing," each with a different slant on what events are meant by each symbol. The "Left-Wing" believes in the later date for the writing. However, they don't believe that the book is inspired and they don't think that all of John's prophecies came to pass. The "Right-Wing" group holds the more traditional Preterist view. That is, an early date of the writing and that all but the last chapters of the book had come to pass by 70 A.D.

For the most part, the Preterist method of interpretation is dependent on Revelation being written at an early date.

FUTURIST

This method holds that all events predicted by John are in the future and will be fulfilled in a literal Israel complete with the rebuilding of the Temple. They would also conclude that the events listed in chapters 14-19 would happen in the 3 ½ years just before the second coming of Christ. Usually, they take a literal interpretation of the passages.

The "Futurist" method, like the "Preterist" method has its origin with a Jesuit priest. Francisco Ribeira, a Spanish Jesuit originated this approach in 1585. The reformers also thought this method was developed to take the focus away from the Papal system as being the Anti-Christ. It was rejected by Protestants for over 200 years before one writer, who was the founder of dispensationalism, included it in some of his works.

This method is popular with media preachers today. It does not require the person to identify any past events with specific actions. They believe, for the most part, that the events listed will literally happen at some time in the future.

They also believe in a literal millennium (1000 years). There are various types of millennialists. There are pre-millennialists and there are post-millennialists.

Pre-millennialists think:

- The 1000 years is a literal period

- The binding of Satan is still in the future

- Christ will come back to earth at the start of the 1000 years and reign

- Satan will be bound at the time Christ returns

- Loosing of Satan will bring the millennium to a close

- The new heaven and the new earth will come at the close of the period when Christ returns for a second time

Post-millennialists think:

Christ will come back at the end of the 1000 year period

There will be peace and prosperity during the 1000 years

Satan will be bound during this period

Preaching of Christ will be successful

Satan will have limited influence

Following this period there will be a general resurrection and judgment at Christ's coming

CONTINUOUS HISTORICAL

Those who use this method think that the panorama recorded in Revelation is a continuous historical picture of things that have happened or will happen. This sequence of events that affect the true Church goes from the time of John until the second coming of Christ. By using this method there will always be prophecy that has been fulfilled and prophecy that is yet to happen.

This method was popular with the early commentators. It was supported by Wycliffe, Calvin, Luther, Barnes, Newton, Wesley and others.

CONCLUSION

The "Preterist" is right in that many of the events have now happened, but over a much longer time that the "Preterist" would think. The "Futurist" is right in that some events are still to happen, but not as many as they think. I believe the "Continuous Historical" is the correct interpretation because history has certainly aligned itself with a number of the things that are recorded in the Book of Revelation. However, one using this method has to be careful because these are not all events, but a series of visions.

By using historical events that have occurred over time and applying those events to the symbols John used in the Book of Revelation, a correlation can be seen. In particular, many scholars have used Gibbon's book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as a source to show that correlation.

Gibbon, who was not a Christian, did not write his book in support of the Book of Revelation. He simply wrote about the history of Rome and its decline. Yet when the events he recorded are placed beside the predictions of John, there is a definite correlation.

The "Continuous Historical" approach is what will be used in this study to evaluate the material that John has included in his writings about the information that was presented to him by God.

REVELATION 1

Verse 1:

The word “revelation” is from the Greek word “*apocalypse*” which means an uncovering or unveiling of something. Here the unveiling would be the events that the angels are going to show to John that will happen in the future.

John gives the source of the revelation – “the Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The information was for Christ’s servants and he gave the information to John to record and share with his servants.

“Shortly come to pass” – the events that John is going to describe are about to start. We also start to see the interaction between John and Christ’s messengers, the angels. This interaction will continue throughout the book.

The word “signified” is used as a description of the method to show how the message will get from the angel to John. The word has the meaning of “a sign” or literally to “give a sign or token.” This gives additional insight into how the information is going to be presented; by a sign or symbols.

In addition, John identifies himself as the person who will receive the information and write it down for those who follow.

Verse 2:

What is John going to do with the information he receives? – He is going to “Bare record of the word of God” and report the things he sees. This is not John’s revelation; it is God’s revelation given through Jesus Christ to an angel and then to John. John then records and reports what he sees (verse 1).

Verse 3:

There is a blessing for those who read and obey the words of the book. This would indicate that we should have some knowledge of what is contained in the book.

John makes another statement about the timing of the events recorded in the book. – It says; “for the time is at hand.” This would have the same meaning as “shortly come to pass” in verse 1. The events are about to begin.

This doesn’t mean that the end of the events is near. That will happen sometime in the future. However, the prophecies that John is going to record are about to start.

Verse 4:

In this verse, John again identifies himself as the person who is recording the information and tells what the first section of the book is going to be, instruction to seven churches in Asia.

Asia in verse four refers to the Roman province of Asia which is the western end of what we call Asia Minor or current country of Turkey. There were more than seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. These churches were close together and may have presented some kind of a circuit where mail (this letter) could be distributed on a timely basis.

The number seven indicates a perfect or complete number in Bible symbolism. John uses the number seven, fifty-two times throughout the book. This chapter has, for example, 7 churches (vs. 4), 7 spirits (vs. 4), 7 candlesticks (vs. 12 & 13) and 7 stars (vs. 16).

There will be other uses of the number seven all through out this book

The Seven Spirits refers to the Holy Spirit (number 7 showing completeness, fullness and perfection)

John uses the terms "which is," "which was" and "which is to come." These terms refer to God who has always been, is present and will always be in the future.

Verse 5:

John completes the greeting by adding Christ to the picture.

John has given the complete God-Head in verses 4 and 5. He listed God (represented by the "which is" statements), Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is the source of power and information that John will use as he records the information for us.

John then gives some of the characteristics of Christ; faithful witness, first-begotten of the dead and Prince of kings. Christ is a faithful witness because what he says is always true. Christ was the first-begotten of the dead because he was the first one that rose from the dead to die no more. He was also different after he resurrected as he could appear and disappear at will. The RSV translates the phrase "Prince of kings" as "ruler of kings on earth." Christ is higher and has more authority than any king on the earth.

It was Christ who allowed himself to be sacrificed so that we could have our sins forgiven.

Verse 6:

John gives additional information about Christ and what he has done for us.

The KJ & NKJ both state that he (Christ) has made us both kings and priests. This would be a joining together of two offices that were separate under the Jewish law. However, the word "kings" is translated in most other translations as "kingdom." This would show that Christ has prepared a kingdom for us and we are priests in that kingdom (the church). First Peter 2:9 calls Christians "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." This is the meaning of the phrase that John writes.

John again states the position of Christ. He has "glory and dominion."

Verse 7:

John gives some information about the second coming of Christ. He will come in the clouds; he will be seen by everyone, even those who killed him (Israel); he will cause men to mourn when he comes back because their sins will be known. This seems to be a quotation from Zechariah 12:10.

Acts 1:9-11 records that Jesus ascended into a cloud when he left this earth and that the angels said he would return in the same way.

Verse 8:

John refers to God using the Greek alphabet by calling Him the Alpha and Omega. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. Using these symbols show completeness from beginning to end and that all is included.

John again uses the expression "which is, and which was, and which is to come" to describe God and his everlasting existence.

Verse 9:

John again identifies himself, gives his location and reveals some of the things he has in common with the people who are going to read this book. He identifies himself as a fellow sufferer with the other Christians. Through his suffering he had patience and faith in Christ that he would sustain him in his trials.

He had suffered a great deal because of his faith in Christ Jesus. He was located on the Isle of Patmos because of that faith. He had been placed there in exile by Domitian after the Emperor had tried to kill him. Historical tradition indicates that Domitian had John placed in boiling oil to kill him, but he didn't die. He was severely injured but he must have had special help, just like the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace in Daniel chapter 3, to survive such torture.

History also indicates that John was banished to Patmos in 94 or 95 A.D. and was released from that exile in 96 A.D. by Nerva, the emperor that replaced Domitian. Patmos is an island about 50 or so miles from Ephesus. It is a small island that is only one to four miles wide and six to eight miles long, depending on which book you read. It is said the circumference of the island was only 15 miles. It had a rocky surface and no trees, although there was some vegetation on the island. However, most believe that it was not enough to sustain human life.

Verse 10:

John gives his state of mind. He was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." His mind was in tune with the Holy Spirit and because of that God starts talking to him. The voice is described as a "great voice" and it was like a "trumpet."

The sound of a trumpet would be loud and strong. The trumpet was used, in the past, to give commands to armies in the field. It had to be loud enough for soldiers to hear what their commanders wanted them to do. So a voice like the sound of a trumpet would get John's attention.

John heard, but did not see, the person who was speaking to him.

Verse 11:

The great voice is identified as the Alpha and Omega. This is the same expression that was used in verse 8. In that verse, John indicates that it was the Lord who had made the statement and that he was "the beginning and the ending." In this verse he adds that he was "the first and the last." The meaning in both places is the same. God and Christ existed before there was time and will still be there after time ends.

John gets instructions on what he is to do with the information that he will receive. He is to write down the information in a book (scroll) that is given to him and send the information to the seven churches of Asia that are named.

There were more than seven churches in this part of the Roman province of Asia. Why these were chosen to be listed, I don't know. It may have been the complete number of seven that was the important factor; that number meaning that it included everyone. It may have been that these churches were on a circuit where the letters could be delivered quickly to be shared with other churches in their area. Any attempt to give a specific reason is purely speculation.

Verse 12:

As the voice spoke, John turned and looked and saw seven golden candlesticks (lamp stands). Candlesticks are something that gives light. We are told in verse 20 that the seven candlesticks represent the seven churches of Asia. They should be sources of light to the world in that area.

Verse 13:

As John looks, he sees a figure among the candlesticks; a figure like the Son of man. This figure would be Jesus Christ. Daniel uses this same term in Daniel 7:13, as did Stephen in Acts 7:56. His presence among the candlesticks shows his relationship to the churches.

The figure is clothed with garments down to his feet just like the High Priest. The figure was clothed with a golden girdle tied around his chest. This would indicate a high ranking official or a king. The NIV calls this garment a "golden sash" and the NKJ calls it a "golden band."

Verse 14:

John uses the next three verses to describe the figure that he saw in his vision.

His hair was white like wool and snow, and his eyes were like a flame of fire. The white color represents purity, holiness and victory. The expression using wool and snow shows that it was perfectly white. John records that his eyes were as fire which represents the ability of Christ to penetrate what he is seeing and to be able to see what is true and the thoughts of man.

Verse 15:

John continues with the characteristics of the figure.

The feet were made of brass that had been refined in the fire. This gave the metal a glowing or glistening look. Brass can be different colors depending on the relationship of the copper and zinc that is used in refining of the metal. In Ezekiel 1:7, Ezekiel used the same description to describe the feet of the living creatures.

Feet like fine brass would show the ability to give divine judgment. Christ, with feet of judgment, would be moving through the churches.

The sound of many waters would sound like a loud noise or roar. The roar of the ocean or a waterfall makes a lot of noise. The sound would be loud and would get our attention. Ezekiel 1:24 gives the same kind of information. A voice that made a sound like that of many waters would show Christ's power and authority.

Verse 16:

John continues with the characteristics of the figure.

The figure had seven stars in its right hand. Verse 20 records that the seven stars depict the angels or messengers who represent the seven churches. The word angel here does not mean a heavenly being but rather someone of importance located in each of the churches.

A sharp two-edged sword came out of the mouth of the figure (Christ). This would show that the figure (Christ) had a means of executing judgment on the churches. What comes out of a mouth? – words. The words are what will execute judgment for and against the people of the world. The churches will be judged based on the word. Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17 also portray the word as a two-edged sword.

Christ's countenance was as bright as the sun. The sun is the major giver of light in the universe. The word is a symbol of power and authority. Compared to stars, which were in his hand, the sun represents a much larger, more powerful being.

This brightness was similar to Christ's appearance at the mount of transfiguration. (Matthew 17:2)

Verse 17:

John gives his reaction to what he had seen and heard. He fell down.

Christ then speaks and reassures John not to be afraid.

The verse closes with the same statement that is made in verses 8 and 11. Christ is the first and the last.

Verse 18:

Christ continues to give his story and state his power.

The statement "was dead" is enhanced in the NIV & RSV by adding "I" in front of the "was dead" statement. Christ is stating that he actually died on the cross, refuting claims that he was just unconscious and subsequently revived.

He is now alive. He conquered death and because of that, we can live.

Having keys shows control or power over whatever the keys fit. The keys, that Christ has in his possession, fit the locks that control hell and death. He had power over death and hell.

The word "hell" here means Hades or the holding place for the dead before judgment. The Greek word used here is Hades not Gehenna.

Verse 19:

John is again given the instruction to write what he sees. He is to write not only the things that he just has seen (chapter 1), but also the things are (chapters 2 & 3) and the things that will be shown to him in the future (chapters 4-22).

Verse 20:

The text explains the meaning of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks.

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. The seven candlesticks are the seven churches.

The term "angel" here means a messenger. The term could be a representative of the church, possibly the elders.

REVELATION 2

This chapter starts the individual letters to the seven churches located in the Roman province of Asia. This would be the western area of what is now called Asia Minor or the country of Turkey.

William M. Ramsey and William Barclay, in their books on the letters to the seven churches, show that John had a knowledge not only of each of the churches, but also of the cities, the economies and the topography of the region as well as the general religious setting where the churches were located.

The People's New Testament by B. W. Johnson adds some insight into what is contained in each of the letters. He writes that each letter has the following: "(1) An order to write to the angel of the church. (2) A glorious title of Christ taken from the imagery or language of the vision of chapter 1. (3) A description of the condition of the church, whether good or bad, including admonitions and exhortations. (4) A promise to those who persevere and triumph. (5) A closing injunction to 'hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.'" (Page 419).

Verses 1-7:

The first mention of Ephesus is when Paul visited there on his way home from his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19) and left Aquila and Priscilla at that location. Paul later spent three years in Ephesus on his third journey (Acts 20:31), so the church had an opportunity to receive a lot of good teaching. Paul had to deal with the worship of the goddess Diana (the Roman name – the Greek name was Artemis) while he was in Ephesus (Acts 19). Also, when he visited with the elders in Acts chapter 20, he warned them that men would arise out of the church that would teach false doctrines and lead people away from the truth. Paul also wrote a letter to the Ephesians where he wrote about God's plan of salvation and the unity of the Church.

The city of Ephesus was an important center of commerce at this time. It was located where two rivers emptied into the Aegean Sea. It was also located where three roads came together; the road from the Euphrates, the road from Galatia and a road that came up from the south. Because of its seaport and road junction location, Ephesus became a very important city in the world in the time of John.

The city also had political importance. It was a *free* city, which meant it had certain rights of self-government. It was also a city that the Roman government used to try certain important cases. Justice was often handed out by the Romans in the city of Ephesus.

The city was also of religious importance. There were a number of temples to various gods located in the city. The most famous of these was the temple to the goddess Diana. The merchandise involved in worshipping this god was a major source of revenue for some of the area craftsmen. Paul had to deal with that problem as is recorded in Acts 19.

Verse 1:

All of the seven letters begin with the same phrase. John addresses each letter to the “angel” of the church. This is the same reference that was used in chapter 1 verse 20 where the word “angel” means the representative of the church.

Christ is also going to be referenced in each of the letters. In this letter he is referred to as the one holding the stars in the midst of the churches. See the notes on chapter 1:20 for the meaning of the stars and candlesticks and chapter 1:13-16 for the meaning of the one holding the stars.

Verse 2-3:

Christ was described in chapter 1:14 as having eyes like the flame of fire. Here he uses those eyes to be able to know the works of the church at Ephesus.

The works that the Ephesians were noted for were “labor” and “patience.” The Greek word that is translated “labor” means “toil that exhausts.” John recognized the fact that the church at Ephesus had worked hard for the cause of Christ. The patience here is not merely enduring but rather steadfastness or fortitude.

John adds to his comments about their work by writing that they could not stand evil. The city of Ephesus was a very wicked city mostly due to the temple of Diana. The temple possessed the right of asylum, thus a criminal could go there and be safe from arrest. Therefore, the area had a large criminal element.

The church is also complimented for examining men who came into their midst to see if they were preaching the truth. The Christians at Berea were also noted for this in Acts 17:11. The church had the ability to make those judgments.

The church at Ephesus had endured many hardships and through it all, they had endured and remained faithful to the truth of Christ’s doctrine.

Verse 4:

The church was very good at defining and defeating false teaching. However, the enthusiasm, zeal and excitement that they had in the beginning had faded. They no longer were excited about Christ and his cause. They no longer had that level of love for Christ and the brethren.

Verse 5:

John reminds them how they felt in the beginning and advises them to return to that level of enthusiasm for Christ and his work. They were to repent of their current condition and return to how they felt in the beginning.

John then tells them what will happen to them if they don't repent. Christ will remove their candlestick. As far as God is concerned, to remove the candlestick would mean that they no longer were considered a church of the living God.

Verse 6:

No one is sure what is meant by the expression, "deeds of the Nicolaitanes." Many, however, believe it represents those who were followers of Nicolas, one of the deacons who were appointed in Acts 6:5, who taught that Christian liberty was a license to commit sensual sins. Whatever the exact meaning, John commends the brethren for resisting this false teaching. This may represent part of the "testing" comment in verse 2.

Verse 7:

The first part of this verse is repeated at the conclusion of each of the different letters. John wants them to pay attention to the things that he has written to them. He wants them to act on the instruction and to change the way they were doing business.

The second part of each of the closing verses is different. The church at Ephesus is promised a place in paradise and the ability to eat of the tree of life if they overcome their problems here on earth. The last time the "tree of life" was mentioned was in Genesis (2:9 and 3:22). It symbolizes eternal life. It was removed from the Garden of Eden to prevent Adam and Eve from eating its fruit and living forever (Genesis 3:22). It is mentioned in this verse and at Revelation 22:2. Its location in heaven again symbolizes eternal life for those who are faithful to Christ and his church.

Verses 8-11:

Smyrna was a very important city. It was located about thirty-five miles north of Ephesus. It had a good harbor with a narrow entrance that could be closed. The city was also located on the road that came out of the Hermus river valley. This area was noted for their wines. The city is still there and is called Imzir.

Smyrna was also a beautiful city that possessed a large stadium and public theater. The city also claimed to be the birthplace of the poet Homer. The Romans made Smyrna a city where Roman justice could be administrated. This made the city an important part of the Roman Empire. Partly because of this designation, the city was a center of Caesar worship. The Romans, in their desire to unite the kingdom, had made Caesar a god and demanded that people worship him. Because of this demand and the related punishment for those who didn't worship him, Smyrna was a dangerous place for Christians. Smyrna also had a large Jewish population which added to the danger of being a Christian.

There is not a biblical record of the church being started in Smyrna; however Polycarp, the Christian martyr was from the church at Smyrna.

Verse 8:

The angel, like all of the other letters, is the one addressed by John. Christ here is described as “the first and the last” and the one who “was dead and is alive.” This is the same description that was used in chapter 1, verses 17 and 18. Christ was there in the beginning and will be there at the end. He was killed for our sins and was resurrected to conquer dead for all mankind.

The use of the description of Jesus being dead and now alive may have been to encourage the brethren at Smyrna. To be a Christian in that city would have been a very dangerous thing. Many of the brethren would have been facing death because of their belief. The fact that Christ died and was now alive gave them hope for the future. They would know that if they were killed, there was another life waiting for them.

Verse 9:

Christ again uses the penetrating eyes (chapter 1:14) to know what is happening to those who live in Smyrna.

The church had been under a lot of pressure from the Romans to worship Caesar and from the Jews because of their rejection of Christ. The word “tribulation” carries with it the idea of affliction and distress. Everyone was attacking the church.

He also knows the poverty of those Christians. The city was a major trade center and would have been prosperous. However, the Christians were not participating in the prosperity. The Greek word that John uses here, that is translated poverty, is *ptochēia* which means to have nothing at all. The brethren here were destitute. Even though the Christians did not have material wealth, they were rich. They were rich in faith, hope and good works.

The Jews were heavily involved in the persecution of the church. Scholars credit the Jews with being responsible for the death of Polycarp. The people were of the Jewish race but they were not true Israel. Their hatred for and blasphemy (slander) of Christians had transformed them from God’s people to Satan’s.

Verse 10:

John warns them that additional tragedies are going to occur. Some of them are going to be put into prison, which is one example of their suffering.

The term “10 days” does not mean a specific period of time. It means that the suffering will last for a short period of time. This would have given the brethren hope because they would know that the persecution would not linger.

The tribulation would be severe but it would not last too long. These Christians could be facing death because of their belief in Jesus; in fact, many were put to death because of

their belief. Christ was telling them that they needed to be willing to die for His cause if they wanted a crown of life.

The crown mentioned here is like the one given to winners in a race. Those who endure the persecutions will be able to receive the winners reward.

Verse 11:

John again uses the same expression about listening and carrying out the things that were written for the Church.

The ending phrase reveals the reward for those who overcome; they will not be "hurt" in the "second death." They have nothing to fear when Christ comes again and the earth is destroyed as they will be taken to live with Christ and God.

William Barclay recounted in his book *Letters to the Seven Churches*, "The man who is faithful unto death dies to live, but the man who saves his life at the cost of principles and at the price of his loyalty to Christ lives to die." (Page 39)

Verses 12-17:

Pergamos was located on a cone shaped hill that rose about 1000 feet above the surrounding valley. It gets its name from the kind of terrain where the city was located. Pergamos is a Greek word that means citadel. From Ephesus, it was located about forty miles north up the seacoast and then fifteen miles inland in a northeast direction. The current name of the city located there is Bergama. It was a capital city for many years before the Romans took over the area. In 133 B.C. the dying king of the area willed the territory to Rome. Because of its status as a capital city, Pergamos had been improved and beautified many times.

The city was noted for its library. The library contained at least 200,000 books and rivaled the library in Alexandria for prominence at that time. That rivalry caused the invention of a new writing material. The main writing material, up to this time, had been papyrus which was made from plants that grew on the banks of the Nile River in Egypt. The king of Egypt became concerned when the king of Pergamos tried to recruit the librarian from Alexandria to come to Pergamos. Ptolemy, king of Egypt cut off the supply of papyrus to Pergamos. Therefore, they had to invent a new writing material. They developed a process changing animal skins into writing material, which became known as parchment. Its original name meant Pergamene sheet.

Pergamos was also a center for religious worship. There were three different kinds of religious worship in addition to Christianity. Pergamos was the headquarters for one of the districts that had been created for Caesar worship. The city also had shrines to the Greek gods of Zeus and Athene. These temples were located on the side of a hill and were very prominent in the cities landscape. In addition, there was a worship center to Asklepios, who was the god of healing. The Temple had medical wards and a medical

school along with its priests. People came to this temple to be healed from their illnesses. The emblem of this god was the serpent.

Verse 12:

This letter is addressed to the 'angel of the church' just like the other letters. In this letter, Christ describes himself as the one with the "sharp sword with two edges." This is the same description that was used in chapter 1 verse 16.

Verse 13:

John again writes that Christ "knows" what is going on in Pergamos. This is also said about each of the churches.

What he knows is that the church has continued its efforts even in the face of persecution. This persecution even included an example of someone who was killed because of his faith. According to tradition, Antipas was roasted to death in a bronze kettle during the reign of Domitian. Even in the face of extreme persecution like this, there were brethren who didn't deny Christ and kept the faith.

The city was known as a center of heathen worship. The reference to "Satan's seat" may be a reference to the worship of the idol, Asklepios. The symbol for that temple and god was the serpent, which from the very beginning, has been the symbol of Satan (Genesis 3). The RSV and the NIV both use the term "throne" instead of "seat." This would show that Pergamos was not just a place where Satan existed but where his power base was located. This would have been a very dangerous place for Christians.

Verse 14-15:

The church did have some problems. They had faced the persecution and had been able to hold to their faith. Now they were faced with the problem of dealing with false teaching inside the church. There were some who were following the doctrine of Balaam and some following the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

The book of Numbers chapters 22, 23 and 24 records the story of Balaam and Balak and what they tried to do to the Children of Israel. God wouldn't let Balaam curse the Children of Israel even though he wanted to curse them; he could only bless them. However, while they were camped, the men of the Children of Israel began having sexual relations with the Moabite women. These women influenced the men of God's people to begin worshipping idols (Numbers 25:1-9 and 31:15-16). The false teaching at that time caused God to be very angry with his people and they suffered because of their unbelief.

The false teaching at Pergamos that was being followed related to the eating of meat offered to idols and sexual immorality. A meeting of the apostles and leaders, which took place in Jerusalem, (Acts 15:20, 29) had proclaimed that Christians should abstain from meat offered to idols. The eating of this meat probably took place in the temple of the

idol which made it different from the instruction that Paul had given in 1 Corinthians, chapter 8. At that time, Paul was instructing about food that had been purchased in the market. There was no way to determine if the meat had been offered to an idol at some time in the past. Paul instructed them not to worry about things that had happened in the past. However, Paul also told them not to have fellowship with devils (idols) in 1 Corinthians 10:20. If the brethren were going to the temple of the idols to have a feast, then they would be having fellowship with an idol.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes had been rejected by the church at Ephesus (chapter 2 verse 6). The church had some members who embraced this doctrine, which allowed sensual sins under the guise of Christian liberty.

Verse 16:

These brethren were also told to repent. In verse 12, Christ identified himself as having a sharp sword with two edges. In this verse, it records that he will use that sword to fight against those who do not repent. In chapter 1, verse 16 he also called it the sword of his mouth. What comes out of the mouth is the word. It will be the words of Christ that condemns those who do not follow his teaching and do not repent.

Verse 17:

The church at Pergamus is told to listen to what John had written and to make the necessary corrections in their lives.

The promises included manna and a white stone plus a new name in the stone. When the Children of Israel were in the wilderness, God provided food for them so they would not starve. This food was called manna or "bread from heaven" as it is recorded in Exodus 16:4. That physical bread God provided to his people kept them alive in the wilderness. The "hidden manna" that God will provide to those who overcome will keep them alive in heaven, forever.

White stones were used for several purposes in the ancient world. They were used for calculations, event admission, food distribution rights and they were also used as a symbol of acquittal in a trial. The use here could be a symbol of justification of those who overcome. They would be found not guilty and therefore be able to be admitted into the heavenly home.

The new name that is written on the stone is also for those who overcome. The new name would reflect a new status for the victor.

There are about as many different ideas on the meaning of the "white stone" and the "new name" as there are people trying to explain the meaning of these verses.

Verses 18-29:

Thyatira was located at the crossroads of the road that ran between Peramos and Sardis and the road that went from Byzantium and Smyrna. It was a "day's journey" from Peramos and about 27 miles from Sardis. It was located in a valley and had no natural defense from the surrounding landscape. Therefore, over the course of history it was captured, destroyed and rebuilt a number of times. It was a military outpost for Peramos. The current name of the city is Akhisar.

While the city was not considered an "important city," it was a commercial center. The trade that passed through Thyatira made it important in the business world. In addition to the trade routes that went through the city, it also was noted for its wool trade and the dying of cloth.

Lydia, who was from Thyatira (Acts 16:14-15) was known as a seller of purple. The purple dye came from a plant that grew around Thyatira and also a small shellfish. There was an inscription discovered in the city which read "the dyers." So Lydia was probably not the only one who was involved in this trade.

Thyatira was not a great religious center. There were temples there to Artemis and Apollo but they were not famous. The city was not a center of Caesar worship. The major group that presented a problem for the church was the trade guilds. Participation in the guilds activities was necessary to be successful in business. These groups had common meals together that usually began and ended with plenty of wine and a toast to the gods. This presented a problem for the Christian. The Christian had to make a choice: take part in these activities and prosper or follow their beliefs and not participate and suffer the financial consequences.

Verse 18:

The statements are addressed to the angel or messenger, just like all the other letters. The two characteristics of Christ that are used for this church are eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine brass. These are the same characteristics that are mentioned in chapter 1, verses 14 and 15.

Eyes like fire would give Christ the ability to see beneath the surface or would be a penetrating gaze, which is the ability to see what really is happening. Jeremiah 17:10 says, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins."

Fine brass is metal refined in the fire where the impurities have been removed. The NIV and RSV use the words "burnished bronze." That is also a strong refined metal. Ezekiel 1:7 uses the same metal term.

What we may have in the Son of God, as outlined here, is the ability to see (eyes of fire) what they were doing and the power (feet of fine brass) to carry out the sentence that he will pronounce on the church.

Verse 19:

John writes the good things that the Son of God sees. He “knows” their works, which means he recognizes and completely understands their condition.

Their works are charity, service, faith and patience. Their love for God and Christ was manifested by their obedience and service. Their faith meant that they had continued to be obedient to Christ and continued to trust in him. Their patience was shown because they had remained faithful in the face of the trials.

The best part was that their works had increased, over time, rather than decreased.

Verse 20:

John then uses the word “notwithstanding” (NIV – nevertheless) to show that even though the brethren were increasing in faith, love, service and works, they still had a problem that could be fatal.

Jezebel – This was not the literal woman of First and Second Kings (1 Kings 16:31 & 2 Kings 9:30-37). This name was used to point out someone or a group of people who had the same characteristics as the Jezebel of the Old Testament. That Jezebel caused Israel to sin in the sight of God because they worshipped idols.

These people had influence in the church which they used to teach and lead Christians to commit sins in the name of religion. This woman or group of people were calling themselves prophets and were trying to take authority over the church. The rebuke is because they were suffering or tolerating them to teach a false doctrine. This is the same false teaching that was a problem at Pergamus (2:14).

Sexual immorality was a common part of service to many idols. Also, the eating of meat offered to the idol in a “religious sense” was part of the worship service. All this was done as part of the worship to the idol. The problem was that the church was tolerating this teaching and practice to be done by church members.

Verse 21:

Apparently this person had been warned about her sin. She had not changed her attitude or her actions which was causing problems in the church.

It was important that she repent because she was in the process of corrupting the whole church with her teaching and practices.

Jezebel of the Old Testament was one of the causes of the ten tribes being overrun. The same thing would happen here unless the church made the necessary changes.

Verse 22-23:

Unless these people repent, they will be punished by Christ. Sometimes we think of a bed as a place of comfort and rest. This is not the case here. The RSV and NKJ say "sickbed" instead of "bed" and the NIV says "bed of suffering."

Therefore, because she refused to repent, this Jezebel will be caused to suffer. In addition, all those who follow her and partake in her actions will also suffer unless they repent and change.

Are these literal children? Before you answer, consider the principle of children suffering because of the sins of their parents as shown in the Old Testament.

Exodus 20:5 (in giving the Ten Commandments concerning idol worship) said, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." Psalms 37:28 says, "the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."

However, the answer to the question given is no.

The children referred to here are the offspring that are produced by the teaching of Jezebel. They are those who accept that teaching and become the next generation teaching this false doctrine. Christ, through John, says he will take extreme measures to stop this teaching. Not only will Jezebel and her followers be stopped; the method used will show other Christians that it is God who is in charge.

In Hebrew psychology the reins (kidneys) were the seat of emotions and the heart was the seat of thoughts or intellect. Therefore, Christ is saying he can look into the entire human being (your emotions and your intellect). He knows what's going on in your mind. He knows what your affections are. Therefore, he can reward people according to what they do.

Other references that deal with rewarding according to works are: Matthew 16:27, Romans 2:6, Revelation 18:6, Revelation 20:12-13, Revelation 22:12.

Verse 24:

He gave the condemnation to Jezebel and her followers, now he deals with the rest of the church. If you are not followers of Jezebel, then the woes documented in verses 21-23 will not be put on you.

Depths of Satan – One teaching that was used at this time was that in order to defeat Satan, you had to fully understand him. Therefore, you should go deeply into the depths of sin to better understand it. That may be what he is referring to by using this phrase.

Verse 25-26:

The church is encouraged to remain faithful to the teaching that they have received. This would be the teaching of the apostles and Christ. They need to retain their faith and

obedience until Christ comes again. That's how we are able to receive the home in heaven that Christ promised in John 14:3.

Like all the other churches, Thyatira was promised a reward for being faithful. Thyatira will have power over nations. This relates to the next verse where Christ is the ruler. Those who remain faithful will be associated with Christ in that rule. This does not mean they will be part of a government here on earth.

Verse 27:

A rod of iron shows power. The person who controls a rod of iron would be in control.

We sometimes play rock, paper, scissors. In this case iron rod beats clay vessels. Christ's rule will take precedent over the will of man. Christ receives his power from God.

Some would like to apply this to a 1000 year reign of Christ on earth, where he protects his followers. I don't believe that this is a correct application because Christ will not return to the earth. The saved will meet him in the clouds.

Verse 28:

Revelation 22:16 identifies Christ as the Morning Star. The redeemed also get Christ.

The morning star is the object in the sky that is seen just before the dawn. Christ leads the lighting of the spiritual world with his truth. (2 Peter 1:19)

Verse 29:

John closes the statement to the church in Thyatira the same way he closes all the other letters. It means pay attention to what has been written because it comes from God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

REVELATION 3

Verses 1-6:

Sardis had been a rich and powerful city as the capital of Lydia. Sardis was known for wool, the dying of the wool and making garments. It also had a deposit of gold sand close near the city. It also was located on the crossing of five different roads. One road led northwest to Thyatira and then to Pergamos; another led west fifty-four miles to Smyrna; another went east to Phrygia; another ran southeast to Philadelphia; and the last went southwest and ended in Ephesus which was sixty-three miles away.

It was located in a natural acropolis about 1500 feet above the valley floor. Therefore it was easily defended. Because of its natural defensive position, the city was not as watchful as it should have been. Because of their carelessness, it was captured by Cyrus in 546 B.C. and Antiochus III (the Great) in 214 B.C. (The city also willingly surrendered to Alexander the Great when he approached the city in 334 B.C.)

Under Roman rule, the city was designated to be a center of justice. The Roman judge visited the city on a regular basis. This caused the city to retain much of its status during the first century. However, its wealth and importance did decrease over time.

Its worse fate was suffered from an earthquake in 17 A.D. It was during the reign of Tiberius, emperor of Rome, whose reign started in 14 A.D. The city was rebuilt by Tiberius and a temple was erected in his honor for rebuilding the city. The cost to rebuild the city, which was a large amount of money, was paid by the Roman government.

The city of Sardis, however, had become a town that was known for its loose-living in that people only sought pleasure and luxury. The people had become soft from the wealth they possessed.

Currently the town of Sart is located close to where Sardis was placed. The town of Sart is a very small, poor and unimportant town.

When Christ had John write to the seven churches he mentioned positive and negative things about them. Two churches (Smyrna and Philadelphia) didn't have any negative comments; three churches (Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira) had some good things and some bad things said about them and two churches (Sardis and Laodicea) didn't have any good things said about them. The only thing positive about Sardis is in verse 4 where John writes that some have not defiled their garments. But there is no positive statement about their works, faith etc.

Verse 1:

The letter to Sardis starts like the other six, addressed to the angel or messenger from the church.

The terms used to describe Christ are some of the same that were used in chapter one. The term seven spirits was used in chapter 1:4 to show that Christ had the Holy Spirit. The term seven stars was used in chapter 1:16, and explained in 1:20, to represent the messengers of the seven churches and that's what is represented here.

The phrase "He that hath" means that God is in control over these churches. He shows that by telling them that he will reward those that overcome and will punish those who don't.

In chapter one, John described Christ as having eyes like a flame of fire. This was to show that Christ was able to see and know what was going on in the churches. Here again he indicates that he has the ability know what is actually going on in Sardis. He doesn't have to rely on hearsay or rumors. His statement is "I know."

Christ then tells them what he knows. They have a "Name that thou livest" (NIV & ESV – reputation of being alive). He, of course, is talking in a spiritual sense. The people thought they were spiritually alive. They were probably going through the motions of living a Christian life; they probably were looking at others and saying we're ok. They thought they were attached to Christ but John writes a different story. They were actually spiritually dead.

Verse 2:

The phrase "Be watchful" (wakeful, attentive, wake up (NIV), awake (RSV)) would have been meaningful to those residents of that city because of its past history. The city was located on an elevated location, so the people didn't worry as much about a sneak attack. However, the city had been captured twice because the people were not watchful. They had let the enemy sneak up on them, because they thought they were safe. So the expression "be watchful" would have been something they should have understood. At this time the church was going the same way. Unless they were watchful, the church was going to be overcome.

What did Christ want the church to be watchful for? – Complacency in the church. They had been drifting off to sleep, probably gradually. Now it was time for them to wake up. They needed to go from being asleep to being wide awake and they needed to make the change now. They needed to be shocked into action. Have you ever driven a car while being very sleepy and then run upon a curb? It shocks you and suddenly you are wide awake. Christ through John was trying to shock these people awake.

There was some life left so Christ tells them to strengthen what remains. However, he reveals to them that what's left is about ready to expire. Christ wants them to take what little is left and build it up. It's like a small spark or a small flame of a fire. If you fan it and give it fuel, you can have a large fire again; but if you don't add fuel or if you cut off the oxygen, it goes out completely. Christ wants the people at Sardis to fan the flame.

God has reviewed the church at Sardis and found that their actions are not up to God's standards. Therefore, they need to make great improvement in what they are doing. The word perfect in this location means complete. They were not doing everything they

should do to please God. They probably were happy with what they were doing but Christ was not happy.

Verse 3:

One method to get people to change is to remind them of what they had and where they were before they started drifting. This is the method that Christ is using. He tells them to remember what they had and how they obtained it and then go back and hang on to that.

To get started in that direction they need to repent of what they were currently doing.

He told them in verse 2 to watch and in verse 3 to repent. Christ then tells them what will happen to them if they don't watch, hold fast and repent. Christ will come like a thief. This is the same way Christ's second coming is described in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, Matthew 24:43, 2 Peter 3:10 and Revelation 16:15. In all these locations, the second coming is referred to as a sudden, unexpected event.

What does a thief do to you? He sneaks up on you or comes when you're not home. He doesn't call and make an appointment to take away your valuables.

However, this phrase is not referring to the second coming of Christ, but rather the demise of the Sardis church. However, that demise will be sudden unless they repent of their current condition.

Verse 4:

Even in a dead church there are some who had remained faithful. These were ones who had not gone along with the majority and let their actions die.

They were the ones who had not "defiled" (soiled, (RSV & NIV) stained with sin) their lives with the things that had affected the majority of the church. Their garments were still "white" (free from sin, pure - John 20:12, Revelation 3:18, 4:4, 7:9 & 19:8) and because of that they were able to walk with Christ.

We become worthy by letting the blood of Christ cleanse us from our sin. With that cleansing, our robes become white. If we are in the world, as were the majority of those in Sardis, our garments are "soiled" or spotted.

Verse 5:

Good things happen to those who do not defile their garments: those who overcome the sins of this world. They will be clothed in white raiment, have their name left in the Book of Life, and have Christ to speak for them to God and angels.

The white garments signify a pure person that has been redeemed or saved. Having our name in the book of life also shows that we have a home in heaven. Christ speaking for us to God means that He will testify to the Father that we are one of his followers.

The people of this church had their names recorded in the Book of Life. However, Christ will remove those names of the people who don't repent. But the ones that do overcome, he will leave in the book. He will not "blot" (remove or erase) their names from the book.

The Book of Life is like a register of the believers. If your name is recorded there, you will receive eternal life.

A record (or book) is referred too in a number of different places: Exodus 32:32-33 (Moses and the sins of the people), Psalms 69:28, Isaiah 4:3, Daniel 12:1, Luke 10:20, Philippians 4:3, Hebrews 12:23, Revelation 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 21:27 and 22:19.

Verse 6:

He closes the letter to Sardis in the same way he closes all of the other letters. Listen and pay attention to what I have written to you and make the changes in your lives necessary to obtain salvation.

Verses 7-13:

The city of Philadelphia was located twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis. It was built on the border of three countries; Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia. It was located there, on the edge of the civilized area, by Attalus to be able to spread the Greek culture into Phrygia. The effort was largely unsuccessful, as the people of Phrygia resisted change in their culture.

Philadelphia, however, was located on a major road between the east and the west. It was the gateway between Europe and the east. The area around Philadelphia was a great plain. This area was noted for great grape growing and also for hot mineral springs. The wine production brought wealth to the city and the mineral springs brought people from many places to bathe in the medicinal waters.

The problem with Philadelphia's location was the area had frequent earthquakes. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 A.D., along with several other cities in this area. Tiberius, the Roman emperor, helped financially to restore the city. Because of his contribution, the name of the town was changed to *Neocaesarea* (The New Town of Caesar). However, the city reverted to its old name after a period of time. The current name of the city in this location is Alashehir.

Verse 7:

This letter is addressed to the angel of the church just like all of the other letters. In this letter, Christ describes himself as the one who is "holy and true." This would describe Christ in his relationship to God and the Holy Spirit. It would also show that his judgment will be correct for the people.

He also describes himself as the one who has the "key of David." Someone with the key has the right to control the entrance. This is shown by the statement which follows about opening and closing. Christ was given the right to determine who will be "let in" and who will be "kept out." However, since he is "holy and true," his determination will be correct. This statement is a quote from Isaiah 22:22.

Verse 8:

Christ again makes the statement that he knows what is going on at this time in Philadelphia. The symbol of an open door would mean there is an opportunity for the church. The same expression is used in Acts 14:27, 1 Corinthians 16:9 and 2 Corinthians 2:12 where Paul expresses himself about the chances he had to spread the gospel.

Not only did Christ open the door, he promised that no one could shut it. The opportunities were going to remain for them, although they may take different forms. For example, it could be the door of self-improvement; it could be the door of service; it could be the door of prayer; it could be the door to the kingdom; and it could be the door of opportunity to preach the gospel.

The church at Philadelphia was known for their faithfulness and that they had not denied the name of Christ. It was a standard practice for pagans to bring Christians up before the government and demand that they renounce the name of Christ. The Christians here had kept the faith and had not done this.

The reference to "little strength" may mean they were few in numbers, they had little resources or power, or they were not as energetic as they had been in the past, or all of the above.

Whatever their weakness was, they had continued to remain true to Christ's teachings and had overcome those who would cause them to deny Christ.

Verse 9:

The "synagogue of Satan" was also referenced in chapter 2 verse 9 when he was writing to the church at Smyrna. This would again refer to the problems the Jews were causing the early church. The Jews would not accept Christ as the Messiah; they did everything they could to destroy the Church. By making this effort, the Jews were doing the work of Satan. They were not true "Jews" or God's chosen people.

Christ makes a promise to the people at Philadelphia. He will cause the Jews to realize and acknowledge that Christ loves the church. It does not mean that all these people will accept Christ as their savior. In the end, at the second coming, all people will bow before Christ and God.

Verse 10:

In verse eight, Christ commends them on their faithfulness to the word. Here, he gives them a promise because they kept the word. The promise is that Christ will be with them and keep them in the trouble that is ahead.

There is going to be a time of crisis with trials and sorrows in the future. These trials are going to come on all the earth, not just in Philadelphia. The term “all the world” here would mean the Roman Empire. These trials will be a test on those who have named Christ and have continued to put their faith and trust in him and follow him.

Verse 11:

The phrase “come quickly” refers to the timing of the trouble that will happen to the church. It either means that the trouble is close to happening or it means that when the trouble does come, it will happen quickly.

The crown is a symbol of victory. A person who wins a race is given a crown to wear. The person who overcomes the trials and troubles of this life will receive a crown of victory in the end. The warning is to “hold fast” and guard their faith so that they do not forfeit their claim to eternal life.

Verse 12:

Christ has a reward for those who overcome. Christ uses several symbols to tell them about their reward.

He is going to:

Make them a pillar in the temple of God – A pillar is something that provides support to the structure. Those that overcome would provide that kind of strength. The symbol of the temple can either mean the church (1 Corinthians 3:16) or heaven (Revelation 7:15). There is disagreement between different scholars on the meaning of the temple in this location. However, it would seem that the reference is to the church, as the spiritual equivalent to the Old Testament temple.

The promise that they would not have to leave would have been significant to the residents of Philadelphia. The area was prone to earthquakes, and at each quake, the citizens would leave the city to escape the destruction and injury. A safe place they didn't have to leave would have been important to them.

Write the name of God on them – This would show that the person belongs to God. Having your name written on something would show ownership. Kings had rings with their name engraved in them to stamp documents to show the king's power and his authorization of that document. God's name on those who overcome shows that we belong to him.

Write the name of the city of God on them – In addition to the name of God written on those who overcome, the name of the city of God is also to be written on those individuals. In the time of the Children of Israel, the city of God was Jerusalem. Therefore, Christ here refers to the city of God with the name of “new Jerusalem.” In New Testament times, the location of the worship of God is the church. The reference to “new Jerusalem” in this location would be a reference to the church.

Write on them a new name – The name for those who overcome is Christian. Those who follow Christ are known by his name.

Verse 13:

Christ closes this letter to the church at Philadelphia in the same way he closes all of the other letters. He tells them to pay attention to what was said and carry out the instructions that were given.

Verses 14-22:

The city of Laodica was located about forty-three miles southeast of Philadelphia and one hundred miles east of Ephesus. It lay in the Lycus valley near Colosse and Hierapolis. The current name of a town in the area is Pamukkale.

Laodica, like many of the places John mentioned, was located at the crossroads of several trade routes. The road from the seacoast from Attaleia and Perga; the road to the northwest which linked them to Philadelphia and Sardis; and the road from the northeast which came from Dorylaeum and Phrygia, all went through Laodica. Because of the trade that traveled up and down those roads, Laodica became a wealthy town.

The city was also a banking center for the area. The countryside around Laodica was known for a sheep that produced black wool. The city received some of its wealth from the manufacture of woolen cloth, clothes and carpets from the wool of those sheep.

Laodica was also known for its medical school. It was famous for two kinds of medicine. They produced an ointment that was used to cure sore ears and a powder that was used to treat the eyes. The powder was used to make a paste that was applied to the eyes to achieve the cure.

The city's water supply came from a hot spring about six miles away from town. It came to the town through an aqueduct. By the time it arrived in the town, the temperature of the water had cooled to a tepid temperature; neither hot nor cold.

The city had a large Jewish population because it was a city that offered free citizenship to all willing Jews. The city was also a center for Roman justice.

The city was devastated by the same earthquake that destroyed Philadelphia and Sardis in 17 A.D. At that time, the city accepted help from the Roman government to rebuild the city. However, when another earthquake struck again in 60 A.D., the city was wealthy

enough that they refused help from the Romans and rebuilt the city themselves. This speaks to the amount of wealth that was possessed by the Laodicans.

Verse 14:

This letter is addressed the same as the others: to the angel or messenger of the church. Christ calls himself "the Amen," "the faithful and true witness," and "the beginning of the creation of God."

This is the only place where the word "Amen" is used as a proper name. In most cases the word means "so be it" or "verily, verily." However, it is used here as a name for Christ, because it is through him the purposes of God are established.

Christ identifies himself as someone who only gives correct judgments. A faithful and true witness will reward people with exactly what they deserve.

The Gospel of John, chapter one states that Christ was in the beginning with God. Verse three of that chapter says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." The word that is used here means the source of things rather than the first created. Christ was there with God when the world was set into motion.

Verse 15-16:

Christ makes a statement about their condition. He can do that because he has the ability to know what is going on with them and the attitude they have in their lives.

They were neither hot nor cold. The word "hot" means to be at the boiling point. If a Christian was "hot" he would be on fire for Christ and be working hard to spread his message of salvation to those who would listen. If a person was "cold" he would be attached to the world and be working against Christ. However, their condition was lukewarm. They would have understood lukewarm because of their water supply, which came to the city at a lukewarm temperature.

It is easy to understand why Christ would want someone to be "hot" as far as their service to Him was concerned. However, it is not as easy to understand why he would prefer "cold" over "lukewarm." The "lukewarm" person would have been someone who was making some effort for Christ and the "cold" would have rejected Christ. The people in both the "cold" condition and the "lukewarm" condition will be lost. The "cold" might be better in that they are easier to identify. Other Christians will not be misled by ones who are outside Christ and have rejected Christ; however, they might be misled by a "lukewarm" brother. Also, the one who is outside might be won over to Christ in the future, while the backslider is less likely to return. Hebrews 10:26 reads that there will be no additional sacrifices for sin in addition to that which has already been given. Christ died for our sins. If after we have accepted him, we turn away, there will not be another sacrifice given to bring us back to Christ.

If we are in a lukewarm condition we probably are trying to maintain a life that includes both Christianity and things of this world. Luke 16:13 reads we cannot serve two masters. We cannot serve both Christ and mammon or riches. That's what the Christians at Laodica were trying to do with their lives.

Because of their condition, Christ was going to reject them. The word "spue" means to vomit. They were making Christ sick and he was going to get rid of them.

Verse 17:

They thought they were ok. They had plenty of money; they had power; they had position and it was getting better. However, their correct condition was different. They may have been physically wealthy but their spiritual condition was entirely different. He calls them "wretched," "miserable," "poor," "blind" and "naked." They thought they were rich and didn't need anything. It would have been a major shock to them to find out their true condition. They had no spiritual vision; they had no spiritual garments to cover their bodies; they had no spiritual treasures laid up in store in heaven.

Verse 18:

Christ gives them the information necessary to correct their problems. The things that are mentioned all relate in a spiritual sense to what they considered to be their strengths in a physical sense. Laodica was known for its wealth (gold); its textile industry (raiment); and its medical products (eye salve). The only thing they needed was to change what they considered important from the physical to the spiritual. Paul told the Colossians that the true source of treasures was God and Christ (Colossians 2:2-3).

The spiritual gold that was purified would make them truly rich; the white raiment would hide their nakedness; and the eye salve would let them truly see what was right and important.

Verse 19:

Christ is concerned about his followers. He is concerned that they will not be true to his teachings and commandments. Because of that concern, he will do what he can to make them aware of their shortcomings. That is the reason he has told these brethren about their sins. He wants them to repent. In this case, they also need to return to the zealous attitude toward Christ they had in the beginning. They had to change their lukewarm condition.

Verse 20:

The door that Christ tries to open only has a knob on the inside. Christ can knock on our "door" but we have to be the one who opens the door and lets him in. The requirement for us to open that "door" is hearing and obeying. We have to listen to what the scripture tells us to do. If we will do that, then Christ will enter our life and become part of our existence. The word "sup" or eat shows a close relationship between the believer and Christ.

Verse 21:

Christ gives the promise to those who do overcome or those who successfully complete their time here on earth. The reward is to reign with Christ. Christ overcame the trials and temptations when he was here on earth; hence he is reigning in heaven. The same promise is offered to us. As someone once said, "cross-bearing precedes crown-wearing."

Verse 22:

This letter also closes with the same statement as the other letters. There is instruction to listen to what has been said and to make the necessary changes to maintain contact with Christ.

Recap of the Seven Letters:

The letters were written to the different churches to deal with their problems. The letters highlighted the good things that could be documented as well as the things that needed to be corrected. In all cases they were told that it is necessary to continue the good things as well as correct the problems if they wanted to be part of those who will be redeemed in the last day. Those who overcome and are successful are promised that they will be rewarded. The wording was different for each of the churches. However, the promise amounted to the same thing, an eternal reward with God and Christ.

They were promised the following:

1. To eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God (2:7)
2. To receive a crown of life and not be hurt in the second death (2:10-11)
3. To receive the hidden manna, a white stone and a new name (2:17)
4. To receive authority to rule the nations (2:26-27)
5. To be arrayed in white garments, to not have their name blotted out of the book of life and to be confessed before God and angels (3:5)
6. To be made a pillar in the temple of God and have the names of God and Christ written on them (3:12)
7. To be allowed to sit with Christ on his throne (3:21)

The churches listed have many characteristics of modern churches. The problems are the same and the results will also be the same. If the problems aren't fixed, then the candlestick will be removed. It is necessary for the church to maintain its spiritual correctness while not losing its zeal. It's necessary for the church to overcome false teaching while taking care of its members, etc.

REVELATION 4

This chapter is a preparatory vision along with chapter five. These two chapters are used to introduce the reader to the information contained in chapters six through twenty. The visions in these two chapters seem to be intended to show the power and authority of God.

Verses 1-4:

John looks and sees an open door into heaven. He receives an invitation to come up and view what is there. John then describes what he sees: a throne and one sitting on the throne. He describes the one sitting there and what was around him (24 elders on 24 seats). The use of precious stones and a rainbow to describe the scene gives a picture of the beauty and brilliance of Heaven. The rainbow would remind John of the promise God gave to Noah in Genesis 9:13. It would also remind the reader that God keeps his promises. This would be an important reminder to those who were facing persecution.

Who were the 24 elders? (vs. 4) This probably represents the whole church or the redeemed (chapter 5:9). However, there are many different opinions. Some include (1) 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles, or (2) 24 courses of Jewish priests or (3) a group of angels. One book I read gave 8 different possibilities. If it does represent a certain group of people, I think the theory of 12 tribes and 12 apostles makes the most sense. It represents both the Jewish and Christians eras.

Verse 5:

Lightnings, thunderings and voices portray threatenings and judgments which proceed from the throne. This is similar to God's revelation at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:16); it shows authority. Seven spirits which were also mentioned in chapter 1:4, indicate the perfectness of the Holy Spirit.

Verses 6 – 8:

The word beast should have been translated living creature. Eyes before and behind would indicate they see all and know all, both the future and the past. Ezekiel 1:10 (vs. 5-14) mentions a similar being. In Ezekiel chapter 10, he calls them cherubim. Isaiah, in chapter 6, described a similar creature as seraphs (vs. 2). Cherubim are also mentioned in Genesis 3:24.

Their purpose, as described here, is the same as the purpose that is given in Isaiah 6:3: to offer praise to God. A possible reason for the four different types of creatures is the characteristics of the creatures. A lion is bold and strong; a calf represents meekness; a man would signify intelligence and an eagle denotes exaltation and fleetness.

Isaiah 6:2 tells the purpose of the wings. Two were for covering the face (indicating humility), two were for covering their feet (modesty) and two were for flying (ready to do God's wishes).

Again, the eyes, being a sign of intelligence, show they could see and know all things.

Verses 9-11:

These verses show that all that were in heaven were worshipping God. This included both the living creatures and the twenty-four elders. Verse four reads that the elders were wearing crowns of gold. Verse ten reads that they cast their crowns before the throne where God was sitting. This would be a sign of humility and submission.

Verse eleven gives the information that God created everything and that the creation was for God's pleasure.

REVELATION 5

This chapter continues with the preparatory visions that were started in chapter four. The information given in these visions introduces the events that will be disclosed in future chapters.

In outline form, the events could be described as:

1. God described sitting on his throne with a sealed book. (vs. 1)
2. A mighty angel asks who is worthy to open the book. (vs. 2)
3. A pause when no one starts to open the book. (vs. 3)
4. John cries because no one opens the book. (vs. 4)
5. One of the elders says Christ can open it. (vs. 5)
6. John attention is then fixed on Christ. (vs. 6)
7. Christ comes forward to open the book. (vs. 7)
8. All in Heaven fall down and worship Christ. (vs. 8-13)
9. The living creatures say amen. (vs. 14)

Verses 1 – 4:

John saw a scene located in Heaven with God sitting on his throne. There is a book in his hand that is sealed with seven seals. The book would not look like a book of today but rather a scroll. The scroll had seven seals. This means that the scroll could be unrolled a little way by undoing the first seal and then there would be another seal which would prevent the reader from going any farther until the next seal was removed and so on until all the seals are removed. As the seals are removed, additional information is given about the vision that John is observing.

The scroll had writing on both sides which would have been unusual. Normally, scrolls only had writing on one side. The writing on both sides could be a sign of completeness and/or an indication that the information on the scroll was very important.

The problem is initially, no one is found that has the ability to open the seals; only a “worthy” person could open the seals. Because of this problem, John is very sad. John had anticipated learning what was on the scrolls and now it appeared that the contents would remain a secret.

Verse 5:

One of the elders steps forward and indicates there is one who is worthy to open the seals. It is the “Lion of the tribe of Judah.” Matthew 1:1 gives the lineage of Jesus Christ. This account of the lineage starts with Abraham and goes to Joseph, with verses two and three listing Judah in that lineage. The lineage of Christ is also given in Luke chapter three. In verse 33 of that chapter, Judah is mentioned as an ancestor of Jesus. This would make Jesus a descendant of David and of the tribe of Judah. In addition, Isaiah describes one that would be coming out of the root of Jesse (David’s father) in chapter 11 verse 1.

Isaiah was prophesying of the Messiah. Jesus Christ was that Messiah that Isaiah was referring to at that time.

Christ was going to open the scroll so that the information contained in it could be revealed to John. This would have taken away John's sadness.

Verses 6-7:

John sees Christ standing in the midst of this heavenly scene. John describes Christ as having the marks of someone that was killed. Isaiah 53:7 describes the Messiah as a lamb, a lamb that was slain. John the Baptist also described Christ as a lamb in John 1:29 and 1:36.

In this passage he is depicted as having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God. The number seven usually shows completeness. The symbol of eyes usually means knowledge or information while horns would represent power. If the Lamb had seven eyes and seven horns, it would indicate complete and total knowledge and power. The seven Spirits would represent the Holy Spirit just as it did in chapter 1, verse 4 and chapter 4, verse 5.

The Lamb then takes the book out of the hand of God.

Verse 8:

As Christ takes the book, the living creatures and the elders fall down before him and begin to worship him. They are going to offer praise to him because he is the one who has the "book."

They have two items in their hands: harps and bowls of incense. The text reads that the bowls of incense represent the prayers of the saints to God. The harps should not be taken as a literal stringed instrument, but rather representing something spiritual. There are several who would say that these harps actually represent the songs of praise of the saints just as the bowls represented the prayers of the saints. This would seem to make sense as the creatures and elders break into a song of praise in the next verse.

Verses 9-10:

These verses contain the song that John heard the creatures and the elders sing before the Lamb. It is described as a "new song," probably because now it is being sung to the Lamb rather than the Father. The song offers praise to the Lamb because he was slain for the redemption of the world. The praise is justified because the Lamb is the one who is worthy to open the book. He is worthy because he was killed for the redemption of the world.

The use of the word "us" in the King James and New King James' versions might be referring to the elders that had fallen down to worship the Lamb. (The Greek word here is the personal pronoun *hemas* which would refer to the people talking) If this is the case, the elder would represent the redeemed saints.

Christ established a kingdom when he died on the cross and shed his blood. He created a plan of redemption for mankind. Those who are part of his church do reign with him. (2 Timothy 2:12) He has made us all priests (1 Peter 2:5) where we have direct access to God.

Verse 11:

John sees and hears the action that is going on around the throne. The creatures, the elders and the angels are all there. The number that John gives for all these beings is ten thousands times ten thousands plus thousands and thousands. This description simply represents a very large number of beings. It does not represent a specific number.

Verse 12- 14:

John records what these people were saying. It was the recognition of Christ as the Lamb and his worthiness to open the sealed book. They were offering their praise to him.

When John mentions "heaven," "on the earth," "under the earth" and "in the sea," he was covering every area contained in God's creation. The all inclusiveness is to show that everyone had joined the living creatures, the elders and the angels in praising God and the Lamb.

John closes this preparatory vision by recording that the living creatures and the elders agreed with the praise offered by all of God's creation. With that, they continued to worship both God and the Lamb.

REVELATION 6

The prophecy of Revelation starts with Chapter 6. It begins as Christ unseals the book. The first four seals of the book are represented by horsemen. Let's compare the four.

Color of Horse: (1) white, (2) red, (3) black, (4) pale

Equipment: (1) bow and crown, (2) great sword, (3) pair of balances, (4) sword, hunger and beasts

Activity: (1) conquering and to conquer, (2) take peace from the earth – kill one another, (3) measure of wheat for a penny, three measures of barley for a penny and hurt not oil or wine, (4) power over fourth part of earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death and with beasts.

At this time, the primary use of the horse was in battles and wars. The colors of the horses would represent how the war was going, with White = victory, Red = bloodshed, Black = famine and Pale = death.

Verses 1-2:

John opens this chapter by seeing the Lamb begin to open the seals. He hears one of the creatures tell him to come and look at what is happening.

As revealed by the first seal, the horse represented (white) would be victorious and in control of the land. His instrument of war was the bow and the crown, which would show that he was victorious. His victory is also shown, by the phrase "conquering and to conquer."

Verses 3-4:

John gets a similar command from the second beast to come and see the Lamb open the second seal.

For the second seal, the color of the horse has now changed to red. The outcome of the battle is changing. The victory and control has now changed to one of conflict. There is bloodshed throughout the land. Peace is taken from the earth and people are killing one another. The sword is the symbol of slaughter.

Verses 5-6:

The third creature gives John the same request as Christ opens the third seal.

The third seal reveals a black horse with the rider holding a pair of balances. Black is the color of mourning. After a period of war, in which there is much bloodshed, a famine usually results because of the destruction of the land where food is grown. The symbol of

the balance weighing food would show that it was in short supply. The price of the food was high. The meaning of the word "measure" is about a quart and a "penny" would represent the amount of a day's wages. It is said this would have been about eight times the normal price. The price of barley shows the relationship between the two grains. The phrase "not hurting the oil and wine" could mean that not all the food was destroyed or it may mean that, while necessities were scarce, luxuries were in abundance. Another possible meaning is that the common people had little while the rulers had plenty.

Verses 7-8:

The fourth creature gives John the same request that the first three had given to him, "come and see."

The fourth seal shows a pale horse. John writes that this represents "death." The natural end result of war and famine is death. The word "hell" or Hades is talking about the resting place of the dead, not the place of eternal punishment. This problem was to cover ¼ of the earth. The ways people died are mentioned; (1) sword of war, (2) hunger or famine, (3) death or pestilence and (4) beasts. War and famine usually cause many deaths, caused not directly but indirectly, through sickness and plagues that come from decaying bodies and lack of food. Also with depopulation, animals increase in number which can be a danger to humans.

What do the first four seals mean?

Is there a period of history where these conditions existed? Remember, chapter 1, verse 1 reads that the events which should "shortly come to pass." Using this, the first events mentioned would have happened close to the time John wrote this prophecy. As was mentioned in the opening remarks, John probably wrote this about 95 A.D. Whatever the meaning, it can't be something that conflicts with other scripture.

If we look at world events shortly after John wrote this book and apply this to the Roman Empire, we find a very good fit.

Meaning Seal 1:

Seal one was one of prosperity, conquest and triumph. After the reign of the evil Domitian (who had placed John on Patmos), there were five good emperors, Nerva (96-98), Trajan (98-117), Hadrian (117-138), Antoninus Pius (138-161) and Marcus Aurelius (161-180). These people came from a group of people known as bowmen.

The "crown" mentioned in verse 2 is represented by a laurel wreath that was usually given to the winner of a contest. This would show that the period in question was a time of victory and conquest for the Roman Empire. It wasn't until later (about 292 A.D.) that the Romans adopted the diadem for their emperors' headdress. The early leaders wore the laurel wreath, which is depicted on many of their coins of the period.

Nerva reigned only for a short period of time but was considerate. Trajan was a soldier by profession and a very talented one. Through his conquests, Rome extended its boundaries to its largest extent. His reign has been described as "one of the most prosperous and fortunate that had yet befallen the lot of the Roman people." (*Ancient History-Revised Edition*, Myers, page 506)

Edward Gibbon wrote "if a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus." (*The Visions of Daniel and of the Revelation Explained* – E. P. Cachemaille – page 171)

Hadrian was a good administrator. It is said he possessed great ability and good judgment. He gave back some of the territory won by Trajan and had built many fine structures. The Antoninus (father and son) reigned for 42 years. During this period the empire was at peace. However, late in the reign, some of the areas revolted showing that the time of trouble was on the horizon. If this is correct, the period of the first seal would have been about 84 years (96 A.D. to 180 A.D.).

Meaning Seal 2:

As was mentioned earlier, the Red Horse had the meaning of carnage, discord and bloodshed. It was also mentioned that they would kill one another with a sword, the emblem of war.

Following the reign of the Antoninus, Commodus came to power. He was the son of Marcus Aurelius, the last of the Antoninus. For a while he ruled fairly, but after an attempt on his life, he became cruel and vicious. He put many people to death until he was killed by members of his own household. He reigned from 180 to 192 A.D. With his death there began a time of civil war which lasted for 92 years (192 to 284). Is there a more destructive thing than civil war? During the 92 years, 34 emperors and 19 pretenders or 32 emperors and 27 pretenders, depending on which history book you read, sat on the throne. All but two died a violent death. As internal problems arose, those who the Romans had captured revolted and began attacking at the edges of the Empire.

Gibbon said of the period, "Such were the barbarians, and such the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, [253 to 268 A.D.] dismembered the province, and reduced the empire to the lowest pitch of disgrace and ruin, from whence it seemed impossible that it should ever emerge." (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, volume 1 page 326)

During the period of peace covered by the first seal, the Church had little persecution. However, when the country started having internal trouble, the Roman leaders and the people needed someone to blame for the problems. Because of this, a period of persecution began for the Church. Christians were blamed for any thing that went wrong,

bad weather, poor crops etc. The pagans hated Christians and took every opportunity to cause them problems. The persecution came primarily from the people, rather than the government. The end of this period could have been about 284 A.D.

Meaning Seal 3:

This seal had the Black Horse with the rider having a scale. The purpose of the balance or scale was to weigh food. Food was so scarce that an exact amount had to be determined before it could be sold. This would show there was a famine in the land.

The 92 years that the empire was at war with itself took its toll on the ability of the people to till the fields. The result of this civil war for the empire was hunger and famine. The period covered by this seal probably overlaps with the 2nd seal as well as the 4th seal.

In addition to the effects of the war, there was also increased taxation on the people during this period. This would have made it even more difficult for the people to survive. It was during this period that an order was issued that if any damaged his crops to prevent paying taxes he could be put to death. Another rule made more people citizens so they could collect taxes from them. This was particularly true under the reign of Caracalla (211-217 A.D.).

Because of the civil war, trade and commerce broke down and the people were left without food. Because of the lack of food, the people were more likely to contract illnesses. It was during this period that the bubonic plague swept through the Empire. Some towns were left without anybody alive.

It would have been very difficult for the church to have made much progress during this period. When there is a stable government and law and order prevail, the church has its best chance to spread the gospel. There was no stable government during this period and the church was left unprotected.

The period covered by this seal overlapped with the last part of the second seal and for most of the fourth seal. This would have been a period of about fifty years (235-285 A.D.).

This may have been one of the worst periods in modern history for people.

Meaning Seal 4:

This is the seal with the Pale Horse that meant death. The body gradually turns pale or a greenish gray as the body starts decaying after death. The events represented by this seal were to cover a fourth part of the earth with hunger and death.

As mentioned before, the period of the fourth seal overlaps with the second seal and the third seal. It should be placed toward the end of the 2nd seal and a large part of the 3rd seal. This was during the period from 248 to 268 A.D. This was during the time which

was called "The Age of Thirty Tyrants." The worst period was during the reign of Gallienus (260 to 268 A.D.). During that time there was a plague in Rome. It lasted for about 15 years. It is said that during this time as many as 5000 died in Rome daily. Some towns were entirely wiped out. John predicts $\frac{1}{4}$ of the earth. This reference to $\frac{1}{4}$ means the number of people rather than area of the earth. Gibbon in his book, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* says about $\frac{1}{2}$ perished. John mentions four reasons (sword, hunger, pestilence and wild beasts). Gibbon mentions three (war, pestilence and famine). Others writers of the period mention the fourth.

The time period of the first four seals takes the Roman Empire from its greatest power to a period of civil war which resulted in famine and death.

Another period which could be represented by this seal is a little later when Diocletian came to power in 285 A.D. He believed it was impossible for one to rule over the entire empire. So in 292 A.D., he divided the empire into four parts and appointed four people to rule with him. He also wanted to unite the kingdom and believed the people had to worship the emperor as god in order to do this.

In 303 A.D., he made a decree that all Romans were required to worship the emperor as god. Christians would not do this, so the answer was to get rid of Christians. Earlier, the pagans were against Christians and the government tended to protect them. Now, however, the government took an active role in persecution.

The most severe problem was in one part of the kingdom, or the $\frac{1}{4}$ part John mentioned in verse 8. Christians were penned in church buildings and burned. With the government's severe persecution underway, the people, who had led the persecution in the past, now tried to help rather than assist in the persecution. (Galerious, who died in A.D. 311, was the one who was most severe.)

Verses 9-11:

As John sees the Lamb open the fifth seal, the picture changes from the horsemen in the first four seals to the altar. Here, below the altar, John sees the souls of the saints who have been slain for the cause of Christ. They ask how long they are going to be required to wait before they are avenged. They are told they must wait until some additional saints are killed for the cause of Christ.

The saints shown here must be the ones who have suffered as martyrs (slain for the Word of the Lord). Their white robes would show purity, victory and justification. The period of time here would represent a time of persecution when many of Christ's true followers were killed.

Meaning Seal 5

The first four seals dealt with the Roman Empire and what was going to happen from the time John wrote the book and for the next few hundred years. Now in the fifth seal, the

scene is changing from a focus on the Roman Empire to the church. All of the actions of the Empire had an effect on the Church and its ability to spread the gospel.

There have always been persecutions for the Christian to endure. However, there have been some specific times when the persecution was more severe for the Christian, especially during the early Roman Empire. Some scholars identify ten different periods when the persecution was at its height. They were: (1) under Nero – 64 A.D. (2) under Domitian – 81 A.D. (3) under Trajan – 108 A.D. (4) under Marcus Aurelius – 162 A.D. (5) under Septimius Severus – 193 A.D. (6) under Maximus – 235 A.D. (7) under Decius – 249 A.D. (8) under Valerian – 257 A.D. (9) under Aurelian – 274 A.D. (10) under Diocletian – 303 A.D.

Diocletian came to power in A.D. 284 and began the most concentrated effort to do away with Christianity. The persecution before had been by the people, now it was by the government. Diocletian may have been led in this activity by one of his leaders (Galerius). He was leader over part of the empire and apparently, under his suggestion, the attempt to eliminate Christianity was started. They caught church members in the meeting house, locked the door and set it afire. It is interesting that the pagan people, who had persecuted the Christians before, now tried to help them so they would not be killed. Sometimes a Christian, who would not worship the emperor, would be carried in by two of his friends and they would hold him and tell the judges of his worship of the emperor, thereby saving his life. This period may have lasted from 284 to 306 A.D.

Verses 12-17:

The sixth seal has several symbols included in chapter six. There is: (1) a great earthquake, (2) the sun goes black, (3) the moon becomes as blood, (4) stars fall, (5) heaven departed, (6) every mountain and island are moved and (7) kings, great men, rich men, chief captains, mighty men, bond men and free men hide in dens and in mountains and ask the rocks and mountains to fall on them.

What do some of these things mean? If we look back to the table of symbols we can get some indication of the meaning.

1. earthquake = political or moral revolution, shaking of established order of things
2. sun = a supreme ruler
3. moon = symbol of power or rulers less than the sun
4. stars = conspicuous men (princes and rulers)
5. heaven = the world – a religion
6. mountain = highly elevated men – a prince – a government
7. kings = supreme power, a government, a kingdom
8. great men etc = all men

By using this table we see that this is a time of political upheaval. It is a time when leaders, governments and religions are changed. The time of change has an effect on all men. The need to hide would show that this is a time of terror. The sun in sackcloth

depicts mourning. The moon as blood represents distress. Stars falling would show that leaders were being shaken off their thrones.

Meaning Seal 6:

Some commentators think that this is prophesying about the end of time. However, there are additional things that are to happen after this scene. At Christ's second coming, there will be no additional events.

Others believe that this refers to the invasion of the Goths and Vandals when the Roman Empire was overthrown. That period does have some of the characteristics of that invasion.

However, most believe that this was a time when there was more of a change. It was a period when entire sets of beliefs changed. With that kind of change, the leaders of the old way are put aside and a new group of leaders and beliefs are put into place.

After Diocletian left the throne and after a series of battles Constantine came to power. It was reported that before the Battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine was praying to his god and he saw a cross above the setting sun with the inscription "in this sign conquer." So he adopted "the Christian Cross" as his banner for that battle and he won the battle and the throne. With this success, he made Christianity the religion of the court (A.D. 313). He gave Christians the right to receive gifts and legacies and he personally gave the Church money and land. This started the possessions of the Church. This also helped lead the Church away from the simplicity of the gospel.

All of a sudden, it went from where a Christian had no rights and the pagans had everything to just the opposite. If you wanted to move up in government, you had to be a Christian. What happens when people realize that Christianity is necessary to progress in government? Many who were not really converted named Christianity as their religion. Many impurities came into the Church because of this requirement.

In addition, he later abolished the pagan religion all together and made heathen temples into churches. Also, he moved the capital from Rome to a new city he called Constantinople.

The events that accompanied this period would reflect the symbols that are listed. The leaders were changed; the type of religion was changed; those who had been in power were now removed; the whole government was changed. The mountains came down; the sun was removed; the moon and stars were changed. Those who had been in power were now seeking a place to hide from the change.

REVELATION 7

The events that happen in chapter 7 occur after the opening of the 6th seal. Chapter 7 records two visions. The first is the sealing of the saints and the second shows a great multitude of saints before the throne.

There is an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals where the church has some peace. Paganism has fallen and now Christianity is the religion of the State. God uses that time to strengthen the church to help it stand against the trouble that is ahead.

Verse 1:

It opens with four angels holding back the four winds of the earth. What could this mean? Most think that they are holding back some trouble. It is to be held back until the children of God are identified.

The verse has several key phrases. They include:

“after these things” – The things that happen in the 6th seal.

“four corners of the earth” – The four corners represent all directions. The angels are holding back destruction or problems from all directions. All of it was so the church could grow after the years of trouble.

“holding the four winds” – The wind would represent a destructive force. If the wind doesn’t blow, what do we have? Calm! I think this is what is being shown here. The events depicted here happen during a period of calm.

Verses 2-3:

Verses 2 and 3 continue the same thought. The “winds” are to be held back until God’s servants are sealed. A big question has been what is meant by being “sealed.” The word “seal” is the one used to refer to the device used by kings to mark their possessions. (Ezekiel 9:4 and Exodus 12:7) Christians were to be marked to show that they were the “servants of God.”

The place they were sealed was on their foreheads. This would be in a place that could be seen by everyone. The seal would not have been a physical mark but rather it was a mark that was shown by the way they lived their lives. They were visibly serving Christ.

Again, as in verse one, the angels of destruction are told to wait until the sealing process is finished. The persecution was put on hold for a while until the church had a chance to strengthen itself.

Verses 4-8:

These verses go through a detailed list of the number that were sealed and who they represented. The number of those sealed and who they represent have caused uncertainty among different groups of people.

For instance, one group takes the number literally. They think only 144,000 will be the total number of people that can go to heaven. However, there is no reason to think that this one number is literal, while the rest are figurative. So if it is not literal it must represent some group of people.

The people represented are those who are true Christians. What periods do they represent? Some think they represent the saved of the Jews. While others believe they represent all those who had become true Christians in this period of time. This probably represents all Christians that had named the name of Christ at this time.

Two of the tribes are not named. They are Dan and Ephraim. One possible reason is they had the two idol temples located within their land which caused the ten tribes to be led astray.

The reason the number 12,000 is used is unclear. Although some think it would represent God's organized religion (12) times all men (1000). It would probably represent a small number considering the size of each of the tribes.

Verses 9-10:

Another group is identified as standing before the throne. With them we have an indefinite number (great multitude) rather than a specific number (144,000). They are also said to be from everywhere. These people would be victors because they had white robes and palms in their hands. Both are signs of overcoming or victory. They also praise God and Christ. Who are these people? This is probably a scene in heaven at the end of time and represents all those saved from this time until the end of time.

Verses 11-12:

These verses continue to show the angels, elders and the four living creatures worshipping and praising God. The word "amen" at both the beginning and end of their praise would add emphasis to the statements praising God.

Verses 13-17:

We start to get the answer as to the identity of those mentioned in verse nine. An elder asks John who they are and John answers that the elder knows. The elder then states that they are those who have come through great tribulation and kept their robes white with the blood of the lamb.

Because of their obedience, they are taken care of as they serve God on his throne. Where does the scripture tell us we will have this kind of treatment? Heaven! (Revelation 21:4). These are the blessings we get for eternity if we overcome.

REVELATION 8

Starting with the 8th chapter we have the opening of the 7th seal. The 6th seal was opened in the last part of chapter six.

Verse 1:

The silence of ½ hour seems to be a brief calm before the starting of the events that are covered by the 7th seal. I don't believe it refers to an exact period of time mainly because of the use of the word "about." This was a period of brief calm before the storm of trouble that was to come on the earth.

Verse 2:

The seventh seal is represented by seven trumpets. If we were outlining this, you would have the 7th seal with the 7 trumpets indented below it. The Angels are again the ones who carry out God's works.

Verses 3-4:

An angel appears with a censer of incense which he mingles with the prayers of the saints as the prayers went before God. Chapter 5:8 refers to the incense as the prayers of the saints. Here it indicates the incense is sent up with the prayers. I'm not sure whether there's any difference between the two. In chapter 6:9-11, the prayers of the saints had been for vengeance. This probably means that their prayers are going to be answered.

Verses 5-6:

After the prayers mingled with incense had been offered to God, the angel takes the censer and fills it with fire from the altar and casts it on the earth. This would show God's judgment on man. In chapter seven, the four angels were kept from loosing the winds on the earth. Now they are being turned loose and the destruction will follow.

The "voices, thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake" are similar sounds as recorded in chapter 4:5 and also in chapter 6:12. These, as here, are noise warnings of the terrible things that are about to happen. All denote the turmoil and commotion that will follow.

With this scene, the seven angels are prepared to blow their trumpets. The events are about to happen. Trumpets are usually sounded to lead a charge into war. (Joel 2:1 & 15, Jeremiah 4:5, Ezekiel 33:1-6) This common use of the trumpet gives some indication of the kinds of events that are about to unfold.

The first four trumpets are blown in this chapter and they may very well represent what the four angels were holding back in chapter 7, verse 1.

Verse 7 – First trumpet:

John records what happens when the first trumpet is sounded. It brings hail and fire mingled with blood and as a result, a third part of the trees were destroyed and all the grass is burnt up.

Hail is considered a destructive force. It was in the Old Testament stories. Some examples are: The Children of Israel in Egypt (Exodus 9:23 and Psalms 40:32), in Job's time (Job 38:22-23), the destruction of the Assyrian army (Isaiah 30:30) and in the prophecy of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 13:11 and 38:22).

Lighting (fire) mingled with blood also denotes destruction. Fire is a very destructive force and consumes the things that are in its path. The fact that it was mingled with blood would indicate that many would die. This was to be cast on a third part of the earth. The earth refers to the civilized or known world. The trees being stronger would not all be consumed but all the grass would be destroyed.

Verses 8-9 – Second trumpet

In this trumpet, a great mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea. While the first trumpet affected the earth, this one affects the sea. A third part of the sea becomes blood. A mountain usually refers to a very powerful man or a powerful force or nation. The fire and blood again show destruction. The act of being thrown into the sea shows that a powerful man, force or nation was overcome and destroyed with the sea or water playing a part. A third of the creatures and a third of the ships were destroyed. This probably shows how this trumpet will be carried out.

Verses 10-11 – Third trumpet

With this trumpet, a great star falls on the rivers and fountain of waters. The name of the star, which is given in verse 11, is "Wormwood" which means bitter. As in the first two trumpets, a third part of the known world is affected. The rivers play a part as they become bitter and many men die. The symbol "star" is for a leader or ruler. The term "burning like a torch" would be like a meteor going across the sky.

Verse 12 – Fourth trumpet

Again, the scene for the fourth trumpet is one of destruction. This time the sun is smitten as well as the moon and stars. Again the "third part" seems important. The result of the sun, moon and stars being affected is darkness. The sun usually refers to a high ruler with the moon and stars being lesser leaders.

Verse 13

Following the first four trumpets, an angel (some versions call it an eagle) pronounces three woes on the earth because there are three more trumpets to sound.

The meaning of the first four trumpets:

The events described in the first four trumpets seem to apply to the calamities that happened to the Roman Empire. The first of these calamities happened about 376 A.D. and the fourth concluded about 476 A.D. In a period of about one hundred years, the Roman Empire went from a world power to one third of the Empire being overrun and defeated.

The Roman Empire had been divided into three parts. Gratian (emperor from 375 to 383 A.D.) was the one who thought it would be easier to administer if it were divided. These first four trumpets seem to affect the Western part of the Roman Empire.

First Trumpet:

The first real invasion of the Roman area (Italy) occurred starting about 395 A.D. The Gothic people had been controlled by Rome for some time and had not been treated very well. (The Goths were originally from Russia but had been forced to live in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Germany. They were considered to be of German nationality.) Alaric was the leader of the Goths.

The revolt started about 376 A.D. and by 395 A.D. they had made it to the borders of Constantinople itself, but were not able to take that city. In 401 A.D., they invaded Italy but were defeated. Then in 408 A.D., they attacked Rome again and this time they forced Rome to pay them with all kinds of gold, silver and other merchandise. In 410 A.D., when Rome rebelled, they occupied the city and "sacked" Rome for three days. Sack means to take everything of value, murder anybody you want and destroy everything you don't want.

So this first trumpet lasted from about 376 to 410 A.D. One dictionary describes how the Goths treated the land. They "left it like the bloody skin of a victim, empty, bloody and discarded." The destruction of this area represented about 1/3 of the Roman Empire. Gibbon in his book stated that "blood and conflagration and the burning of trees and herbage marked their path." This fits with the symbols John used for this trumpet.

Second Trumpet:

With this trumpet, a great mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea. A third part is again affected. This time it is a third part of the sea. The fulfillment would again be on the same part of the Roman Empire. This time the battle would be on the sea.

The Goths had completed their work about 410 A.D. About ten years later, another northern tribe (The Vandals) invaded toward the south. They came from Northern Europe (Poland) across France, Spain, across to Northern Africa defeating the Romans there. They were the ones who destroyed the famous library at Alexandria. By the way, the

word vandalism originated with the acts of the Vandals. Genseric was the name of the leader of the Vandals.

They built ships, crossed the Mediterranean, landed on Sicily and then went up through Italy to Rome. This invasion of Rome took place about 455 A.D. They looted Rome for 14 days and the remaining things of value were taken away. Most other things were destroyed including many people. About 468 A.D., there was another navel battle between the Vandals and the Romans, where most of the remaining Roman fleet was destroyed. The power of Rome was broken on the sea at this time. This period covered from about 406 to 468 A.D.

Third Trumpet:

A great star falls from heaven on the third part of the rivers with the sounding of this trumpet. The name of the star is Wormwood. The word translated Wormwood here is a Greek word for bitter. The waters or rivers become bitter. (Exodus 15:23 is another place where water became bitter.)

The reason the Goths crossed the Danube to live and the reason the Vandals left northern Europe was the threat from the Huns. Reportedly, they came out of central Asia with an army of 800,000 fighting men, led by Attila. He came to power in 445 A.D. and died in 452 or 453 A.D. He came like a meteor and burnt out quickly as his reign lasted only about seven or eight years. However, even today the name, Attila the Hun, is a trademark for fierceness.

Coming out of central Asia, Attila arrived at the borders of Constantinople and was able to get tribute from them. He then crossed over into Europe. He was so feared that many of the local tribes joined together to fight the invader. A battle took place in Chalons in France where he was defeated. Attila the Hun and the remaining part of his army retreated out of France, regrouped, and a year later invaded Italy.

He marched all the way to Rome. As he was about to attack the city, a delegation of church officials came out and bought him off. The leader of the delegation was Leo the Great, bishop of Rome. He told Attila terrible things would happen to him if he attacked the Roman city. Attila was apparently somewhat superstitious so he allowed himself to be bribed instead of attacking the city. He went back north where he soon died.

The rivers and fountain of waters are probably used because the Huns came from the fountain or head waters of the rivers. Also several of the battles were along rivers. It is said they desolated the Rhine to its mouth. It was on the river Marne where they were defeated. History records that this river ran red from the blood of the 150,000 to 300,000 that were killed in that battle. It was along the river Rhone where Attila fought against the Romans and won. After being bought off, Attila died and was buried in the river Danube.

Leo the Great had been successful in keeping Attila the Hun out of Rome. It had cost the city and the church a lot of treasure, but he was successful. Because of Leo the Great's ability to turn back the attack, the Roman church was able to gain both political and spiritual power as the civil political forces grew weaker.

The events of the third trumpet are happening concurrently with the events of the second trumpet, from about 440 to 452 A.D.

Fourth Trumpet:

The symbols used in the fourth trumpet are the sun, moon and stars. These symbols would refer to leaders of the country. The sun would be the highest followed by lesser ranking leaders, moon and stars. They fall and the result is darkness. About 476 A.D. Odoacer, king of the Heruli people, a northern race, invaded Rome. Most of the power of Rome was already gone. He defeated a weak child emperor named Augustulus and disposed the Senate. This governing body had met for over 1200 years and was now eliminated. The "sun" (the emperor) and the "moon and stars" (the senate and lesser leaders) had fallen from power. All of the old Roman Empire government was gone, both in form and substance. Gibbon calls Odoacer the first barbarian to reign in Rome. This again affects a third part of the original Roman Empire.

This defeat begins, what most historians call, the Dark Ages. It is the beginning of a time of intellectual and spiritual darkness. This was a time when knowledge, both of temporal and spiritual things, was put down.

Rome is gone, defeated by nations who previously were inferior to them when the country was in its prime. The prophecy of Daniel is correct (Daniel 2:35).

At this time the Vandals controlled Northern Africa; the Jutes and Angles and Saxons were in Britain; the Franks invaded Gaul (France); the Visigoths occupied Spain; and the Ostrogoths occupied Italy.

The Western part of the Roman Empire was completely occupied by other governments. The Eastern part of the Empire still stood at this time.

REVELATION 9

Verses 1-12:

These verses give the account of the sounding of the 5th trumpet. The scripture records a number of things or happenings that surround this sounding. Some of the characteristics listed are:

1. A star falls from heaven to earth.
2. He is given the key to the bottomless pit.
3. He opens the pit and smoke comes out. There is enough smoke to darken the sun and air.
4. Locust came out of the smoke. These Locust are given great power, as powerful as scorpions. But their power is not to be used against grass, any green thing or trees. They are to use this power only against those who don't have the seal of God (see 7:3). In using this power, they were not to kill, only torment. The torment is to be similar to a scorpion when he strikes a man. The torment will be severe enough that men will want to die but will not be able to die.
5. The shapes of the locust were like horses ready for battle. They had gold crowns on their heads and faces like men. They had the hair of a women and teeth like lions. They were wearing breastplates like iron and the sounds they made sounded like chariots pulled by many horses going into battle. They had power in their tails like a scorpion and the power was going to be able to hurt man for five months.
6. They had a king (which was the angel of the bottomless pit) whose name was Abaddon in Hebrew or Apollyon in Greek.

All of these symbols represent someone or some event that will happen when the 5th trumpet is sounded. The symbols used have a general use that would refer to the type of person or event described in the text. Generally these terms could be defined as:

1. Star – This is similar to chapter 8:10 where the star represented a leader. In this case he would be a very strong leader.
2. Key to bottomless pit – This would indicate that God allowed (given the key) this star to use the power of the bottomless pit to punish the earth. I don't think the bottomless pit refers to the place for Satan and evil spirits (Luke 8:31). Rather I believe it indicates the power is from this earth and not from God.
3. Smoke – The smoke from the pit darkened or covered the sun and air. This might refer to the teaching that came from the star. His false teaching darkened the truth. It would also refer to the amount of influence that would come from the star. There was a large volume, enough to cover the sun.
4. Locust – Locust usually come in great numbers. They are very destructive and sometimes can darken the sky. This could also be the meaning of the smoke. This in symbols can refer to a destroying army (Nahum 3:15). These locust were given the additional power of a scorpion.

The scorpion is a member of the family of spiders and can grow up to about eight inches long. It uses its tail to sting its victims and its stinger contains poison. While it does not always bring death, the sting can cause a number of problems. The sting can become inflamed and hardened, redden, and with chills and fever that follow, the pain is often very severe.

The power characterized by the scorpion would cause the earth a lot of trouble and suffering. The power did not destroy the grass or the trees which would be very unusual for locust. In addition, the power was not to be used against Christians. Their power was given to torment, but not to kill. This is similar to how the scorpion sting affects people. This torment was to last five months or 150 days, which would be 150 years (Ezekiel 4:6).

5. Shapes of the locust or characters – horses (horses used in combat), crowns of gold (golden headdresses), faces like men, hair like women, teeth like lions, etc. All these things would be characteristics of the people referred to as the locust.
6. Abaddon or Apollyon – The name means destroyer.

Meaning of the Fifth Trumpet:

After the events of the first four trumpets, the Western part of the Roman Empire was destroyed. These trumpets (one to four) covered from 376 A.D. to 476 A.D. About 130 years later the events started which would destroy the Eastern Roman Empire. The destruction from the fifth trumpet will last 150 years (610 to 760 A.D.).

The events outlined in the fifth trumpet seem to fit with the emergence of the Muslim religion and its leader Mohammed. Mohammed was born about 570 A.D. He was an Arabian from one of the more powerful tribes (They were descendents from Ishmael). However, his family had fallen out of power in their country. In 610 A.D., he claims to have received a revelation from God which resulted in the Koran (their bible). From that time, he rose to power and was able to unite the Arabians into an army. In the past, they had always acted as individual tribes and were not united.

Mohammed came from what is now Saudi Arabia, which is known as the land of locust. As Attila the Hun was known as the scourge of God and, in chapter 8 verse 10, called a falling star, the one who is referred to here is also called a falling star. Mohammed was called a “prophet of god” by his followers. Mohammed’s teaching was not Christianity, it was a new religion. He placed Christ on the level of Moses and Abraham as a prophet and teacher. However, he placed himself on a higher plane. This teaching of a new religion may be the smoke referred to in chapter 9 verse 2.

Mohammed’s armies would attack in great numbers, like a swarm of locust, with no thought or fear of dying in battle. Included as part of their religion, is the teaching that if a man dies in battle, after a valiant fight, he will be rewarded in the next life by many women to comfort him. The better he fights, the more he will receive.

They were also taught that they were predestinated. This meant that they could go into the worst part of the battle and not worry. Because of this teaching, they believed they would not die unless it was their time to die. With this attitude they made very fierce and effective warriors.

Some other traits of the Arabians were:

1. The Arabians had no foot soldiers. They all fought on horseback. This fits with 9:7.
2. Their faces were like men – Another characteristic of the Arabians was their full beards. For the most part, only the Jews and the Arabs wore full beards at this time. The faces of the locust were that of men. One of the unique features of a man's face is his ability to grow a beard.
3. Golden Crowns – The people of Mohammed wore turbans that appeared as a crown from a little distance. The color of the turban was yellow at this time.
4. Hair of women – The Arabians wore long hair which flowed down to the shoulders in many cases. Arabian poetry of the period speaks of long hair.
5. Iron breastplate – Mohammed, in the Koran, says "God has given you coats of mail to defend you in wars." Their use of iron in battle is spoken of in many writings.
6. One of the specific orders given to the army, by Mohammed, was not to "cut down any palms trees, or burn fields of corn. Destroy no fruit trees." (Gibbon Volume V page 189)

Another characteristic of the people that John prophesied about is that, in addition to not destroying the grass or the trees, they also were not to hurt those marked by God. Their purpose was to torment, not to kill.

How could this war happen? A war of those professing a new religion against those professing Christianity, be to the benefit of those marked by God?

The Eastern Roman Empire was very oppressive. It was to be of support to Christians, but "Christian" was defined by the emperor. If you didn't agree with him, you were killed or banished to a part of the empire where you were not a threat to him. The Arabians focused on the power of the Eastern Roman Empire when they came out of Arabia. Their conquests broke the power of this empire and removed the oppression of the true Christian. The Arabians permitted the Christian to practice his or her religion as long as they paid tribute money to them. So the Christian was at peace as far as their worship was concerned.

The Arabians were able to make great conquests because many of the outlying areas of the Roman Empire gave up without a fight because of the treatment they had received in the past from the Roman Empire. The Arabians conquests took them, by 732 A.D., across Egypt, Africa, Spain, and into the middle of France. It was in France that they were defeated at the "Battle of Tours" in 732 A.D. by an army led by Charles Martel.

The Arabian world would not extend beyond that point. They continued to be led by an Arab until about 760 A.D. when a Persian came to power and the Capital was moved to Bagdad. This change would mark the end of the 150 years mentioned in verse 10.

Another unusual characteristic of this empire was the punishment for bad behavior. They were not put to death, but they were required to pay tribute. This would surely have been a torment to those who had previously been in power. They were not killed but tormented.

The destroyer referred to in verse 11 could have been the destruction enacted on cities and governments by the victorious army or it may be the false teaching (Koran) which was put on the world. Their teachings extended its influence over several current countries including; Spain, ½ of France, all of North Africa from Morocco to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, other Middle East countries, Southern Russia, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In mid-2006, Islam had about 1,336 million followers. This compares to 2,173 million Christians which is made up of 1,135 million Roman Catholics, 382 million Protestants, 432 million Independents, 219 million Orthodox, 81 million Anglican, 34 million Marginal and 117 million unaffiliated. Other major religion membership totals were as follows: Hinduism – 871 million, Buddhism – 382 million, Chinese Universists – 386 million, Sikhs – 26 million, Ethnic religions – 264 million and Judaism – 15 million. (Source – 2008 World Almanac, page 711)

John concluded the information about the fifth trumpet with the statement in verse twelve, “One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.” The first attack on the Eastern Roman Empire was over with the execution of the trumpet. However, there was going to be two additional problems for them to face in the future.

The Sixth Trumpet:

Verses 13-21:

These verses describe the events that surround the sounding of the sixth trumpet. John writes giving the details of the things that will happen at that time.

Verse 13:

The altar that is described here is very similar to the Altar of Incense described in Exodus 30:1-10.

Verse 14:

The sixth angel is given the instruction to loose the four angels bound by the River Euphrates. Where is the first time we have the River Euphrates mentioned? Genesis 2:14. The country of Assyria had been bound by the river. (2 Kings 23:29). The city of

Babylon was on the river (Jeremiah 51:63-64) and the river was the Persian boundary (Ezra 4:10-11). The River Euphrates is a part of many of the stories in the Bible. This is an example of the combination of a literal place and a figurative or symbolic character located in the same prophecy. The river is literal and the angels or the ones who will carry out the prophecy, figurative.

Verse 15:

The four angels are the ones who will carry out the plague that will occur at this time. The fact that there are four "angels" could mean they represent four different countries or it could mean four divisions of the same government. The time that is involved is represented by the reference to an hour, day, month and year. If we added up the time, there are two possible numbers. They are:

Year	365 1/4	or	360
Month	30		30
Day	1		1
Hour	<u>1/12</u>		<u>1/12 or 1/24</u>
	396 1/3		391

When the one day equals one year principle is applied, then time covered by this would be 396 years and 4 months or 391 years and a small part of another year.

Verse 16:

The number of the horsemen that is given is 200 thousand thousand. This would represent a very large number rather than a specific number. Horses are involved in the action of the sixth trumpet just as it was in the fifth trumpet.

Verse 17:

The riders had breastplates of fire, jacinth and brimstone. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary* described jacinth as having the colors of the hyacinth. Some regard it as dusky red, while one wrote it "doubtless meant to describe the blue smoke of a sulfurous flame." (Vine's, page 332) The three colors mentioned may mean red (fire), blue (jacinth), and yellow (brimstone). Horse heads like lions would show their fierceness and strength. The smoke, fire and brimstone out of their mouths would represent their destroying power.

Verse 18:

A reference is again made to a third part. This third part is the final third part. The first one-third was destroyed by the first four trumpets. The second one-third was destroyed by the fifth trumpet and the final one-third is going to be destroyed by the sixth trumpet. This killing is accomplished by the three things, fire, smoke and brimstone, which came out of their mouths.

Verse 19:

The word "their" in this verse refers to the horses mentioned in verse 17. Many of the other versions of the Bible include the words "of the horses" in this location. John sees something unusual about the tails of these horses. In addition to the fire, smoke and brimstone which came out of their mouths, they also had power in their tails. Their tails were like serpents with heads and had the ability to hurt those who were affected by the events of the sixth trumpet.

Verse 20-21:

The people continued to worship their idols even after they had to endure these plagues. Those who were not killed because of the plagues did not repent of their sin. They still continued to do the evil things they had done in the past. The fact that their world was shaken did not change their attitude or their actions.

Meaning of the 6th trumpet:

The work of the Arabians was completed about 782 A.D. About 200 years later, a strong race came from east of the Caspian Sea and overran Persia and India but were held back by the Euphrates River for some time. About 1057 A.D., they crossed and marched on the Eastern Roman Empire. These were the Turks.

Their army was made up of horse soldiers and they came in large numbers. The Turks numbered their army in myriads rather than in thousands. This would indicate the large number of soldiers that were in their army. The clothing they wore matches the red, blue and yellow mentioned in verse seventeen.

They introduced a new method of fighting. This was the use of gunpowder and cannons. When the gun was fired by the rider, the muzzle blast would appear as if it was coming from the mouth of the horse. The Turks also had cannons in their arsenal. The cannons were pulled behind their horses until they were turned around to fire on the enemy. This could represent the reference to the fact that their horses had tails that also could hurt.

There were really four waves of invaders that took place during this time. The invaders were the Persians. They were overthrown by the Seljuk Turks, who made Bagdad their capital. They were the ones who crossed the Euphrates in 1057 A.D. They were followed by the Mongols who acquired some additional territory.

The first major leader of the Mongols was Genghis Khan. The Mongols didn't take many prisoners. They simply killed all the people they conquered. In 1253, a grandson of Genghis Khan (Kublai Khan) led a group through Persia, capturing Baghdad and massacring all its inhabitants. It is reported that 80,000 people were killed. They were defeated when they tried to invade Egypt in 1300 A.D. They then turned north as far as Russia. Marco Polo was from this period.

The last major wave from the Mongols came in 1400 A.D. under a leader named Tomerlane. The Mongols, under Tomerlane, defeated the Turks and forced them into Europe. Their cruelty was exemplified by the story of Tomerlane's monument. He had people lay in a row and he put eighteen inches of wet clay over them. Then he added another layer of people and another layer of clay until he had a monument seventy-five to one hundred feet tall. He left the heads sticking out so it would look like a monument of skulls.

The Mongols were loosely organized and as their strong leaders died, the group went into rapid decline. In about 1400 A.D., they left the area. The only thing left standing was the city of Constantinople. They left it because they didn't think it was worth the effort to destroy the city.

The Ottoman Turks moved back into the area and began trying to take Constantinople. When Constantinople was taken, the Turks used cannons to batter down the walls. The Eastern Roman Empire fell in 1453 or 396 years after Turks crossed the Euphrates River.

It appears that the four held back by the River were the Persians, the Seljuk Turks (1071-1243 A.D.), the Mongols (1224-1368 A.D.) and the Ottoman Turks (1326-1918 A.D.).

It was during the reign of the Seljuk Turks that the crusades took place. The first one was in 1096 A.D., the second in 1147 A.D., the third in 1189 A.D. and the fourth in 1201 A.D.

As John predicted, those who were morally corrupt did not change their actions or attitude after these terrible woes had been placed on them. They continued in their corrupt religion practices. The people, who claimed to be Christians and were not, did not turn to the true worship of God for their salvation.

REVELATION 10

The sixth trumpet has blown and the last part of the Roman Empire has fallen. The year is 1453 A.D. and the seventh trumpet is yet to sound. Chapters 10 and 11 through verse 14 could be considered as part of the sixth trumpet or an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets. The condition of the world at this time is described in chapter 9 verses 20 and 21. The conditions described in these verses give the condition of the apostate church at this time. They did not repent of their actions, but continued to carry out their agenda of spiritual fornication, etc. They continued to worship their "spiritual" idols just as the pagans had worshipped their "physical" idols in the past.

Verses 1-3:

During the period following the fall of the Roman Empire, in a physical sense, another Roman Empire had arisen to take the place of the former. Remember the third trumpet in chapter eight where we considered the story of Leo the Great dealing with Attila the Hun in order to help spare the city of Rome. Leo was a church leader. As the power of the state decreased, the power of the church increased to fill the vacuum.

The bishop of Rome was called the "Lord of the Church" by about 533 A.D. The power continued to be more and more centralized in the bishop of Rome. They made various changes to the teaching of the apostles that they thought would be useful (sprinkling, instrumental music, doctrine of purgatory, sale of indulgences, etc.). The Church of Rome did not tolerate people who disagreed with them. During the 1100's the period of time known as the "inquisition" began. People who disagreed with church leaders were killed, had their property taken away or were put in jail. Many people were then, as they are today, killed in the name of religion. In 1229 A.D., the bible was banned for the laity, as only the clergy were permitted to read it. (By the way it is interesting to look at Brumback's book *History of the Church through the Ages* in connection with this area, page 103-121.)

All this prepares us for what happens next: The Reformation. This first started in England in the late 1300's. By the middle 1400's, it had spread to Switzerland and Germany. In 1517 A.D., Martin Luther gave his first sermon against the sale of indulgences. The state of the world at this time would fit the description given in chapter 9, verses 20-21. (By the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire, the Reformation was already started in Europe.)

There are several symbols used in these verses. They are:

1. A mighty angel that comes down from heaven
2. The angel is clothed in a cloud with a rainbow on his head
3. The angel's face was like the sun and his feet were pillars of fire
4. He has a book in his hand
5. He stands with one foot on the sea and the other on the land
6. He cries with a loud voice like a lion
7. There are seven thunders that answer the angel

The mighty or strong angel indicates that the work to be performed had a broad scope and would require a lot of effort to be successful. The angel here represents a great movement rather than a specific person. The clothing and appearance of the angel gives additional information about the movement. The cloud would represent the glory; the rainbow would represent peace and mercy; the face as the sun would show the enlightenment that would result from the information received by the people; and the feet to the trampling shows the judgment that would result from the message. The fact that it came down from heaven would show that God approved of the thing that was going to happen.

The statement that the angel was standing on both the sea and land shows the universality of the event that was going to happen. The book represents information or knowledge which in this case means the Bible. The information will have a profound effect on the people. A lion roaring gets your attention.

There is a response to the proclamation. The seven thunders would represent the attempt of those opposed to the teaching of the "little book." The reference to the number seven could refer to the "seven hilled city" which is Rome. The thunders would refer to their proclamations that were issued against those who were instrumental in getting the "little book" into the hands of the people.

During the time of the reformation:

1. Christ was returned in spirit to the people
2. It was time full of peace and hope
3. It gave light or information to the people about God's will
4. It had an effect on the whole world
5. It's influence was due to the opening of the book
6. The Roman church issued many decrees or "bulls" in which the leaders of this movement were threatened both with removal from the church or death

The book that had been "sealed" for most people for so many years would now be open for all to read.

Verse 4:

The seven thunders try to counteract the information that the angel gives from the little book. However, as John starts to write what they were saying, he is not permitted to write about it. This indicates the verbal instruction was not from God therefore John was not permitted to record it as part of God's revelation. They claimed to be from God but this was not the case. Based on the content of this chapter, most of these statements most likely refer to the Roman church as the seven thunders. God intends that their instructions are not to be noted or followed.

The apostate power had taken away the bible from the people. The Roman church's headquarters was located on a seven hilled city. The thunder means threatening, blasphemy, etc. that had been issued from the seven hilled city. The opening of the book

symbolizes the information that would now be available to the people brought about by the Reformation.

Verses 5-7:

The angel again takes a role in the action. The angel, using God as his reference, declares that there should be time no longer. The phrase, "time no longer" does not refer to the end of time. New translations use the word "delay" in place of the word "time." So, in effect, there would be no more delays as the events are about to happen. The information was ready to be freely distributed and it would not be delayed. The true Church which had suffered at the hands of the Roman church for an extended period of time would now be getting some relief.

In the days when the seventh trumpet begins to sound, the mystery will be finished. The mystery refers to the divine purpose of God being revealed, including why the persecution (the purpose) was allowed to happen. The fact that it is finished means that the reason for God's actions will be plain. John had recorded in chapter 6 verse 11 that the martyrs had inquired how long the persecution would continue. Now it will be known. God had, from time to time, revealed certain information through the prophets. The seventh trumpet will sound at the end of time as the church triumphs over evil.

Verses 8-11:

John is given additional instruction. This time the instruction comes directly from Heaven where he is told to go and take the book from the angel. John requests the book from the angel and the angel tells John to eat the book. He also tells John what will happen to him when he eats the book. It would taste good when he eats it but it will cause him pain when it gets to his belly. He eats the book, as instructed, and the prediction comes true.

The taste represents the way the world looks at the opportunity to "eat" or "consume" (Ezekiel 3:1-3) the Bible. After all the years when it was not available, the thought of being able to "consume" the information contained in the scriptures was something that was desired by many people. It had a sweet (like honey) taste.

The bitter taste is what comes after the contents had been consumed. The bitter taste could be represented by a number of different options:

1. It could represent the persecution and death that Christians were put through because they accepted the Word.
2. It could represent the fact that some men accepted a form of Christianity. It appeared to be good, but it was not because they did not accept the Christianity that would save their souls.
3. It could represent the condition of man that results when they realize that the Bible contains teachings that are sometimes hard for man to fulfill. They start by accepting what seems sweet to them but becomes bitter when the teachings, from the scripture condemn what they are doing.

The first or the last seems like the more likely options.

John is told to continue his prophesy (preaching) in the future. The word here is not foretelling but rather the declaration of God's will. The phrase "many peoples" would refer to the masses, "nations" to different countries, "tongues" to different languages and "kings" to leaders or rulers. The word was to be spread to all the people.

During the period of the dark ages, true gospel preaching had almost stopped. With the events of the reformation, that trend would be turned around. The gospel was to be given back to the people.

The events of the tenth chapter can be summarized as follows:

1. An angel holds an open book
2. He calls attention to his purpose with a loud voice
3. The seven thunders launch thunderbolts against the reception of the open book
4. John is forbidden to record words of thunders
5. The angel affirms, with an oath, that the duration of the power and terror of the seven thunders will be short. The seventh angel will sound in the future which will bring universal redemption and triumph
6. John is told to take the book from the angel
7. He is told to eat it
8. The original taste is like honey
9. The taste changes as it reaches the belly. It changes from sweet to bitter – John, on behalf of humanity, receives the Bible and is told to preach the word
10. The result is that many people are killed because of their acceptance of God's word

REVELATION 11

This chapter is divided into three parts: (1) the measuring scene (vs. 1-2); (2) the two witnesses (vs. 3-14) and (3) the blowing of the seventh trumpet (vs. 15-19). (Also see Ezekiel 40:3 & Zechariah 2:1)

Verses 1-2:

When examining these verses it is interesting to look at (1) who is doing the measuring, (2) the device that is used to do the measuring and (3) the thing that is measured.

1. John the apostle was given the reed to do the measuring. At this time he would have been the only living apostle.
2. The measuring device that was given to John was a reed. The reed that was to be used was not a human measure. It was given to him. John didn't make the reed or ruler. It's the one who makes the ruler that sets the standard that is to be used, not the one who uses the ruler. In this case, God sets the standard and decides how and what is to be measured and by what standard. The reed would represent the New Testament which is God's standard for conduct. The phrase "reed like a rod" would mean that the measuring device was strong.
3. The instructions were to measure the temple, the altar and the people that worship in that place. This would not represent the building that stood in Jerusalem but rather the Church. The altar was part of the worship in the temple and would be symbolically considered part of the worship in the Church. In addition, John was to measure those who were worshipping in the Church.
4. The court of the Gentiles was the place outside the temple that was reserved for non-Jews. The instruction given not to measure those in the outer court was meant to divide the people between true worshippers and false worshippers. There would be no need to measure the false worshippers because they were already on the outside. They were not part of God's Church, as they were already cut off. There would be no need to check on their condition.

The Holy City refers to Jerusalem which represents the Church. The Church would be abased (tread under foot) for 42 months. The length of time for this abasement would be 1260 years. (42x30=1260 days = 1260 years)

The meaning would be:

1. The measuring, using God's ruler, would take place to find out exactly the identity of the true Church. This was one of the goals of the reformation.
2. The altar in the Roman church has become very important. The altar is the center part of their worship. One of the important events that happen at their altar is the observance of the Lord's Supper. In their doctrine, the bread and wine actually become his literal flesh and his literal blood. This ceremony

takes place at the altar. As part of the measuring, the true doctrine concerning Christ's sacrifice, its observance and man's justification before God is compared to current practices.

3. Measuring the worshippers would mean the truth of Christ's doctrine would be compared to the qualifications and practices of the worshippers that were currently claiming to be worshippers of God.
4. Leaving out the court would indicate that those who were outside the "temple" were already lost and there was no need to check their current status. It also shows a separation between the true church and the false one.

John was to use God's measuring stick, the one that had been given to him. The measuring stick that was given by God was the New Testament.

The exact start of this time period (42 months) is difficult to determine. However, the date of 533 A.D. is accepted by many writers. It was in this year that the power of the pope increased as he was given the title, "Lord of the Church." If this is the correct starting date the ending would be in 1793, or 1260 years later. However some would begin this period about 323 (when the Nicene creed was adopted) or 476 A.D. (when the Western Roman Empire fell and the restraint was taken off the church). If either of these dates are used, it would cause the period to end about 1583 to 1736 A.D. In addition, some think the period covers from the reign of Constantine to the reformation of Luther.

The period is represented by the length of time that the Roman Catholic Church ruled with absolute authority and the church was completely under the domination of the pope. The period ends with the absolute power of the Roman church being broken to the benefit of true Christians.

Verses 3-14:

These verses deal with the two witnesses. They tell about their condition, the length of time they would prophesy, what happens during their preaching, who attacks them, how long they are down and what happens in the end.

1. The two witnesses are dressed in sackcloth while they are prophesying.
2. They continue prophesying for the 1260 days. This is the same period of time mentioned in verse 2 (42 months) or 1260 years.
3. There are two olive trees and two candlesticks before God.
4. The two witnesses are protected
5. The two witnesses have power so they can destroy enemies, shut heaven etc
6. They are attacked after this period by the beast and are killed
7. Their dead bodies lay in the street of a great city
8. Their bodies will be unburied for three and one half days
9. Their enemies will rejoice because of their death
10. After three and one half years, the witnesses will come back to life
11. People will realize that the witnesses are alive and will be very afraid
12. God calls them into heaven while people watch

13. The saga ends with a great earthquake
14. The earthquake causes destruction and death
15. Those remaining give glory to God

The symbols used in this location have general meanings to show the kinds of events that the angel was predicting for the future.

Sackcloth (verse three) is usually a symbol of sorrow or mourning. The olive trees mentioned in verse 4 would be a source of olive oil which would provide oil to light the candlesticks, which in turn, would provide light or illumination.

The witnesses were protected for a period of time but were allowed to be killed when their testimony was over. After they are dead, their bodies remained unburied, lying in the street of a city. The city is referred to as spiritual Sodom and Egypt. What kind of places were these? Sodom was known for its wickedness in the time of Abraham and Lot. Egypt was the enslaver of the Children of Israel and it would represent bondage. The killing of the two witnesses would be spiritually, not physically.

The city is identified as the place where the Lord was crucified. This would not refer to the literal Jerusalem where Christ was physically crucified, but rather a spiritual crucifixion such as mentioned in Hebrews 6:6.

Mankind realizes that the witnesses are dead and their enemies rejoice. However, after three and one half days (or years) the witnesses are revived and called up to heaven. The people are aware of their revival just as they were aware of their death and are very afraid. Their revival and transformation to heaven would show that the witnesses had God's approval.

At the time they are called up to heaven, a disaster occurs and a large part of the city falls in which 7000 men are killed. The earthquake would represent commotion and change. The 7000 probably represents a perfect number or a total overthrow. There is a small group who do survive and they finally offer praise to God. Compare this to chapter 9, verses 20 and 21.

These statements are completed by closing the second woe and announcing that the third woe was about to begin. This part is over but the next will happen shortly.

Meaning verses 3-14:

The characteristics of the witnesses are as follows:

1. There were two witnesses
2. The Lord calls them "my witnesses" to testify to the truth
3. He gave them power to destroy and to intercept blessings
4. They were to testify in sorrow and mourning and to do it for 1260 years
5. They were compared to two olive trees and two candlesticks

6. They were prophets who were killed after the 1260 years were completed
7. Their enemies rejoiced at their death
8. They were not buried and after 3 ½ years they came back to life
9. They ascended to heaven with their enemies watching
10. In the end, the city of sin will be overthrown

There is some disagreement among writers about the meaning of the two witnesses. Most commentators tend to believe that the two witnesses refer to the Bible, represented by the Old and New Testaments. However, some think this refers to two groups of reformers, those from the eastern part and those from the western part. I believe that these witnesses probably refer to the Bible.

These witnesses are the Lord's and they are the source of light or truth. They speak with the power of God (or inspiration) to condemn or justify individuals depending on the life of the person. The 1260 years would represent the period of time the Roman church had complete control of the religious world. This started about 533 A.D. and ended about 1793 A.D. During this time, the apostate church caused a lot of trouble for God's people.

In the book of Daniel he refers to time, times and half-a-time in chapter seven, verse 25. This period of time is understood to refer to be 3 ½ years. The three and one-half years is equal to the 42 months in verse two which is equal to the 1260 days in verse three. These times are also referred to in Revelation 12:6, 12:14 and 13:5.

It begins with the development of the power of the Roman church and ends when the absolute power of the Pope was broken. Many place the starting date about 533 A.D. Justinian ascended the throne in 527 A.D. and persecuted Christians in order to establish his power. In 533 A.D., he received the title "Lord of the Church." He was given complete power with the approval of civil government. If this starting point is correct the end would have been in 1793.

Even though the Reformation had started earlier, there was still much persecution of the church. At the close of the 18th century, there were strong efforts made to discredit and reduce the power of the Bible. Several people in France, Germany, England and America worked against the Bible. Two names we know from America were Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Paine is known for his work *Common Sense* about the American Revolution. However, he also wrote *Age of Reason* while in prison during the French Revolution. It was called the "atheist's bible." Thomas Jefferson is known for his work on the Declaration of Independence. He also edited the Bible taking out the things he didn't feel were important or possible, such as miracles. This was known as the "Jefferson Bible."

The revolt against the Bible reached its heights in France where they passed a law abolishing God as well as the Bible. They decreed that France would only worship reason and liberty. Atheism became the law of the state in 1793. The "two witnesses" were slain by the state which had earlier promoted and enhanced the power of the pope.

The French “connection” which started the reign of terror in France during its revolution lasted a little over three years. After the three and one half year period, the atheistic laws were repealed and Christianity was again acknowledged. The witnesses that were slain were revived and returned to life.

At the start of the 19th century, the Bible had a renewed acceptance. It was translated into the most of the known languages. France, which was one of the ten countries under Roman church control, now returned to where Christianity was accepted.

Verses 15-19:

The next scene is the blowing of the seventh trumpet. There is a change as the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord. People are now free to worship God in these kingdoms instead of being prohibited to worship him in the correct manner. The elders (same elders as chapter 4, verse 24) continue to worship God because he has taken his power and is reigning.

The judgment trumpet sounds, but many nations are angry because they will have to face what they have done in this life. On the other hand, the saints and prophets look forward to this judgment because of the reward they will receive. At that point, the earth is destroyed. (Under this method, the time represented here is the same as the time in chapters 20-22.)

There are some commentators who believe this represents the ending of the papal Roman power which is the power to control kingdoms. Therefore, kingdoms of the world return to God. The power of that group to control both political and religious aspects of life will not reoccur. The judgment of the dead would refer to the avenging of the saints who had been killed (chapter 6, verse 9).

God, as is indicated with this verse, now destroys the power of those who worked to destroy the Church. Time is over and the world has ended.

Verse 19 appears to go with chapter 12, so we will analyze it with that chapter.

This section of the book ends with the close of this chapter. This part has dealt with the civil government and its relation to the church. The balance of the book deals with events involved between the apostate church and the true Church.

Recap of this Section (chapters 5:1 to 11:18)

SEALS

1. White horse (6:2) – period of expansion of the Roman Empire (96-180)
2. Red horse (6:3-4) – civil war and bloodshed within the Roman Empire (193)
3. Black horse (6:5-7) – calamity and disaster in the Roman Empire (200)
4. Pale horse (6:8) – famine, pestilence and death resulting from civil war (240-270)

5. Saints crying out (6:9-11) – era of persecution`- pagan efforts to blot out Christianity (303)
6. Overthrow of paganism (6:12-17) – end of the Pagan Roman Empire (310-350)

The four winds held back (7) – the Northern invaders restrained (340-395)

7. The seven trumpets (8:1)
 1. Invasion of Goths (8:7) (409)
 2. Vandal invasion (8:8-9) (422)
 3. Invasion of Huns (8:10-11) (440)
 4. Final overthrow of Rome by Odoacer (8:12-13) (476)
 5. Mohammedan uprising (9:1-12) (632-782)
 6. Rise of Turkish power (9:13-21) (1057-1453)

The open book (10:1-11) (1518)

The Church measured (11:1-2) (1516-to present)

The two witnesses (11:3-13) (1793)

7: The final trumpet (11:14-18) (yet to come)

These chapters and verses cover the period where the nation of Rome was the greatest power in the world to the time it was completely destroyed. They also cover the period where the Roman church controls every man to the time where a man has the ability to study God's word and make his own decisions concerning his worship of God.

REVELATION 12

Starting with the 12th chapter, the next section of the book begins. To recap the first eleven chapters, we have covered the following:

1. General introduction – Chapter 1
2. Epistles to seven churches – Chapter 2-3
3. Preparatory vision – Chapter 4
4. The external relation of the church – The relation to secular affairs, political changes and revolutions as bearing on the church – Chapters 5 to 11:18

Now in section 5, the topic will change from external relations to the Church internally. The text will be covering the rise of the Anti-Christ and the efforts that formidable power will have on the history of the Church. It will cover its rise to power to the time its overthrown, which coincides with the triumphant establishment of the kingdom of God. This will cover chapters 11, verse 19 through chapter 20.

Chapter 11, verse 19 through chapter 12 is the starting point of the introduction to the rest of the chapters in this section.

Chapter 11, verse 19:

John sees another vision. This time he sees the temple opened and the Ark of the Covenant is revealed in that location. How often was the Ark viewed in the time of the tabernacle? The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year, which was a very dark room. When you read about the Tabernacle, you find its construction would have not let much light into the Most Holy place. The vision showing the Ark revealed would mean that information is about to be given.

The temple in Jerusalem did not exist at this time. What temple did exist at this time? The answer is the spiritual temple: the Church. The vision to be revealed relates to the Church. The lightings, thunders etc. would show that a great deal of commotion, revolution etc. will take place in the carrying out of the symbols.

Chapter 12:

Verses 1-6:

There are a number of symbols used in chapter twelve. Before starting to determine what they might mean, we can list the symbols used here in this chapter.

Verse 1:

1. a woman
2. the woman clothed with the sun, moon and crown of stars

Verse 2:

1. the woman is with child and in pain, waiting to be delivered

Verse 3:

1. there is a great red dragon with seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns

Verse 4:

1. because of the dragon, a third part of the stars are cast down
2. the dragon is going to kill the child as soon as it is born

Verse 5:

1. a man child is born
2. the child is to rule all nations with a rod of iron
3. the child is caught up to heaven with God

Verse 6:

1. the woman flees into the wilderness for 1260 years
2. the woman flees to a place that is prepared for her by God

There are two basic schools of thought as to the meaning of these six verses. The key to the meaning is what is represented by the woman. The text reveals that the woman was clothed with the sun; had the moon under her feet; and had a crown with twelve stars.

One possible meaning is that the woman might represent the Jewish nation or Israel. That nation brought forth a man-child represented by Christ. The Jewish nation had been looking for the Messiah for some time. Subsequently they were overcome and persecuted by the Romans and now they wanted someone to deliver them.

However, it is more likely that the woman represents the Church. There are several places in the scripture where the Church is referred to as a woman. (Isaiah 62:11 [in prophesy], Galatians 4:31, Revelation 21:2)

The different ages of religion are often referenced using different light sources to show different dispensations. These analogies usually have the Gospel being represented by the "sun" light dispensation and the old law as the "moon" light period. Using those definitions, the sun (the thing the woman is clothed with) would represent the New Testament or Gospel period, the moon would represent the Old Testament or old law period (reflected light (what the woman is standing on)) and the twelve stars the apostles. These apostles were the ones spreading the light to the world.

The woman was with child and about to be delivered. This would show that the number of Saints in the Church was increasing during this period of time.

The red dragon would represent pagan Rome. The dragon was the flag or standard that the Romans carried into battle during this time. This statement is also similar to Daniel 7 where he has the vision of the beasts. This dragon had seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns on the seven heads. Rome was noted for being built on seven hills. The number seven is often used to refer to the city of Rome, whether to the pagan empire or the papal empire. Revelation 17:9 reads that the seven heads are the seven hills where the city was built.

The dragon had a tail and that tail was used to knock down a third part of the stars. The third part would represent a large number of people involved. The stars usually refer to leaders.

The dragon stands ready to kill the man-child, which represents the saints, as soon as they are born. Verse seventeen of this chapter calls the woman's seed those who "keep the commandments of God." Chapter 2, verse 27 reads that those who overcome will rule with "a rod of iron." They rule through the authority of Christ and God by the application of the scriptures.

God protects the Church so it can survive all the persecutions that Satan administers. God can provide that protection in a number of ways. The examples in the Old Testament give a number of different techniques that God used on different occasions. After a time of extreme persecution from the Roman government, new leaders came to power which reduced the pressure against the Church. This gave the Church some relief for a period of time.

The period of time described in verse six is coming at a later date. This period is the same period that was mentioned in chapter eleven, verses two and three. It is also the same time mentioned in verse fourteen of this chapter.

While there are some features of John's prophesy that might fit the Jewish nation and the birth of Christ, most commentators seem to follow the theory that the woman represents the Church. The Church is referred to as a woman on different occasions. In Galatians 4:31, it talks about the bond woman and the free woman, with the free woman representing the Church. In Revelation 21:2, the scripture calls the Church a bride.

One evangelist who takes the position that the woman represents the Jewish nation is Richard Riggins. He led a study at the Independence, Missouri Church of Christ that lasted from December 25, 1966 to January 6, 1967. The following paragraphs were taken from a printed transcript of that study.

He said, one key is that "the number twelve is usually associated with the Church or the Jewish nation." The fact that the woman was clothed with the sun, moon and stars shows the woman belonged to God rather than man. The nation of Israel is often spoken of as a woman, usually in a spiritual sense as the people of God.

The only hope the nation of Israel had was the Messiah that God had promised to them. They were "pining to be delivered." They wanted the Messiah to come and deliver them from the oppression of the Roman Empire. The next symbol given is the old great red dragon that was waiting to devour the child as soon as it was born. This dragon had seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. These numbers are applied to the Roman Empire because the city of Rome was built on seven hills and there were ten kingdoms attributed to them.

The dragon appeared and cast down a third part of the stars. Between 100 B.C. and 30 B.C., the Romans took Asia. This would represent the third of the world or stars. There was a prophecy about the coming of Christ in Isaiah 9:1. In that passage, it states that Christ would come from an area under the control of the Gentiles. This was accomplished when Christ came out of Galilee under the control of the Romans.

The dragon wanted to kill Christ as soon as he was born. Herod, an agent of Rome, tried to kill him at birth. The Romans were the ones who crucified Jesus. The second and twenty-second Psalms talk about the heathen raging. Satan used the civil authority to try to do his work. If Christ had died at birth or some other way rather than the cross, Satan would have gained, because Christ would have failed. The rod of iron is mentioned in Psalms 2:9. That chapter is a prophecy about Christ. After Christ fulfilled his mission he was caught up to heaven to be with God.

The woman then flees into the wilderness for 1260 years. There is some problem here because the Jewish nation didn't flee into the wilderness, the Church did. To have the first part relate to the Jewish nation and this part relate to the Church, some transition is needed between the first verse and this one. Mr. Riggins uses Matthew 21:33 to explain that transition. That is the parable of the Wicked Husbandman. In Luke 20, (the same parable) the point is made that the vineyard continued but the husbandman changed. With this reasoning, the people of God are represented as the woman both under the old law and under the new law.

Verses 7-9:

What is described in these verses as being in Heaven, and the related events that took place, are written in symbols just like the rest of the book. I don't think this describes a war in the place where God lives but rather a condition that happened here on earth. It must refer to some time or event when Satan and his interests were overcome.

The casting out of the Devil and his angels from Heaven to earth would show a loss of power or authority. They would be going from a high station to a low one. His ability to deceive all nations was broken.

The dragon that represented of the Pagan Roman Empire in verse three is still the same in verse nine. This "war" represents the attempt of the Roman Empire, as an agent of the Devil, to eliminate Christianity from the face of the earth. Michael would represent the forces of good while Satan would be the forces of evil.

The persecutions from the Pagan Roman Empire continued for several years, but in the end, Christianity prevailed when the Empire changed from paganism to Christianity. The use of the names "Devil" and "Satan" show the real power behind the persecution of the Roman Empire. The word devil means accuser and the word satan means adversary. The original words show the nature and purpose of Satan. He accuses those he can and becomes an adversary to those who chose to serve God.

When Christ was here on the earth, the angels were active in helping him. Angels ministered unto him after he was tempted. Also, in the Garden before his death, angels ministered unto him (Luke 22:43). This could also be the time represented by this vision. Christ in his victory over death caused the power of Satan to be broken. Man now has a way to receive redemption from his sins.

Verses 10-12:

As a result of the overthrow of Satan, described in verses six to nine, there is a victory celebration. The celebration happens because of the blood of the lamb and those brethren who were willing to give up their own lives rather than turn from their faith. These faithful brethren were able to keep the Church pure as they were persecuted. This would represent the time of martyrs; a time when being a Christian was cause enough to be killed. However, that time was over because their accuser had been cast down.

There is another woe to come for the Christian to worry about in the future. Satan is angry knowing that his time is short; therefore, he will try to cause as much trouble as he can. Satan will change his tactics because the first approach had not worked. The Church was still there.

Verse 13-14:

The devil continued to persecute the Church as much as he could. This was a period of time from the fall of the Pagan Roman Empire to the beginning of the 1260 year period. It went from the rise of Constantine to the time when the Roman church gave the title of "bishop of Rome." This period lasted about 208 years and during this time, Satan continued to persecute the Church. During this time the persecution changes sources. It continues to come from Satan, but the instrument used by Satan changes from the Pagan Roman Empire to the Papal Roman Empire.

The woman or the true Church was given a way of escape. If no way of escape had been provided, the Church would have been destroyed. The analogy of wings and wilderness has been used before in the scriptures. The term "eagles' wings" was used by God when he described to Moses how he removed the Children of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 19:3-4).

Going into the wilderness is usually used to describe escaping to a place of safety from pursuit. That's the way it was described for Elijah in 1 Kings 19:4 and for David in 1 Samuel 23:14-15. That's what happens to the true Church at this time. Satan was attacking in every way that he could and the Church needed help. God provided a place where the Church could be preserved.

During that time, the Church was nourished and kept alive for time, times and half a time. I believe the meaning of these words is as follows; the "time" would mean one year, the "times" means two years and the "half times" means a ½ year. If this is correct, the amount of time during this period would be 3 ½ years or the 1260 days or 1260 years,

using the one day equals one year principle. This is the same time that is covered in verse 6 of this chapter and also in chapter eleven verses two and three, chapter fifteen verse five, as well as Daniel 7:25.

The persecution goes from the end of the pagan Roman Empire, to the establishment and strengthening of the Church, to the rise of the papacy, and finally to the Protestant reformation.

Verse 15-17:

Satan has attempted many things in order to destroy the Church. The symbolism used in these verses show the relentless hatred of Satan against the true church. He wants to destroy the whole church.

The symbol "water" usually means people and a "flood" usually means people in motion. The use of the word "flood" also shows the volume or amount that was involved. This "flood" probably represents the amount of persecution that the church would have to endure. It is also sometimes used as a metaphor for an invasion. This is the case in Isaiah 8:7, 17:12 and 59:19. Jeremiah spoke of warring enemies as "an overflowing stream (Jeremiah 47:2).

In either case, the amount of persecution that was attempted by Satan amounted to a flood. The volume of attempts would overwhelm the Church unless something happened to protect the Church.

That protection came from the earth. The earth helped in a number of ways. One way it helped was the nature of the earth itself. People were not aware of the activities that were occurring in all of the hills and valleys of the earth. Events could occur and people only a short distance away would not be aware of those activities because of terrain and because of the lack of good communications. So the Church was protected by the very terrain and nature of the earth.

Civil government sometimes helped to protect the true Christian from the persecution that was being brought from the Roman Church. Usually the official position of civil government during this period was allegiance to the Roman Church, but there were cases where they protected individuals from harm. Martin Luther was hid by the German government for nearly a year at a lonely castle so the Roman Church could not harm him.

The psalmist David writes about God saving him. He used the symbol of water to represent the trouble that was about to overtake him. In Psalms 124:2-5 he writes, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side.....the waters had overwhelmed us." He added in Psalms 18:16 the following, "....he drew me out of many waters."

With the help of the "earth" and God, the complete destruction of the Church was avoided. Satan tried, but it was unsuccessful.

Satan had been unsuccessful in destroying the Church so he changed his focus to those who supported the church, the individual Christians. The term "keep the commandments of God" would refer to those individuals who had remained true to Christ's teaching throughout all this persecution.

The "remnant" would indicate that the Christians were scattered around the earth as referred to in verse four. The cruelties that were practiced in the inquisition are examples of the persecution that was placed on individual Christians. The Roman Church never gave up trying to destroy the true Church.

REVELATION 13

In Chapter twelve, the dragon's desire to persecute the woman and her seed was shown. In verse nine of the twelfth chapter, the dragon is identified as the Devil or Satan. In Chapter thirteen, there is an explanation of the organized forms that the Devil was going to use to wage his persecution against the seed of the woman or the Church. It shows the agencies or means that he used in carrying out his goals.

Verses 1-10 – The Sea Beast

Verse 1:

John sees a creature come up out of the sea. It has seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns. It is claiming divine origin and honor which was not true.

Chapter seventeen, verse fifteen gives the meaning for the word "sea." It reads the sea is "peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues." Therefore, it was going to be out of the people that the beast arose. Daniel 7:3-4 also describes what Daniel saw in his vision. The beast he saw also came out of the sea. In his case, the sea was stirred up by storm winds which made the sea turbulent.

The description of seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns is also mentioned in Revelation 12:3, where it refers to the dragon. The same items are also mentioned again in Revelation 17:3, 7 & 9.

Verse 2:

The beast that he sees is described as looking like a leopard with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. The dragon is the one who gives the creature power, position and authority.

The beast described in Daniel chapter seven had exactly the same characteristics as the one listed here. It came out of the sea, it had ten horns, etc. All the characteristics of these beasts would be ones that would be deadly to man.

Verse 3:

John sees that one of the heads was severely wounded and it appears as if the head will die, but the wound heals and the world wonders what happened.

Verse 4:

The people worship the dragon and the beast and proclaim "who is greater, who is able to make war against him." The position of the beast and dragon is one of prominence and power.

Verse 5-6:

The beast was able to speak great things. The beast was making false statements (1) against God (2) his Church and (3) against the worshippers of God. The beast was claiming that he was actually representing God rather than the true followers of God. When one speaks "great things," he usually draws people to him. This would be the result of this great "speaking."

The 42 months period is the same period of time that has been referred to before as 1260 days or time, times and $\frac{1}{2}$ a time etc. Daniel also mentioned this period of time in Daniel 7:25.

Verse 7-8:

The beast was very successful during this period of time. He was so successful that he was able to rule over many nations. The description of "all that dwell upon the earth" includes those "whose names are not written in the book of the Lamb." This would indicate that the entire known world was under the spell of the beast except for the few, true followers of God. The reference to tongues, kindreds and nations are all in the plural form. Therefore, it means that the beast was able to overcome several nations and nationalities of people.

Verses 9 & 10:

John wants the reader of this book to listen to what was being said. The reader will be judged according to what he has done. Those nations or peoples who were taking captives and who had killed with the sword would have the same fate in the end. The saints, knowing this, would have patience because they knew if they were faithful to God, he would reward them.

Verses 1-10 – The Meaning:

Verse 1:

The reference to seven heads has been applied to the seven-hilled city of Rome which would be the case if you take Revelation 17:9 in a literal sense. However, the scripture reads in verse three of this chapter that one of the heads was "wounded to death." This would be hard to do to a literal hill.

The term mountain can refer to a kingdom or kingdoms. Isaiah 2:2 refers to the "mountain of the Lord's house" and Daniel 2:35 refers to the "stone that smote the image became a great mountain." In both of these cases, the term "mountain" refers to a kingdom, God's kingdom.

The phrase, "the seven heads are seven mountains" in Revelation 17:9 refers to seven forms of government or seven kinds of rulers. This is because it follows up with a statement in 17:10 that "five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come." The mountains were all still there, so it has to refer to something that would change over time.

The Roman Empire had a number of different forms of government in its history. The forms were:

1. Kings – 753 B.C. to 509 B.C.
2. Consuls – 509 B.C. to 498 B.C.
3. Dictators – 498 B.C. to 451 B.C.
4. Decemvirs – 451 B.C. to 443 B.C.
5. Military Tribunes – 443 B.C. to 31 B.C.
6. Emperors – 31 B.C. to 292 A.D.
7. Absolute Monarchs – 292 A.D. to 476 A.D.

When John was writing, he was living in the time of the Emperors so the statements made by John in Revelation 17:10 would fit.

An additional interpretation of the meaning of the seven heads is that they represent seven nations who have opposed God's people. They are the following:

1. Egypt – who enslaved God's people
2. Assyria – which carried off the ten tribes
3. Babylon – who destroyed Jerusalem and carried off the balance
4. Medo-Persia – who succeeded Babylon
5. Greece – who overthrew Persia and continued to oppress
6. Rome – the civil Roman government which worked against the Church as we have already learned
7. Eastern Roman Empire or the Papal Roman Empire – chapter 17:11 calls the Roman church the 8th but that could also represent the consolidation of the power of all the above

John was writing in the time of Rome so the statement from Revelation 17:10 would also fit this interpretation.

Revelation 17:12 reads that "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet." At the time when John wrote the Revelation, these kingdoms had not yet come into existence. Different writers have some differences in what makes up the ten kingdoms. The principle is the same in all cases.

Sir Isaac Newton in his writings listed the kingdoms as:

1. Kingdom of the Vandals in Spain and Africa
2. Kingdom of the Visigoths
3. Kingdom of the Suevi in Spain
4. Kingdom of the Alans in France
5. Kingdom of the Burgundians

6. Kingdom of the Franks
7. Kingdom of the Britons
8. Kingdom of the Huns
9. Kingdom of the Lombards
10. Kingdom of Ravenna

E. P. Cachemaille, in his book, *The Visions of Daniel and of the Revelation Explained* gave two lists, one for 486 to 490 A.D. and another for the period of 533 A.D. His lists are as follows:

	486 A.D.	533 A.D.
1.	Anglo-Saxons	Anglo-Saxons
2.	Franks	Franks of Central
3.	Allemands	Allemand-Franks of Eastern
4.	Burgundians	Burgundic Franks of Southeastern France
5.	Visigoths	Visigoths
6.	Suevi	Suevi
7.	Vandals	Vandals
8.	Heruli	Ostrogoths in Italy
9.	Bavarians	Bavarians
10.	Ostrogoths	Lombards

It could be that the number is actually symbolic. In that case the number would represent a complete number meaning that the beast was able to control all of the people and area represented by the division of the Roman Empire.

Out of those ten "heads" came ten "crowns." Those ten crowns would represent those countries which helped the beast control the people. These are countries where the beast had almost complete control for a number of years. They are:

1. Switzerland
2. England
3. Denmark
4. Austria
5. Germany
6. Sweden
7. Netherlands
8. France
9. Italy
10. Spain

Verse 2:

John goes on to describe the beast that came up out of the sea. The description is very similar to the one that Daniel gives in Daniel 7:1-6. However, in this chapter Daniel refers to the different kingdoms that would arise over time, namely Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Here John is referring to the nature of the persecution that was going to come on the Church from the beast which had been empowered by the dragon. An animal that had the combined characteristics of a leopard, a lion and a bear would be a terrible, cruel beast; a real terror to man. This would represent the attitude and the tenacity of the beast that had been empowered by the dragon as it attacks the Church.

Verse 3-4:

The Roman Empire was a world power and had control over a large area of land. There came a time when that power eroded and a number of countries attacked them and were able to defeat them; the empire that at one time was thought to be invulnerable. The end would have happened about 476 A.D.

A power vacuum results when a major power is eliminated. When there is a power vacuum, something or someone arises to fill the vacuum. In this case, the vacuum was filled by the rise in power of the Roman Church. The church filled not only the religious segment of the world but also the civil realm. The world wondered at this event and worshipped the new head as the true church.

An example of that change was when Attila the Hun attacked Rome. Leo the Great convinced Attila not to attack the city. The civil government was dying and the church leaders were getting more and more powerful. The head that had been so strong was now very weak and about to die. The replacement head was waiting, ready to replace the dying head.

This power increased over time until the papal system had complete control over the events and lives of the people. The power was so great that people could not envision anyone standing up against the beast represented by the church. This power would last for a long period of time as John indicates in verse five.

Verses 5-7:

During this period of time (the forty-two months), the Roman Church had complete control. They made many pronouncements that set the tone for religious life in the world at that time. These statements were made in such a way as to portray themselves as the authority for God's plan. Unfortunately, these pronouncements many times did not reflect the information contained in the Bible, but rather the personal feelings of the pope in his desire to accumulate additional power.

The forty-two months is the same period of time that is mentioned in Revelation 12:6, 11:2, 11:3 and in Daniel 7:25. The period of time would represent 1260 years (42 months

x 30 days in a month or 1260 days which equals the 1260 years). This period of time is referred to as the "Dark Ages." The time would coincide with the time that papal power had supreme control over the people of Europe. This period would have begun about 533 A.D. and lasted to about 1793 A.D.

During this time, the "beast" is able to speak all kinds of evil and false doctrines against God, his Church and his worshippers. With these statements, he is able to deceive whole nations of people. These nations would be represented by the nations that made up the Roman Empire.

Verse 8:

The area that's contained in this control or worship would be the known world. That would basically include the area and people that made up the Roman Empire.

Those who had remained true to Christ and his teachings did not worship the beast. The plan of salvation had been in place from the beginning of time, so when it was time, God sent Christ here to earth to put that plan in motion. Everyone who did not remain true, marveled at the beast and worshiped the one who claimed to be true, but was not.

Verses 9-10:

John makes a positive statement to pay attention to the things he was saying. They were not only to hear, they were to listen and understand. This listening included not only what he said about the beast in the previous verses, but also the statement he was about to make about the end result of those who live in a certain way.

The statements about captivity and swords are very similar to the principles laid down by Christ in Matthew 26:52; by Paul in Galatians 6:7 and by God in talking to Noah in Genesis 9:6. In all those cases, the principle is that you will end up being treated the way you have dealt with other people. Live by the sword, die by the sword; reap what you sow; whoever sheds man's blood will have his blood shed by man represents the principle involved.

These statements were intended to give hope and assurance to the saints. They were being treated badly now but in the end, their tormentors would themselves be tormented. With this information, John tells the saints to have patience and to have faith that in the end, God will take care of them.

Note:

The growth of the Papacy is an interesting story. It has as much intrigue involved with it as any third-world country does today.

Richard Riggins, in his commentary on Revelation, devotes eight pages to the happenings involving the early popes. In *Halley's Bible Handbook*, some 14 pages are used to tell of

these activities. In these books they tell how the office was purchased; how people killed to obtain it; how people were killed in order that the person in power could remain in power; how that bribery, sex, robbery were all involved with the office, and finally how by using threats etc., they were able to gain control over most of the countries of Europe.

Verses 11-18 – The Land Beast

Verse 11-15:

John sees a second beast. This one appears out of the earth and looks like a lamb with two horns. When it speaks, it sounds like a dragon. The beast gives a false impression of himself. The characteristics of a lamb and a dragon are very different. The lamb is meek and mild and the dragon is dangerous and deadly.

This second beast has all the power and control of the first beast. With that power, he causes the world to worship the first beast. John identifies the first beast as the one who's deadly wound was healed.

The second beast does great wonders and causes people to be deceived because of his apparent ability to do these wonders. The beast also requires his followers to make an image in his likeness and to worship the image.

Because of the beast's power, represented by the two-horned lamb, the image of the beast could speak. Also, because of the beast's power, anyone who did not worship the beast or its image was killed.

Verses 16-17:

The power of the beast, through the lamb, caused everyone who wanted to do business to receive a mark with the number of the beast before they could buy or sell. The mark was to be located in either their right hand or their forehead.

Verse 18:

John gives the information to identify the beast. He gives a number that represents the beast and his operations. The number given is six hundred sixty-six.

Verses 11-18 – The meaning:

John identifies the one who Satan was trying to get the people to worship in verse twelve. He indicates it is the one who survived the deadly wound that was healed. This would be the system that replaced the pagan Roman Empire or the papal Roman system.

The two horns on the lamb probably represent the two different areas of authority of the papacy, church and state. The lamb gives the appearance of good, but it is really just like the dragon or the devil. They speak the same. The reason to use the appearance of a lamb

is to get people to believe that they are the Lamb of God and are worthy to be followed and worshipped.

The first beast came from the sea and the passage located in chapter 17, verse 15 gives the meaning. This beast comes from the earth. While there is not a scripture to turn to for the same kind of explanation, I believe the inference is plain. This beast was from the earth, not from heaven. The true church is not referred to as being from earth. So the reference is to something that was created here on earth. The papacy system was something that was created on earth and is the thing that is referred to in this location.

Verse 12:

The papal power (the healed head) which replaced the pagan power (the wounded head) in Rome exercised the same power as the old system it replaced. The way in which they did business caused the people to continue to remember the first beast. He is teaching, as far as the people were concerned, there was not much difference between the two systems. The pope combined the two powers (spiritual and civil) to get the action he wanted. If someone got out of line, he simply withheld his or her spiritual blessings until the person conformed to his wishes.

Verses 13-14:

The people thought the church had great power. They gave the illusion of this great power by seeming to be able to do great miracles. The people were deceived by this and because of the deception, worshiped the beast. Some examples of actions that were taken by the Roman Church included the apparent changing of the bread and wine into the actual blood and flesh of Christ, the worshipping of images and other pretended miracles (which are almost too numerous to mention). This is proof that the Roman Church pretended to be a worker of miracles. The need for temporal power or control that was felt by the pope caused the people to continue to look to the first beast (the civil power) and worship the images.

Verses 15:

The second beast (the Roman church or papacy) had the power to give life to the first (the civil government). Because of this the civil authority had power to cause all who would not worship the beast to be killed. During this period of time (the dark ages) those who would not obey the pope's wishes were hunted down and killed. The period called the inquisition is the most infamous of these periods. The church representatives were very zealous in trying to stamp out all people who did not agree with them. They used every cruel manner to put people to death. Torture was the standard of the day. All this was done in the name of religion. This was pursued all over Europe, wherever the pope had control.

Verse 16-17:

The people were marked. The mark was probably not a physical sign, but some indicator that was used to denote those who believed and followed the beast. This could refer to the sign that the Roman church uses even today. The sign is used at their conversions and on a regular basis thereafter. Many think that the mark in the forehead shows the effect on the mind and the mark in the hand shows action in support of the church. So they not only had to believe the teachings of the Roman Church, they also had to practice them.

The pope's control was so complete that no person could do business without the approval of the Roman church. Several council proclamations stated during this time that those loyal to the pope were not to do business with heretics. These edicts applied to all people. The scripture reads, small and great, rich and poor and bond and free. This would cover everyone.

We have had discrimination in this country against African-Americans. However, during this time, it was a war against non-Catholics. Non-Catholics did not have any rights at all. In some countries, there were no legal marriages for non-Catholics, etc.

No one could do business unless he had either the mark of the beast, the name of the beast or the number of the beast.

Verse 18:

In verse 17 it is told that, in addition to the mark and name, there was also a number of his name. This verse reveals what the number was of the beast. In our numbers, which are Arabic, it is 666. However, John did not write in these numbers. He wrote in Greek. The Greeks, like the Romans, used letters to represent amounts or numbers (for example in Roman numerals x=10, v=5, c=100 etc). Many years ago (in the 300's A.D.) a man named Iraneus worked the following using Greek letters and came up with this solution which is the one most accepted today.

L	=	30
A	=	1
T	=	100
E	=	5
I	=	10
N	=	50
O	=	70
S	=	<u>200</u>
		<u>666</u>

It is generally agreed that the word would be LATEINOS. This would be the founder of the Latin race. When reference is made to the Roman church it is called the "Latin Church." All their services for many years were done in Latin.

There probably could be other words that could be spelled to equal the number 666. However, this has been the accepted answer to this number for many years.

REVELATION 14

Chapter 12 presented Satan as the symbolical dragon. Chapter 13 expands on Satan's methods by introducing the two creatures which become the instruments on earth of Satan's power and might. They were the creature from the sea and the lamb that spoke like the dragon. All this was to show the beast and its power and its efforts to destroy the true believers in Christ Jesus. In chapter 14, John reveals what will happen to the beast. It paints a much brighter picture for those who remain faithful to Christ and his true doctrine. This better picture would be a comfort to the saints as they faced the many troubles that lay ahead.

Verse 1:

In chapter 13, there was one who looked like a lamb, but was really an agent for the dragon; but here we have the real thing, the true lamb. This is the same one who was qualified to open the book with the seven seals (chapter 5), Christ. Hebrews 12:22 also mentions Mt. Zion. It symbolized the location where the gospel was started, the city of Jerusalem. Here it refers to the spiritual Jerusalem or the church.

The 144,000 was also mentioned in Revelation 7:4. It was determined that it referred to a large indefinite number and it would have the same meaning in this location. The seal was also studied in chapter seven where it refers to those who were sealed by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the 144,000 represent the true Christians.

Verses 2-5:

John hears a voice from heaven. The description that is used to describe it would indicate that it is the voice of God. There is a time of praise with singing and harping around the throne. A new song is sung, which only the redeemed could learn and sing. Only those who have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb can fully appreciate the value, joy and happiness of salvation.

The description of those that are redeemed is in verses 4 and 5. The reference to being virgins has to do with their spiritual life rather than their physical life. Spiritually these people were virgins (undefiled); they followed Christ in everything; there was no guile (or deceit) in their lives; they were without fault, before God, in what they did. They are the redeemed. They are the first-fruits and are the examples for those Christians who were remaining on earth and facing tribulations.

Verses 6-7:

Heaven as mentioned in verse six is not the same heaven that was mentioned in verse two and will be mentioned in verse seven. This heaven is the atmosphere. What the angel is telling John is that the power of the apostate church has been broken so the gospel could again be spread to the people. Truth was now going to be able to be delivered

everywhere. When truth is delivered, the error in the teaching of the beast will be disclosed and people can accept God in truth.

The message is to fear God, give him the glory and worship him instead of the beast. We worship Christ because he is the one who created the world and all things associated with the world.

Verse 8:

The second angel makes the announcement that Babylon has fallen. The word Babylon does not represent the city that captured the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in 586 B.C. It represents the group that had taken God's spiritual people captive for many years, the apostate church. The spiritual Babylon fell, from absolute control, after the gospel had been spread to the world (vs. 6-7) and the people had a chance to know the true message of the gospel. With this information, the power of the Roman church would be broken.

Their extreme power had controlled both church and state. They had made all nations "drink" what the church had wanted. They forced the people to do whatever they commanded.

Verses 9-12

A third angel announces what will happen to those who have or will follow the beast. This beast is the same one as was referred to in chapter thirteen. If any of the people continue to worship the beast, the wrath of God will be on them. The term "without mixture" means the punishment would be a full measure of God's wrath, not watered down.

This punishment will come at the judgment where Christ will be the one who hands out the sentence. The torment that they will receive will last forever. The angel puts emphasis on who he is referring to, those who worship the beast and those who have received his mark.

The true Christians received strength and patience knowing the fact that those who were oppressing them would, in the end, receive punishment for their deeds. This was designed to give the true Christians the patience to endure.

Verse 13:

John is again given specific instructions to write what he is about to be given from Heaven. The information is that those who "die in the Lord" are blessed. The part that is necessary is finishing the race (2 Timothy 4:7). Those that accomplish this will achieve rest and their works will be known. Again, the message is designed to instill patience and hope into those Christians who are in the midst of persecution and suffering.

Verses 14-20:

The last section of this chapter gives the consummation of all events – there is the final triumph of the Church and the final overthrow of the wicked; along with the final judgment. As listed in this location, there is an indication of two harvests. However, both of these harvests will occur at the same time. The angel separates the two to show the different results that happen to both sets of people.

The term harvest has been used several times to indicate the judgment that God will make on people at the end of time. John the Baptist said (recorded in Matthew 3:12) that “he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.” Christ also said (recorded in Matthew 13:39) that “the harvest is the end of the world.”

Verses 14-16:

In Acts 1:9-11, Christ is depicted as ascending into heaven in a cloud. In Matthew 24:30, Christ told the disciples that he would come in a cloud when he returned at the judgment. John sees Christ on that cloud ready to return and make final judgment.

The Son of Man is symbolized as coming with a sickle to reap the harvest that is ripe. This is the harvest of the souls of the redeemed. That is, those who have not had the mark of the beast on their lives.

Christ is told to begin the reaping because the harvest is ripe. Christ obeys the angel and does the reaping.

Verses 17-20

An angel is seen coming from heaven with a sharp sickle. Another angel gives a command to the angel with the sickle to begin reaping. This represents the balance of the harvest, those who were not part of the first harvest. The people in this group are described as coming from the “vine of the earth.” Matthew 13:39 indicates the angels are the reapers. Harvesting would show that the “grapes” are fully ripe and the time had come to bring life on earth to a close.

The angel thrust the sickle into the earth and those that were gathered were cast into “the great winepress of the wrath of God.” This winepress was located outside the city to show that those who were included in this group were excluded from the blessedness of those who had died in the Lord.

The amount of blood would show the number of people involved and the total destruction of those who are condemned. The distance of 1600 furlongs is equal to about 200 miles. A horse bridle would represent a depth of about 4 feet. This would require an extremely large amount of liquid to run four feet deep for 200 miles. Some make reference to the fact that Italy is about 200 miles wide to explain using this number.

What is shown in these verses is the complete destruction of those who die outside the Lord. It would also show that there will be a large number of people who are in this category.

These verses (14-20) show two harvesting of souls that will occur at the end of time. However, these two will be simultaneous as far as man is concerned.

There are other opinions about the meaning of these last seven verses. Richard Riggins, in his study in Revelation carried in Independence, Missouri in 1966 had the following interpretation of verses fourteen to twenty.

Verses 14-16:

These verses do not represent Christ's 2nd coming but rather represent his coming through the gospel. The reaping is the harvest of souls achieved through the spreading of the gospel. This harvest is carried out by workers going out with the gospel to the world.

Verses 17-20:

The things listed represent the horrible punishment that was put on Italy. In 1527, France, who was atheistic, attacked Rome and on June 5th made the pope surrender. They made him melt down his crown. There were other countries which were loyal to the pope that sent troops to try and defeat the French. Because of the battles, the rivers of Italy did flow red with blood. The country is about 200 miles wide. The military forces which supported the pope were defeated and in the end, the pope had to bless the king of France in order to save himself.

REVELATION 15

The fourteenth chapter gave a summary of future events; the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth chapters will present the same events in detail. All of these events are connected with the fall of spiritual Babylon.

The seven seals and the seven trumpets presented a series of events. They went from the period of the greatest expansion of the Roman Empire to its fall. Now the seven vials will also give information about a series of events that will happen.

The seals and the trumpets dealt with the civil Roman government, both pagan and "Christian." The vials deal with papal Rome. They present a series of events which first weaken and then destroy the power of papal Rome.

Chapter 15 is a preparatory chapter. It sets the stage for the execution of the events covered by the seven vials.

Verse 1:

John sees another scene located in heaven. It was a glorious sight because he describes it as being "great and marvelous." There are seven angels holding seven vials containing the last seven plagues of the wrath of God. This would complete the outpouring of God's judgment on the false church. This is not eternal judgment.

Verse 2:

A sea of glass would be a very calm body of water. This condition around God's throne would show his purity and calmness. However, the mingling with fire would show his judgments. The time for judgment of the papal church was at hand. The events that are about to happen will cause the power of the papal church to be broken. They no longer would be able to control nations.

The people who had obtained victory over the beast are the same ones that are identified in chapter fourteen, verse one. They are the ones who did not succumb to the threats and persecutions of the beast, the papal church. They are the Christians who have overcome and are with God.

Harps are mentioned in this location. They were also referred to in chapter fourteen, verse two. The book of Revelation is a book of symbols. The term "harps" that is used here, and in chapter fourteen, would not refer to the stringed instrument that we have on earth, but it would rather be a symbol for the praise offered by the redeemed to God.

Verses 3-4:

The scene is located in heaven. John observes those who are around the throne and what they are doing before God. They are offering praise to God. They do that by singing "the song of Moses."

The scripture refers to a song of Moses in two locations. The first is in Exodus chapter fifteen just after the Children of Israel have crossed the Red Sea and the Egyptians have perished, and the second is in Deuteronomy chapter thirty-two when the Children of Israel are ready to cross over into the Promised Land and Moses is ready to die. In both cases, it was a song of praise to God for all the things that he had done for his people. Hosea 14:9 also has a similar statement.

John also records what the redeemed were saying in their praise to God. There are seven things that John mentions: (1) God's works are great and marvelous (2) God's ways are true and just (3) We should fear God, not in being afraid, but in reverence (4) We should glorify his name (5) Only God is holy (6) All nations or peoples should come and worship him and (7) God's judgments or actions have been revealed.

Verse 5:

Again, John looks at the scene in heaven and sees that "the temple of the tabernacle of testimony" is open. Both the physical tabernacle and the physical temple were divided into two sections, the holy place and the most holy place. (Exodus 26:33 & 2 Chronicles 3:1-8) The reference to the temple of the tabernacle would refer to the most holy place.

Verse 6:

The seven angels came out of the most holy place dressed as priests. In the physical sense, the high priest was the only one that was allowed to enter the most holy section of the tabernacle. Exodus chapter 28 gives a description of priests clothing.

This time these angels will be priests of destruction. They are carrying the vials or bowls that contain the wrath of God. It will be their duty to pour out the wrath of God on those who have followed the beast.

Verse 7:

The action is set in motion when one of the four living creatures, which were mentioned before, gives these seven angels the seven golden vials which contain the wrath of God. The time for the plagues is about to begin.

Verse 8:

The temple is then filled with smoke so that no man can enter until the seven plagues are completed. This does not mean that God was cut off from his people during this period,

but rather his mind was made up on these series of events. This was represented by the vials of the wrath of God, and man could not change the outcome. God would not accept any intercessory prayers on this subject. This is similar to the condition of the Jews in Jeremiah's time. Their condition was so bad that God decided that they would go into captivity and his mind would not be changed by the prayers of the people. (Jeremiah 7:16 and 11:14)

REVELATION 16

In chapter fifteen, the scene is in heaven where seven angels have seven containers (called vials) that contain the wrath of God. Chapter sixteen is the account of the pouring out of the contents of those vials, mentioned in chapter 15, on the beast. These vials, which contain the wrath of God, will cause the beast and his followers a great deal of trouble. The connotation of the term "plagues" and the results of those "plagues" are very similar to the effect that the plagues of Moses, in the book of Exodus, had on the country of Egypt; which is utter destruction.

Verse 1:

The scene starts with a voice coming out of the temple. However, John doesn't see the speaker. The temple that is referenced here would be the same as the reference to heaven in chapter fifteen, which is the abode of God. The events that happen are from the authority of God. The seven angels received their instructions to carry out God's wishes. They were told to pour the contents of the vials on the earth. This was a series of bad events that was going to happen to "spiritual Babylon" or papal Rome. As we continue, we will see that "the earth" means the papal organization and the people that are controlled by that group. The contents of the vials that are poured out represent punishments for the sins that have been committed against Christ's church. In many ways, this is the same as the plagues of Egypt that were given due to Egypt's treatment of Israel.

Verse 2:

The first vial is poured out on the earth and it causes a noisome and grievous sore. This sore came on those who had the mark of the beast and worshipped the image of the beast.

Many writers have compared this sore to a boil or an ulcer. The word used here is similar to the words used to describe the sixth plague in Egypt when Moses was trying to get the Children of Israel out from under the control of Pharaoh. Whatever the exact nature of the condition, we can think of it as something that was very painful and very messy.

The period of time represented by this vial is near the end of the persecution put on Christ's people by the Roman church. The events that will be shown are those which break the power of the Roman church.

The prophecy was that the persecution would last for 1260 years. Most date the start of these problems to the time when the Bishop of Rome was designated as the "Lord of the whole Church." This event occurred in 533 A.D. If this is the correct starting point, the date of the first vial would occur about 1793 A.D.

This would make the event of the first vial the French Revolution. Before the revolution, France's rulers were very strong supporters of the pope. France was called the "eldest son of the Church" by men of the period. But during the revolution, the leaders, the royal

family and the priests were put to death by the people. The people went so far as to declare France an atheistic country. So the place where the pope had drawn much of his civil power was taken away from him. Because of this revolution much of Europe was covered in blood because of the fighting. These events occurred in 1793.

Other writers attribute this plague to the knowledge that the people received and what that knowledge did to the Roman church. The change started at the time of the Crusades. The men who went on those Crusades came in contact with the Muslims. The Muslims were very advanced intellectually as compared to the Europeans. By seeing what the Muslims knew, the men from the Crusades went home with a great desire for knowledge.

Remember that the Roman church tried to keep the people uneducated so they would be easier to control. As knowledge and understanding grew, both of physical things as well as spiritual things, people began to understand how corrupt the church had become and they lost their respect for church leaders. Many of the priests themselves could not even read or write, so the people scorned them.

With the invention of the printing press, the Bible was translated into the languages of the common man. When the Bible was read, people began to see how far the Roman church had moved from the truth. With the growth of knowledge, scorn and rejection swept across the Roman church like a grievous sore. This would have been over a period of years from the 1500s to the 1700s.

Verse 3:

The second angel pours his vial on the sea and the sea becomes as the blood of a dead man. The blood of a dead man does not move. It congeals and starts to decay. The reference to blood would show the amount of suffering and carnage that would take place because of the events represented by this plague. This condition is similar to the plague recorded in Exodus 7:17-21. Again, everything in the sea dies.

There is general agreement that this would refer to something that happened on the sea which helped to weaken the power of the Roman church. When the Roman church controlled the governments, it also controlled the sea.

England, which was a protestant nation, had a very strong navy. England's battles against catholic countries left the pope without a country that could control the seas. This trend started with England's defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and continued through England's defeat of Napoleon's navy. Spain, Portugal and Italy were close allies of the French, so with the defeat of these nations by the English, the seas no longer were controlled by the pope.

Verse 4:

The third angel pours out his vial on the rivers and fountains of waters and they also become blood. Again, the reference to the waters becoming blood would show the

amount of fighting and killing that will take place as the result of this plague. This is similar to the area effected by the 3rd trumpet (Revelation 8:10-11).

Rivers and head waters will be affected by the events controlled by this vial. They will be the rivers and waters that have an effect on the Roman church. When the events transpire, caused by the pouring out of the vial, the Roman church will suffer because of what happens.

As in the 3rd trumpet, this would probably be something that had to do with Northern Italy. Water comes down from the Alps and forms rivers which rush to the sea.

The people in this area were ones who chose not to follow the pope. Because of their "disobedience," the pope sent a large number of men against these people and many were killed. This was an example of severe persecution of God's people.

In 1796, Napoleon came thru this area as he invaded Italy. It is interesting that the major battles of this campaign were fought on the rivers of Northern Italy. To obtain peace, the pope paid Napoleon 21,000,000 francs and a hundred masterpieces of art. In 1798, Pope Pius VI was taken prisoner to die in France and his successor had to be elected in Venice because Napoleon still controlled Rome.

Verses 5-7:

These verses make statements about the righteousness of God's judgments on the Roman church. The statement is made by the angel who had just poured the contents of his vial on the waters. He contended that the punishment was just because they had persecuted God's people. Now the tables were turned on those who had persecuted and they were getting what was fair considering how they had treated God's people in the past.

Another statement comes from the alter that agrees with the statements made by the angel. He states that God's judgments are always true and righteous.

Verses 8-9:

The fourth vial is poured out on the sun and power was given to it to scorch men with fire. Since the vials were to be poured on the earth, the sun would be symbolic rather than literal. The sun, when used symbolically, usually has the meaning of a ruler or leader. Fire usually denotes something that would be very painful and would contain a great deal of suffering.

As we continue looking at things that affect the papacy, we again find that Napoleon had a lot to do with the breaking the power of the pope. In the last vial, it was mentioned that he carried Pope Pius VI back to France to die. In addition, he also waged war against most of the countries whose land had been controlled by the pope. From 1792 to 1818, Napoleon battled many other rulers and countries of Europe and defeated them. These wars left Europe like a battlefield, one that had been scorched by fire.

In 1804, he forced the pope to come to Paris to put the imperial crown on his head. Just as the pope was going to crown him, Napoleon took the crown and crowned himself. During this period, Napoleon took the wealth of the church. He even sold the pope's clothes.

Four years later, Napoleon again removed the pope from Rome. This time it was Pius VII. He also was taken to Paris to die. At that time, Napoleon decided to annex the Papal States and thereby took the balance of the temporal power from the pope. This was the area of land that Charlemagne had given the pope some 1200 years before.

Napoleon showed the world that you could defy the pope and not be destroyed. The pope had used intimidation to control the people by telling them that bad things would happen to them if they did not do exactly what the pope said. Napoleon destroyed this myth.

Even though the pope and the Roman church had been humbled and its power removed, they didn't change their attitude about the persecution of God's church. They continued with the same approach that they had used in the past. They refused to give God the glory.

Verses 10-11:

The fifth vial is to be poured out on the seat of the beast. The seat of an organization is where its base of operations is located. For example, the seat of government is often located in the capital city of the country or state mentioned. Therefore, the seat of the beast would be Italy, and in particular, Rome.

In 1848, the people of Italy rebelled against papal authority, driving Pius IX into exile. He was later restored by the French government and remained as long as he had protection by the French army. In 1870, when the French went home because of problems with the Germans, the people again rebelled. The papal army was defeated by an army led by Victor Emmanuel.

The pope shut himself in the Vatican. A new Italian government for the country was formed. This new government seized much of the church property. It also allowed Protestants missionaries go into every important Italian city and preach against the papal church.

It must have been very painful for the officials of the Roman church to see their power go away. The scripture mentions that "they gnawed their tongues for pain." However, they still didn't change; they continued to blaspheme God for their troubles. It was during this time that they declared the pope to be infallible. The pope issued a paper stating his right to rule the nations of the earth. He railed against those who opposed him. They continued to be bitter, arrogant and hostile.

Verse 12:

The sixth vial is poured on the River Euphrates and the water dries up. The river seems to be holding something back, after it is dried up, the way is opened. Chapter 9:14 used similar language when we dealt with the 6th trumpet. We also have a literal example of the river drying up. Cyrus of Persia changed the course of the Euphrates so his army could overthrow the country of Babylon.

The drying up would mean that an obstacle had been removed in the overthrowing of the papacy. The drying up of the Euphrates would represent the lack of a powerful nation in the area. In the past, there has almost always been a strong country in the area: Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Turkey, etc. However, during this time, there was not a strong nation.

The last major power in the area of the Euphrates was Turkey. Three hundred years earlier, Turkey had been a powerful nation. However, their power had declined over time and by the end of World War I, the Turkish Empire was no more.

The papacy had preferred the Muslim nation of Turkey over any of the Protestant nations. Now with the decline of the Turkish Empire, the papacy had lost one of its powerful allies from the East.

In general, the identity of the “kings of the East” is not known.

Verse 13:

Three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. In the plagues of Egypt, the use of the frog was unclean and loathsome. Another characteristic of a frog is that it is noisy. A small number of frogs in a pond sound like a large number when they are all croaking.

These unclean spirits came out of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. The term “unclean spirits” represents sources of false religion. They are enemies of the truth. They all are representations of Satan.

The dragon was representative of pagan Rome in chapter 12; the beast was referring to the political power of the Christian Rome under the dominance of the Catholic Church in chapter 13; and the lamb-like dragon (false prophet) represented the papacy in the latter part of chapter 13. However, while most agree with what is represented by the dragon, there is some disagreement with the meaning of the other two. Many have the “beast” as representing the papacy and the “false prophet” being a symbol of Islam.

Either way, the forces of Satan are going to attempt to overcome God’s people and destroy the true church.

Verse 14:

The dragon, the beast and the false prophet do things to make the kings of the earth think they have great power. The reason for this activity is so the kings of the earth will support them in a battle against truth. They are trying to rally as many followers as possible. They do all kinds of wonders to trick men into following them.

Verse 15:

The thought that is given in this verse is similar to Matthew 24:43 and 1 Thessalonians 5:2. All Christians are always to be ready. If a Christian is not ready spiritually, he is spiritually naked. One who is spiritually naked will be rejected by God and Christ at the end of time. John warns his readers that the time will come as a thief and that they are always to be ready.

Verse 16:

The word "Armageddon" is one word that causes much guessing as to its meaning. The word means hill or mountain of Megiddo. Megiddo was a region in Israel. There were several decisive battles fought in this area. Ahaziah, king of Judah, was wounded and died there (II Kings 9:27). Deborah and Barak destroyed Sisera there (Judges 5:19). Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-nechoh at that location (2 Kings 23:29-30). It became a way of referring to mourning because of all the things that happened there (Zechariah 12:11).

The meaning here is that there is going to be a battle between the power of Satan, as represented by the dragon, the beast and the false spirit; against true religion and that the battle will be decisive. This does not refer to the end of time. The battle represented here will be a spiritual battle, not a physical war.

An application of these verses is as follows:

1. Turkish power keeps the gospel from being spread in that area.
2. The drying up of the Euphrates represents the decline of this power. A number of events and battles occur, which by the middle 1800s, has Turkish power broken.
3. With this obstacle removed, more people in the area turn to Christianity.
4. Satan tries to use other means to stop the spread of the Gospel. Heathenism, Mohammedanism and Romanism would be the three methods Satan would use in order to try to accomplish his purposes.
5. Finally, a decisive battle in which the forces of Satan make an attempt to overcome the true church. This does not mean a physical battle, but more likely it is a battle for men's minds.

Verses 17:

The seventh vial is poured out on the air. Ephesians 2:2 calls Satan the "prince of the air." This may be what is meant by the reference to this term or maybe it refers to his agents. However, all of the vials have referred to the problems that came to, and the reduction in power, that affected the papal system. Therefore, the seventh vial would also refer to some events that happened to or will happen to the papacy. With the pouring out of the seventh vial the voice that came out of the temple of heaven says "it is done." This is the same voice that was mentioned in verse 1.

Verse 18:

The words used here indicate the intensity and magnitude of the destruction that was to happen. There were references to these kinds of events in Revelation 4:15, 11:19, and 6:12. This turmoil represents movements of the divine will and an upheaval in society because of his judgments.

Verse 19:

The great city would be spiritual Babylon. It was broken into three pieces. These pieces seem to be the division of power the pope had to endure. Church was separated from the state and the pope's portion of the church was divided as the reformers rebelled against him.

Verse 20:

When islands and mountains are used as symbols, they denote earthly powers. The people in high authority will be removed from their positions.

Verse 21:

The symbol of hail would mean punishment that would come on those who oppose God's people. The fact that they weighted one talent (or about 50 to 100 pounds each depending on which translation you read) would mean that this will be a very severe punishment. Even with this extreme punishment, the men who followed Satan continued to blaspheme God rather than taking responsibility for their deeds. Some place the seventh vial at around 1900 and others think it refers to the end of time.

Daniel prophesied in Daniel, chapter seven, that the beast would have its powers taken away and it would be destroyed. This is probably representing the same thing.

REVELATION 17

Chapter 16 explained the seven vials and chapters 17, 18 and 19 will expand that explanation as it gives greater detail on that information that was given previously. The explanation of the fall of Babylon is expanded.

The first six verses of this chapter give the description of the spiritual anti-Christ using the figure of a great harlot. The true church has been described as a pure woman and now the false church is being described as a harlot.

Verse 1:

One of the seven angels, who helped God by pouring out the contents of a vial, is going to show John the judgment that is to come. The location of the "whore" is on many waters. The use of the term, whore, shows the spiritual prostitution that the false church had engaged in over time. Verse fifteen of this chapter gives the meaning of the term "many waters." It means "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The "whore" had enjoyed wide spread support in the past.

Verse 2:

The relationship between the physical nations of the area and the Roman church is shown by the condition that is stated. The kings, that would mean literal leaders, had participated with the church in the control of the people and in the things that were done to the true church. John uses sexual impurity as a way to describe that relationship.

Because of the benefits the kings (nations) had received in doing business with the "whore," they were intoxicated with the power and riches that they had received. They were more than willing to continue to support the false church and to persecute the true followers of God.

The false church had been unfaithful to the truth and because of that unfaithfulness they were classified as a whore. The true church has always been classified as a chaste virgin.

Verse 3:

John is "carried away" to see what is going to happen to the false church. This would not be a literal movement of his body but rather in his mind, like the one mentioned in chapter four verse two, where he describes himself as being "in the Spirit." The term "wilderness" would probably represent obscurity and desolation that was going to happen. What he sees is a woman sitting on a scarlet colored beast full of blasphemy having seven heads and ten horns. The woman would refer to the apostate church. This is the same woman that was mentioned in verse one.

This beast was mentioned in chapter 13, verse 1. The seven-headed beast has been the symbol of Rome. It has been known over the years as the city that sits on seven hills. Verse nine indicates that the seven heads represent the seven mountains where the "woman" is located.

The ten horns represent the ten kingdoms that were controlled by the Roman church. Verse twelve reads that the horns represent ten kings which had a relationship with the beast. Most agree that the ten kingdoms that are referred to by the ten horns are: 1) England, 2) Germany, 3) Switzerland, 4) Netherlands, 5) Sweden, 6) Denmark, 7) France, 8) Austria, 9) Italy and 10) Spain.

Sir Isaac Newton developed a list which he thought represented the ten horns. They were: 1) Vandals of Spain & Africa, 2) Visigoths, 3) Suevi of Spain, 4) Alans of France, 5) Burgundians, 6) Franks, 7) Britons, 8) Huns, 9) Lombards and 10) Ravenna.

However, some believe that instead of representing ten specific countries, the number represents a complete number which includes all the countries that took their power and position from the pope of Rome. The actual list of countries would have varied over time as the political climate of the world changed from time to time.

Verse 4:

The woman is wearing purple and scarlet. These colors are the colors of royalty and are identified with power and riches. However, sometimes the color scarlet is identified as the color of sin. It is interesting that one religious organization has chosen these colors for their leaders to wear. The gold and jewels would show the enormous wealth possessed by the woman. The golden cup would be for someone who was ruling as it was usually the king that had the golden cup. The appearance of the woman is that of royalty.

The representation here is similar to the statement made by Jesus about the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:27. Jesus characterized them in that passage as being "whited sepulchers." They looked good on the outside but inside they were full of dead men's bones. The same can be said about the woman John sees at this time. She had the appearance of royalty but her cup was filled with abominations, fornication and sins.

Over time, the harlot had intermingled the true doctrine of Christ with paganism and the teachings of men. The combination that resulted, from this corruption of God's church, was an abomination to God.

Verse 5:

John gives the harlot a name in this verse. The name was easy to see because it was written on the forehead. Because it was so obvious, John did not have any difficulty in knowing the nature of the woman or describing her characteristics. The name has three parts; first is "Mystery," second is "Babylon the great," and third is "The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

A mystery is something that is not understood. Here, the Roman church was trying to be mysterious so the world would not understand what God required for them to receive salvation. They didn't want the people to know the word of God. They didn't want the common man to be able to read the Bible. Therefore, they did what they could to keep the truth of the gospel a mystery.

Babylon, in the Old Testament, was the country that carried the tribes of Judah away into captivity. They ultimately were destroyed by another stronger nation. Jeremiah 51: 7-9 records God's prophesy about the future of physical Babylon. Now John uses the same name, Babylon, to represent the carrying away of God's people from the truth to false doctrine. This time it is a spiritual carrying away rather than a physical action.

The woman is also called the mother of harlots. This is because not only did she corrupt the word of God herself, she was the basis for most of the other corruption that occurred. For example, the reformers only did away with the parts of the Roman church they disliked the most, but kept the balance of the teaching of that church. In many cases, their teaching didn't return to God's word as the basis for their teachings. Most churches, today, base their doctrine somewhat on principles of the Roman church.

Verse 6:

The oppression of true Christians started slowly but in time, it became a wholesale slaughter. The more power the Roman church had, the more it wanted, and it would do anything to keep that power. The fact that they were drunk on the blood of the saints and martyrs shows the intensity of the persecution that was placed on the saints.

The woman had consumed enough blood to be drunk. This would indicate the great amount of persecution that had been administered by the Roman church on the true followers of God. The persecution had been carried out with a lot of enthusiasm. The Roman church sought out people who were not following their teachings exactly.

Being drunk indicates a lack of self control over your actions. The woman had already consumed enough to be drunk. In so doing, the Roman church had achieved the mentality of a pack of dogs that kill or sharks when blood gets in the water. That is, they killed almost for the joy of killing rather than for a purpose.

The word "wonder" means to be amazed and the word "admiration" means to be astonished. What John saw was so amazing to him that it caused him to stare at it. He could hardly believe what he was seeing, so he looked at the scene very closely. We tend to have the same reaction when we see an accident or someone who looks different than ourselves.

Verse 7:

The angel asks John; why were you amazed? The angel tells John that he will tell him the mystery of both the woman and the beast. The angel goes on again to describe the beast as the one having seven heads and ten horns.

Verse 8:

Remember that John referred to the beast as being wounded in chapter 13:3. There he said, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." This is the same beast that John referred to in chapter thirteen. Here the angel calls the beast, "the beast was, and is not, and yet is."

The beast was pagan Rome and because of the attacks that came against the physical empire, it seemed to go away only to reappear as papal Rome. The ones that wondered at the change that occurred were not followers of the true Christ. In chapter thirteen, verse eight, John calls these same people those "whose names are not written in the book of the lamb..." These people are not the true followers of God; they are followers of the beast. The book or God's plan of salvation has been around since the world was formed.

The bottomless pit or abyss is the holding place for the wicked until judgment. Luke 16:23 mentioned it in relation to the story of the wicked rich man and Lazarus. Here, because pagan Rome was wicked, it is symbolized as coming from there. When Christ returns for the second time, pagan Rome will go into perdition or the lake of fire and Satan's power will be completely broken.

Verse 9:

Starting with verse nine through the rest of the chapter, the angel tells John what is meant by these symbols.

The angel informs John that the seven heads mentioned in verse three represent seven mountains which was its base of operations. The city of Rome has always been noted as "the city on seven hills."

Verse 10:

The term mountain can also refer to governments or forms of government. (Isaiah 2:2 and Daniel 2:35) In this case, the seven mountains could refer to seven forms of government that had or would occur in the Roman Empire. These seven forms of government were: 1) Kings, 2) Consuls, 3) Dictators, 4) Decemvirs, 5) Military Tribunes, 6) Emperors and 7) Absolute Monarchs.

There are several alternative meanings for the seven kings. One of those alternative meanings is that the kings represent seven nations that had interacted with God's people over the years. They are:

1. Egypt – who enslaved Israel
2. Assyria – who captured the 10 tribes
3. Babylon – who captured the 2 tribes
4. Persia – who overthrew Babylon
5. Greece – under Alexander who overthrew Persia
6. Pagan Rome – which was in power at Jesus' time
7. Eastern Roman Empire - which would come about after John or the Christian Roman Empire which was started by Constantine

The angel reveals to John that the first five had fallen, the sixth was in power and number seven would come after John's time. In either of these explanations this, information would be correct. John lived in the time of the Emperors and also in the time of Pagan Rome.

Verse 11:

The angel again refers to the beast that "was and is not." The eighth is not an additional head, but has come out of the seventh head. It represents a kingdom which came out of the seventh head. The Roman Empire "was" and then it "is not" when it was defeated by the barbarians which invaded Rome. However, out of that empire sprang another empire which would cause people to wonder and worship the beast. (Verse eight) Here it is called the eighth king. This would be papal Rome.

They would build their power until the popes became more powerful than the Caesars had been in the past. However, over time, that power was going to diminish. The use of the word "perdition" shows the decrease in power and the final destruction of the false church.

Verse 12:

The angel reveals that the ten horns represent ten kings or kingdoms. They were not kingdoms yet (in John's time) but they will be in the future. However, they will only be kingdoms for a short time (one hour). The phrase "with the beast" shows their support for the beast (Roman church).

Verse 13:

This verse also shows their support of the beast. They were united in that effort in support of the Roman church. They may have had wars against each other over various issues but they never wavered in their support of the pope. They were all Roman Catholics.

There are various lists of the nations which make up the ten. The following are two of those lists:

1. Vandals of Spain & Africa
2. Visigoths
3. Suevi in Spain
4. Alans in France
5. Burgundians
6. Franks
7. Britons
8. Huns
9. Lombards
10. Ravenna

Or

1. England
2. Germany
3. Switzerland
4. Holland
5. Denmark
6. Italy
7. Spain
8. France
9. Belgium
10. Portugal

I tend to agree with the countries list or the countries of Europe. However, the use of the number ten may represent a complete number, not a specific number of nations. All of the world governments in that area were subject to the authority of the pope at this time.

Verse 14:

All of these countries have supported the pope and Roman church in its battle against truth. The extent to which these countries had helped the "great whore" is shown in verse two of this chapter. There it states that these kings were also "drunk with the wine of her fornication."

The kings of these countries helped carry out the wishes of the pope because they feared the pope and also because that alliance helped them to accumulate wealth and power. The true Christians could take hope that even though the outlook often looked bleak, they would come out on top because in the end, the lamb will triumph.

The lamb is identified as the "Lord of lords" and the "King of kings." This would refer to Christ. His followers are identified as "called and chosen and faithful." Those people are the true followers of Christ, his church and his teachings.

Verse 15:

The angel now gives the meaning of the term that was used in verse one. It reveals that the term "many waters" stood for people of many different nations, races and cultures. This shows the broad base of support that was enjoyed by the "whore" during this time.

Verse 16:

The angel makes a prophecy about the future of the "whore." Those nations which had supported the false church in the past will turn on the pope and his church. In so doing, they will break the political power of the Catholic Church and much of its spiritual influence. All of the terms that are used would show destruction and desolation. In most cases, the reason the country left the pope was because the ruler wanted to do something not permitted by the pope.

This was fulfilled in the protestant movement when those leaders would show that the teachings of the pope were not in accord with the scriptures. This destruction cannot be taken literally because it won't be until the second coming of Christ that all false teachings will be completely eliminated.

Verse 17:

Why did the kings ultimately abandon the pope? God put it in their hearts to fulfill his will. The ten kings were being used by God to carry out his plan. This technique on God's part is not new. In the Old Testament, God used kings of the world to punish the Children of Israel on many occasions.

Verse 18:

The angel reveals that the great city mentioned in chapter 16, verse 19 and the woman (whore) mentioned in this chapter are the same. In that location, the pope and the Roman church are identified as the people who are represented by the symbols.

Let's examine the individual nations that broke with Rome, the time period of each, and some of the reasons why:

1. England – 1534

The king wanted to divorce his wife and marry another woman. This was against Catholic doctrine, so the pope would not permit it. When the king didn't get what he wanted, he had parliament make him the head of the Church of England. The king was Henry VIII. Even though at a later date his daughter, Mary became Queen and tried to reestablish the Roman church. This was not successful because she didn't live long enough and Elizabeth I came to power after her death. She worked to keep separate the church and the state. The pope tried to change this by

declaring Phillip of Aragon, heir to the throne. He was from Spain. This conflict between the pope and Elizabeth I led to England's battle with the Spanish Armada in 1588 when England defeated Spain.

2. Germany – 1554

Charles V had worked against the protestant movement. Because of his position favoring the Catholic Church, he was forced to abdicate his throne. This was marked by the treaty of Augsburg in 1555 which permitted religious freedom.

3. Austria – 1554

The action in Germany had a similar effect on Austria.

4. Switzerland – 1566

Zwingli began his work in the protestant reformation in the early 1500's. By 1525, the reform effort in Zurich was complete. Different areas of the country supported either Catholics or Protestants. In 1566, an agreement was reached to grant religious freedom in Switzerland.

5. Holland – 1648

After a long battle, the treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648 which guaranteed religious freedom in Holland.

6. Sweden – 1560

When Gustavus I became king, he needed money to support his government. The majority of the wealth was controlled by the Roman church and their wealth was not taxed. He called a meeting of the leaders of the country to try and solve the problem of finances. This included both church leaders as well as those of noble birth. He told them how much money he needed and that they weren't going to get out of the meeting until a solution was reached. The leaders saw the wealth of the church and decided that would be a good place to get the large amount of money that was needed. The king made Lutheranism the national religion. He also tried to run off as many Catholics as possible so he could take over their wealth.

7. Denmark –

The conditions in Denmark were a lot like Sweden. At the end of the 100 year war, the pope was putting a lot of pressure on the king and the king wanted to rule his own country without outside influence. He permitted Protestant preachers to come into Denmark and they had a great deal of success with the people. The end result was that many of the Catholics were removed.

8. Italy – 1871

It was not until 1848 that there was any degree of religious freedom in Italy. In 1861 Victor Emmanuel united the country as a nation. However, it wasn't until 1871 that a law was passed limiting the power of the pope. This law limited the pope's power to the Vatican.

9. Spain – 1978

The inquisition was cancelled in the early 1800's. However, it wasn't until 1978 that the Spaniards adopted a constitution that permitted some form of religious freedom. This change didn't occur until the death of Francisco Franco and the country adopted a new form of government. Up until that time it had been against the law to preach anything except the Catholic doctrine.

10. France – 1792

The power of the pope was broken in France in 1792 when the French Revolution caused the country to change. The changes in France were more fully covered in chapter sixteen.

Verse 16 reads that the kings who supported the beast turn on her and destroy her. The listing above is a chronicle of those actions which brought an end to the political power of the pope and the Catholic Church. At this point in time, all of the countries that had supported the pope in the past have kicked out the pope and the Catholic Church as the official religion of their country.

REVELATION 18

This chapter continues on with the account of the destruction of Babylon (papal Rome). There are many terms used to describe the fall of the Roman church and the effect it had on the people who supported it. This chapter borrows from Isaiah and Jeremiah in its imagery, where they described the destruction of the original Babylon. They were giving prophecy concerning the physical country of Babylon and now the prophecy will cover spiritual Babylon. (Isaiah 13:19-22 and Jeremiah 50:35-40).

Verse 1:

After the events described in chapter seventeen, John sees another angel. This one has great power and glory. His glory was great enough to illuminate the earth.

Verse 2:

The angel makes the announcement that Babylon has fallen. The actual destruction of Babylon had not taken place at this time, however the sentence was in place and the judgment was sure. This was spoken of in the "prophetic past." This would be part of the pouring out of the 7th vial.

The destruction of the empire of Babylon was prophesied in Isaiah and Jeremiah many years before it actually occurred (Isaiah 13:19-22, 14:4-23, 21:9, 34:11-14, Jeremiah 51:8 and 37). This is what the angel is performing here concerning spiritual Babylon.

The words used to describe the residents of Babylon are not very complimentary. They are described as "devils," "foul spirit" and "unclean and hateful bird." The words "hold" and "cage" are from the same Greek word, *prulake*. This is the only place where it is translated with these words. Most of the time it is translated "prison." (i.e. Matthew 14:3, Luke 23:19, Acts 5:19, 16:23-24)

Information about the destruction of Babylon had been given in Revelation 16:19 and 17:16 and now the angel was going to provide additional information.

Verse 3:

In chapter seventeen, verse two, a reference was made to those who had committed fornication with the whore. The angel again uses this symbol of being drunk on the wine of her fornication. The wrath was against the true church and its followers.

During this time, the Roman church controlled most commerce that occurred in the business world. The merchants had to deal with the church in order to stay in business. The result of this combination was that both the church and the merchants got very rich. The church had money and bought a lot of goods, so to do business with the church was very profitable. Because of their dependence on the church, countries were more than willing to carry out the wishes of the church. (Isaiah 47:15)

Verse 4:

God gives a strong message to the people who are part of the false church. If they come out of it, and are not associated with it, they won't be affected by the plagues that are about to strike the whore.

This is similar to the instructions that were given to the Children of Israel that were taken into captivity in physical Babylon. God wanted his people to return to the Promised Land, so He instructed Isaiah and Jeremiah to give prophesy that would give them that information (Isaiah 48:20, 52:11 and Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6 and 45).

Another example is the Children of Israel in Egypt. By separating themselves and obeying, they did not have to endure all the plagues, in particular, the death of the first born. Also, there are the examples of Lot at Sodom (Genesis 19:12-13) and Moses when the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan and Abiram. (Numbers 16:20-24)

God was teaching the people that if they would disassociate themselves from the apostate church, they would not have to partake of the plagues that were going to come on that church.

Verse 5:

In Genesis 18:20, the writer records that the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were so great that they had reached God, He then sent angels to deal with the situation. The end result was the complete destruction of those cities.

God again hears the cry of the sins of a city; spiritual Babylon. When the seventh vial was poured out it, was because "Babylon came in remembrance before God." (Revelation 16:19) Just as with Sodom and Gomorrah, God had all He could take so He was going to deal with the "whore" and her followers. In the end, the result will be the same as with the cities of Lot; total destruction. Their sins were more than he can stand.

Verse 6

The false church had persecuted the true church over the years. The persecution had been very severe during that time. Now the Roman church will receive back double for all the bad things they have done to others.

This gives truth to the statement Paul made in Galatians 6:7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The Roman Church had sown seeds of persecution against the true church and now they were going to reap double of their misdeeds (Isaiah 40:2, 61:7 and Jeremiah 51:9, 50:15 & 29).

Verse 7:

This gives the attitude that the false church had displayed over the years. They wanted and got the best and considered themselves royalty. They could not see that their actions today might lead to trouble tomorrow.

The statement about the “whore’s” attitude of being a queen would match very well the apostate church’s claim of infallible authority. A Royal ruler thinks that he/she is above the rules that apply to everyone else. They have absolute authority.

Physical Babylon had the same attitude about itself and its future. (Isaiah 47:7-11) They thought they were above all and that they would never see sorrow. Yet, it was not too many years before the Medes and Persians defeated them, destroyed their city and carried them away. (Isaiah 47:7-11, 61:7, 40:2)

Verse 8:

Because of the attitude; because of the persecutions; because of the sins; the plagues will come. The term “one day” equals a short period of time. Physical Babylon was defeated in only one night. The end will come quickly for the apostate church when God deals His death blow to their organization. Also, the quick execution of judgment will leave no time for repentance in the end.

This is how Paul describes the end of time in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8. In that passage, Paul describes the second coming of Christ as a “thief in the night” and “travail upon a woman with child.” These examples would indicate both surprise and quickness.

Death, famine, mourning and being burned with fire are descriptions of severe punishments. This would be the typical results for a city that was captured and burned. The judgment on the apostate church will be that severe. It is justified because of the severity of the persecutions that it had placed on the true church.

Verses nine through nineteen give information about the lament of the kings and merchants. They had been made rich and powerful when the Roman church was at the heights of its power. Now, as the power of the church declined, they were sorrowful because the profits they had enjoyed in the past were gone. They grieved because they wanted to keep their source of income (Isaiah 21:9 and Jeremiah 50:46).

Verses 9-10:

There were many rulers who were able to keep their thrones because of the threat of the pope excommunicating them if the people failed to obey the king. Because of the help the pope gave in keeping their kingdoms, the kings were willing to help the Catholic Church with the muscle the pope needed to keep the people in line. For the pope and the kings it was a win-win arrangement. However, for the people and the true church, it was another story.

These verses tell of the attitude of the kings, who had gotten their power from the church, when the plagues came on the apostate church. They were very sorrowful when they saw her burning. However, at that point, they didn't want to get too close because they were afraid of being destroyed themselves.

The judgment came suddenly when it happened. The phrase "one hour" would represent the quickness of the destruction.

Verses 11-19:

The reaction of the merchants of the world is covered in these verses.

Verse 11:

The merchants are distraught because the system of commerce has been overturned.

Verses 12-13:

The different kinds of merchandise that were included in their businesses is outlined in these verses. These were probably literal products of the day that the church had control over.

The last two phrases of verse 13 are interesting, "and slaves, and souls of men." The word "slaves" is translated "bodies" in the NIV. The church was involved in slavery and the control of the people's bodies. In addition, the church also used the practice of prayers for the dead (or souls of men) to get money from the family of those who had died to get them out of purgatory. They also made money from the sale of indulgences, absolutions etc. Therefore, they actually made merchandise out of the souls of men. (Isaiah 19:9)

Verse 14:

When the false church is overthrown, there will be no demand for these things that they had used in the past. A product will disappear without demand. The things that the church lusted after are gone. These things would not be available.

Verses 15-16:

You can tell your real friends by what they do when the going gets tough. The merchants who had claimed to be the allies of the Roman church stayed far away when the persecution was reversed and came on the apostate church. Their only allegiance to the church was because of the money they were making as the result of the church's habits. The reason the merchants were sad was because their source of wealth was gone. The items listed were some of the things that the church used. They are examples of what the

rich would buy. From this list, and the list in verses twelve and thirteen, you can tell the level of opulence that was enjoyed by the apostate church.

Verses 17-19:

In addition to the merchants, the seamen were also upset at the demise of the institution that had brought them such large profits in the past. Most of the goods that were mentioned in verses 12, 13 and 16 would have been moved by ship. Now there was no need for them because the buyers of those goods were gone. They were concerned about their loss of profits rather than the reasons of the downfall of the apostate church.

There are two characteristics that sum the feeling toward this destruction. One is the seamen "stood afar off" and the other is the intensity of their feeling at the sight of the destruction. They stood back because they didn't want to get caught in the ring of destruction that was affecting the Roman church. The "casting dust on their heads" and the "weeping and wailing" would show that they were very concerned. Again, not for what was being destroyed, but rather the loss of their source of income.

The term "one hour" is used both in verse seventeen and in verse nineteen. This is a comment about the swiftness of the downfall of the "whore." The term would not be a literal period of time but rather an indication of a very short period of time when this would happen. (Isaiah 23:14 and Jeremiah 5:37)

Verse 20:

This verse changes the thought from the previous verses. It moves from those who were crying because of the papal church's destruction to those who had suffered because of her actions in the past. In chapter six, verse ten the souls of those slain for the word of God ask "how long?" When will we be avenged for the suffering that we have experienced? Now they are told to rejoice because God has now avenged them (Isaiah 44:23, 49:13 and Jeremiah 51:48).

Verse 21:

The mighty angel proclaims that with violence, this "Babylon" will be overthrown. The sudden destruction is shown by the example of the millstone being cast into water. There is a sudden splash and then the water returns to the way it was before the splash. (Jeremiah 51:61-64)

Verse 22:

All of the sounds that had been associated with the city are gone. A completely destroyed city would make no sounds. The musical reference would refer to its worship and the other reference would be to its commerce. The angel is communicating that all is quiet because all is destroyed. There is nothing left. (Isaiah 24:8 and Jeremiah 7:34, 16:9, 25:10)

Verse 23:

This verse continues by showing additional items that would be gone after the demise of the apostate church as a political power. It also relates how the papacy was able to control the nations and force them to support the pope; it was through deception. (Isaiah 23:8 and Jeremiah 33:11)

Verse 24:

The judgment was made on the apostate church because of the sins she had committed against God's true followers. She had committed the crime of killing God's people. When the autopsy was performed, she was full of the blood of the saints and prophets. (Jeremiah 51:49 and Isaiah 13 & 14)

REVELATION 19

This chapter continues describing the events following the destruction of "Babylon.

John hears the heavenly hosts giving praise to God in light of the destruction of Babylon. The use of the word "alleluia" occurs only in this chapter in the New Testament. It is a Hebrew word and some have used this to indicate that the Jews will come to accept Christ and be involved in the heavenly scene.

Verses 1-2:

The things that are reported in this chapter occur subsequently to the events of the previous chapter. (18:21-24) However, it does not reveal the amount of time that transpires between the two events.

The heavenly host continues to shout praise to God giving him honor and glory for his victory over "the great whore." They also state that God's judgments were correct because he avenged his saints from the persecution of the "great whore" with a victory.

Verse 3:

The praises continue as the smoke from the destruction of her empire continues to rise.

Verse 4:

The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures were introduced in chapter four, verses four to eight. Now they join in the praise and fall down and worship God because of the things that God has done for the saints in the overthrowing of Babylon.

Verse 5:

A command is given from the area of the throne to praise God. This applies to servants and those that fear him, both great and small.

Verses 6:

The use of the term "many waters" is used again referring to a large number of people. This is the same usage that was used in chapter seventeen. What the voices are doing here is praising God. The use of the word "omnipotent" would mean that God is all powerful or has unlimited power.

In the first six verses of this chapter, the word "alleluia" is used four times. This word means "praise ye the God or Jehovah." The word is translated as "Hallelujah" in many other translations. The praise is given by those in heaven, the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures and a great multitude.

Verse 7:

The reason that all these groups are giving thanks and praise to God is that it is time for the marriage of the lamb. The true church is the bride and has been making herself ready. The true church has been engaged to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2, Romans 7:4 & Ephesians 5:22-32) and when He returns, the wedding will take place. The bridegroom will not accept any but those who have continued to keep their garments white. The bride is now ready.

Verses 8-9:

The marriage is going to take place. Notice what the bride wears; linen, clean and white. The text reads that this represents "the righteousness of the saints." John is told to write the importance of the marriage invitation. If you are invited to the marriage, this would indicate that you had lived a life of purity and righteousness. They have washed their robes in the blood of Christ (7:14) and have lived a life faithful until death (2:10).

Verse 10:

John is overcome by the majesty of the scene and falls down to worship the angel. The angel quickly rebukes him and tells him to worship God. This is the same information that is given in Acts 10:26 when Cornelius tries to worship Peter, and in Acts 14:14-15 when the people at Lycaonia tried to worship Paul and Barnabas. In all of these cases, the instruction was to worship God only. John will have this problem again in chapter 22, verse 8.

One problem that has continued to harm man in his service to God is the practice of worshipping things or people other than God himself. As is covered in the Old Testament, the people created images of wood, stone, metal or precious stones to be their gods and they worshipped those images. Today, people still worship men, as was prohibited by Acts 10:26 and 14:14-15 and they still create images to worship.

Worship, in the "Christian world" today, often involves the worship of church leaders or former church leaders. This includes those who have been designated by the church to be special people and many times images are created of those same individuals. These images usually consist of crosses, pictures of leaders, pictures of those who have been determined to be special people, etc. This story may have been included because of the image worship and worship of leaders that would occur and be common in the Catholic Church.

Verses 11-21:

The final verses of this chapter show the final conquest of the beast and the false prophet.

Verses 11-16:

The first section of these final verses has a description of the conqueror.

Verse 11:

Heaven is opened (similar to the beginning of chapter four when John sees the first vision) and John sees another vision. The vision is of a white horse with a rider that is called "Faithful and True." This is not the same white horse that John saw in chapter six. It is still a symbol of conquest and triumph as it did in chapter six. However, this time the rider of the white horse would be the Lord. Again, the rider has achieved a victory. This time it's a spiritual victory instead of the physical conquest of war.

Verses 12-13:

The person described in these verses is Christ and it gives his appearance. The eyes of fire would be bright and penetrating. The crowns show his universal, kingly authority. The name given in verse eleven, "Faithful and true" would refer to his nature; the name given in verse sixteen, "King of kings and Lord of lords" would refer to his authority and the name recorded in verse thirteen, "The Word of God" would show his relationship to the father.

In chapter two, verse seventeen, John wrote that those who overcome will receive a new name which no one will know except those who receive the name. This is similar to that reference and it means that men cannot know and appreciate the name of Christ until they overcome with Him.

The cloth dipped in blood shows the sacrifice Christ made for the benefit of mankind. It was through his blood that he conquered, and it was through his blood that the New Testament was sealed (1 Peter 1:2, Hebrews 9:18-20, 12:24 & 13:20).

Verses 14-16:

The armies probably represent the redeemed going out to observe the victory. Their riding on white horses would show their victory and the "white and clean" clothing would show their purity.

Verse fifteen reveals how Christ conquered with the word. The word is what will convict men of their sins. The rod of iron would be unbending. The judgments that will be applied to those who have opposed God's true church and supported "Babylon" will be just and correct. It will be firm and it will go on forever. The example of a winepress was used in chapter fourteen, verses seventeen to twenty. This indicates that Christ will be trampling underfoot the wicked nations.

A king is one with supreme authority and a lord is one who governs. The title "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" means that the person is over all the other rulers. Christ has

this written on his clothing and body. This indicates that he has ultimate authority and power over all people. Christ has earned both titles because he has overcome all.

Verses 17-18:

John sees another angel that calls the birds of prey to come and to eat the flesh of those that were destroyed. This scene would be similar to a battlefield where the bodies were not buried. We think of buzzards feasting on dead animals that are laying about the landscape. This is the kind of a picture that John is describing.

This shows the complete destruction of the enemy of the Lamb. It goes through a list of different classes of individuals and animals that have been killed. These are the ones who supported the beast.

Verses 19-21:

John sets the scene of battle. On one side it is the beast, the kings of the earth and their armies and on the other side, it is Christ and his army. In this battle, the beast and the false prophet are taken and cast into the lake of fire. The rest of the beast's army is slain. There are enough dead bodies for the birds to fill themselves with the flesh of those killed.

The general idea is that these great anti-Christian powers which had resisted the gospel and prevented it from being spread over the earth and had shed so much blood in persecution and had so long corrupted and deceived mankind, would be subdued.

True religion will be triumphant. It's as if the Son of God went forth as a warrior himself and secured their leaders for punishment and gave up their hosts to the birds of prey. This destruction of these great enemies – which the whole course of the interpretation leads us to suppose is still further – prepares the way for the reign of the Son of God, as stated in the next chapter.

If the conqueror is the "word", the conquering may have already happened. This would prepare the way for Satan to be bound (not have as much effect) for a period of time.

REVELATION 20

This is a chapter that has caused many people a lot of problems over the years. However, most of these problems can be dealt with in light of other scriptures and principles.

Verse 1:

John sees another vision. This time an angel has the key to the bottomless pit and a chain in his hand. The bottomless pit has been referred to before (Revelation 9:1 & 11; 11:7; 17:8). The words, "bottomless pit" are from the Greek word ABUSSOS which means the place in Hades where angels are cast when they sin.

The key would show that the angel has authority to control the bottomless pit. The angel also has a chain. The chain would be a symbol of control or the ability to bind. What was able to bind Satan? This would refer to the Word of God. When the Word was released, Satan was put down and no longer able to control nations.

Verse 2:

This verse reveals who was controlled by the chain. John uses four different names here to describe the one who is controlled; 1) dragon, 2) old serpent, 3) devil and 4) Satan. All these names apply to Satan, the deceiver of mankind.

Man has misinterpreted the term 1000 years, and has caused many to be deceived. There are many different interpretations of the 1000 years or as it is referred to by many, the millennium. Many people believe that Jesus is coming back to earth to reign for a literal 1000 years. There are other interpretations, but this seems to be the most popular. Those who believe this teaching preach that at the end of the 1000 years, people will have one more opportunity to be saved.

To determine the correct interpretation of this chapter it is necessary to determine what is meant by 1) the binding of Satan, 2) the period of time represented by the 1000 years and 3) what happens after the 1000 years is over.

Verse 3:

John sees Satan cast into the bottomless pit and a seal is placed on it. Satan was able to be controlled by the "chain" that was in the hand of the angel (verse one). This verse teaches what Satan will not be able to do during this time. He will not be able to deceive nations till the 1000 year period is over. After the 1000 years, he will be set loose for a short period of time and be able to deceive nations again.

The word "nations" would show the scope of the influence that Satan will have. He had been able to deceive "nations" before he was bound by the Word of God. Just before the end, he will again be able to control whole nations again.

1000 years:

There are three possible explanations for the 1000 year period:

1. It means a literal 1000 years
2. It means, using a day for a year as we did in earlier prophecy, 365,000 years
3. It means a long indefinite period of time

The most popular is the first. Many people want to believe the millennium theory, maybe because it has the second chance option. But if it means a literal 1000 years, this would be one of the few literal items used in this book of prophesy.

I am not aware of anyone who takes this to mean 365,000 years. While this fits with the way other periods of time in the book are calculated, it doesn't fit well here.

The better explanation would most likely be the last, with the 1000 years meaning a longer, indefinite period of time. The use of the expression "1000" in the scripture, referring to either years or things, is always referring to a large indefinite number. (Psalms 50:10, 90:4, Exodus 20:6, 2 Peter 3:8 etc.)

In contrast, the term "little season" would mean a much shorter period of time as compared to the 1000 years.

When does this period of time occur?

Those who believe that the 1000 years is a literal period of time are divided on the order of events that will occur. Some believe that Christ will return at the start of the 1000 year period and will reign here on earth at Jerusalem, along with his saints, for the entire period. These are called "premillennialists." They also believe that the saints will be raised first, and the wicked will have a second chance to change their lives.

There are also those who are called "postmillennialists." They believe that Christ will return at the end of the 1000 years. They believe that the world will continue to become more in tune with Christ's teaching during this period, and when He returns, it will be to a Christianized world.

There is third group that are called "amillennialists." They believe that the 1000 years is not a literal time period, but rather a long indefinite period of time. They don't believe that there will be a literal reign of Christ on the earth. They also think that both the wicked and the righteous will be resurrected at the same time.

Verse three of the text also contains a key to the period of time that is covered. In that verse it reads, "...that he should deceive nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled..." If the Word is the chain that was referred to in verse one, then the question

must be asked: when was Satan bound by the Word so he could not deceive nations? The answer is the reformation period.

The study in previous chapters indicated that whole nations were under the power of the pope. This power was broken as the Bible was put into the hands of the people. When the people could read the Bible for themselves, Satan could no longer deceive the majority of the people. Could that be the start of the 1000 years? If so we are living in that period today.

Or has that 1000 year period already ended and are we in the period of time when Satan has that power once again? Some writers are concerned about Satan being able to control whole nations today. They cite China, the Islamic countries and others as places where Christ cannot be preached and wonder if the "little season" has already begun.

Many people want to believe that Christ will come back to earth, set up a kingdom, and reign for 1000 years in glory. It would be a time of peace and no sin. At the end of that time, there would be a second chance for sinners. Then the end of time would come and we would all go to heaven to live with Christ and God.

However, this approach cannot be supported by these scriptures and is also in conflict with other scriptures as well that describe the process of becoming a Christian and the events that will occur at end of time (2 Peter 3:12, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, 2 Corinthians 5:10, John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Verse 4:

Verses four through six describe some of the scenes that happen during the "1000 year" period. This descriptive paragraph is inserted here with the rest of the narrative continuing with verse seven.

John sees two things here: (1) Thrones and those who sit on them and (2) those who have not accepted the beast. (The beast represents world power opposed to Christ. It had the ability to change forms. i.e. pagan Rome to papal Rome) The saints are those who have given their lives for the cause of Christ. It is important to notice how they are referred to. It reads their souls were seen by John, not their bodies. In chapter 6:9, in the fifth seal, the saints asked how long till they were avenged? Now they are.

There are some who believe this was a literal raising of the dead. They believe Christ is literally coming back to earth to reign a 1000 years and the righteous will be resurrected and reign with him. John refers to the souls of the saints rather than the bodies. It doesn't indicate they came back to life as bodies which would have to occur if they were literally reigning with Christ on earth. Here it reads that John saw the souls.

How does Christ and these martyrs reign? Again, we go back to the control of the Word. It was available to the people and they were letting it reign in their hearts. In so doing, Christ reigned over them.

Who was sitting on the thrones? Some think they are the people mentioned in chapter 17, verse 12. However, the context of this passage makes it difficult to follow that line of reasoning. The use of the symbol thrones is a symbol of rule and judgment. Those who were sitting on these thrones were given judgment rights.

However, most believe it is the saints that are on the thrones as mentioned later in the verse. (1 Corinthians 6:2 – saints judge the world) How did they reign? It could be by the example they have left for others or it could be by the life they have lived. People remember their example and used that to have a positive influence on their lives. Daniel chapter 7 covers this period. In verse 27, it reads the kingdom will be given to the saints.

The 1000 year period mentioned in this verse is the same period of time mentioned in verses two and three.

Verse 5-6:

The phrase “rest of the dead” refers to the bodily resurrection that will occur at judgment. This judgment will take place after the “little season” and the “1000 years” are over.

The last part of verse five ends with a statement about the first resurrection. Verse six continues with that thought and reads “blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” If that is the case, then the second death will have no effect.

What are the first resurrection and the second death?

Who was the first to rise to die no more? Christ! If we participate with him then, we have part of the first resurrection. How do we participate? We do that by being obedient to what he has commanded about salvation. This would include the steps of primary obedience as well as living the Christian life. If we obey and remain faithful, then the second death (second coming; the separation from Christ and God at judgment) has no power over us. (John 5:25-27, Ephesians 2:1, Revelation 1:9 – God brought us into the Lord and Revelation 1:5 – Christ “washed us from our sins.”)

The 1000 year period that is mentioned in verses five and six is the same period mentioned in verses two, three and four.

Verse 7-8:

Verse seven picks up where verse three left off. The story continues concerning Satan being bound and what happens after he is loosed from the bottomless pit.

The period when Satan can no longer deceive nations is over and Satan will be loosed. Verse three reports that it will only be for a “little season.”

At the point Satan is loosed, he will again be able to deceive nations as he did before the 1000 year period started. The four quarters would represent the whole earth. Satan is going to be able to get a large number of people to follow him.

The names Gog and Magog are listed as part of the four quarters. These names are used in the Old Testament as enemies of God and his people.

Magog is mentioned in the Old Testament in Genesis 10:2, 1 Chronicles 1:5, Ezekiel 38:2 & 39:6

Genesis 10:2 and 1 Chronicles 1:5 list Magog as one of the sons of Japheth. Ezekiel lists the word as a country. In Ezekiel, Gog is listed as the king of Magog.

Revelation 20:8 is the only reference to these names in the New Testament. Here they are symbols that refer to a group of people that represent the enemies of God just as it did in Ezekiel – an antichristian party.

In his dictionary, Strong lists the country (Magog) as a barbarous Northern region. Thayer lists that it “will come from the remote north, with innumerable hosts of his own nations as well as of allies and will attach the people of Israel, reestablished after the exile; but by divine interposition he will be utterly destroyed.”

A lot of people have spent time trying to determine who these people are and where they will come from.

The people Ezekiel was referring to lived in the area between the Caspian and Euxine seas. Josephus referred to them as Scythians. The people were also known as “Tartars” and were considered to be fierce warriors.

In one lexicon, they listed these people as the Chinese. Again, they would be coming from the same general area.

What is John trying to tell us?

Is he naming the specific country that will be the source of the attack against the church or is he saying that the fierceness of the attack against the church will be similar to the fierceness of the people that Ezekiel listed in his book in chapters 38 & 39.

The latter is probably the case.

Verse 9:

The vision that John sees is a battle that is about to take place. Satan and his forces have spread over the world and have surrounded the church. The outlook would be very bleak at this point. However, God is going to take a direct hand in the outcome of this battle. At this point, God destroys those who are oppressing the church.

The fire predicted here is similar to the one Ezekiel mentioned in Ezekiel 39:6. Paul also describes an ending which gives the same information in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

The prophecy given here, when God takes care of his people in the time of extreme trouble, is like two stories in the Old Testament. In 2 Kings 6:8-23, Syria was attacking Israel. They surrounded the city where Elisha lived. Elisha's servant was worried but Elisha said, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." (verse 16) Elisha was right because God struck the Syrian army with blindness and the country was saved at that time.

The other time when a similar incident occurs is found in 2 Kings 19:35. Assyria had attacked Judah and had surrounded the city of Jerusalem. They had given orders for Hezekiah to surrender. Hezekiah prayed to God and He saved the city. During the night, God sent an angel down and smote the camp of the Assyrians and 185,000 of their army died that night.

Verse 10:

This is Satan's last battle. It also reveals the length and the events of the battle. This time, he is not cast into the bottomless pit but rather into the lake of fire. The beast and the false prophet are already there. (Revelation 19:20) The duration and the condition of the punishment were also given. It will last forever and ever and they will be tormented while they are there.

Jesus taught what would happen to Satan. In Matthew 25:41, Jesus said "... depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." He also said, talking about the wicked, in verse 46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment..."

Verse 11:

John sees another scene in heaven. This time he sees a great white throne located there. The symbolism used would mean that the white color would again stand for purity and the throne for power or authority. This starts the teaching concerning the final judgment at the end of time. This subject takes the rest of the chapter. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:31-46 indicates that Christ will be the one sitting on the throne (verses 31&32). John 5:22 also reveals that the Son will be the one on the judgment seat.

Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:7-12 that the heavens and the earth that exist today are going to be destroyed. They "... shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (Verse 10) He also wrote in verse twelve that "...the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved..."

So the lesser thing would withdraw in the presence of something greater. The end of the order of the world as humans know it has come to pass. The old has passed away to make room for the new, which is presented in chapter twenty-one.

Verse 12:

This scene that is presented is judgment day. The phrase “small and great” is a way of indicating that everybody is included in the judgment. There are at least two books at the judgment seat. One is named, “the Book of Life” and the other would represent the laws that God had given to man to conduct his life or the Old and New Testament.

The record is opened that will reveal how man had conducted his life here on earth. The record is called the “Book of Life.” The people are judged according to the things recorded in that book. Moses knew this (Exodus 32:32), Malachi mentioned this fact (Malachi 3:16), Paul realized this (Philippians 4:3) and John gave this information to the church at Sardis (Revelation 3:5).

The parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46) gives some additional information about the judgment. Do you remember how Christ judged those people in that parable? The people were separated based on their performance here on earth. The ones who had done well were put on one side and the rest were placed on the other side. With this parable, we get some idea of the things that are recorded in the Book of Life.

Verse 13:

This is not an event that takes place after the events of verse twelve. This verse further explains all of the things that are involved in the judgment that will occur. In other words, all people will be involved in this judgment. It doesn't make any difference where or when you died, you will be involved.

Again, the emphasis is that everyone will be judged according to their works. If you think about it, what could be more equitable? The correct record will be there; there are no mistakes in the record and on that record, we will be judged.

Verse 14:

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:26 taught that the last enemy that would be destroyed is death. That destruction happens here as the final judgment takes place and man, in the physical sense, is no more.

Death, along with Hades, is characterized as being cast into the lake of fire. This is the area where Satan was placed and there is no escape from this place of torment. The placing of Satan and the wicked into the lake of fire is the second death.

Verse 15:

Those who go into eternal punishment are those whose names are not written in the book of life. They will be placed into the lake of fire along with Satan (verse 10), the beast and false prophet (verse 10), death and Hades (verse 14).

In verse 6 of this chapter, John recorded that if we take part in the first resurrection, then we have nothing to fear in the second death because we will not be part of that death. In other words, if we obey Christ and his teaching, both in primary obedience and in the way we live our lives, we have taken part in the first resurrection and are safe from the second death.

This is a very important message for us!

REVELATION 21

John sees another vision. The second coming of Christ has occurred. So this vision shows us what it will be like after the judgment by showing the eternal home of the saints.

Verse 1:

John sees what he calls a “new heaven” and a “new earth.” The reason that these are important is because the old “were passed away.” This statement agrees with 2 Peter 3:10-13 where it reads, “the elements will melt with a fervent heat” and also gives the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. The prophet Isaiah also gives a similar prediction in Isaiah 65:15-25 & 66:22-24. What John sees is a new home for the redeemed. This is necessary because the physical earth is no more.

As John sees this scene, the lack of seas must have caught his attention. In the physical world, a sea or body of water was a barrier to man. Because of their limited methods of transportation, a sea would keep two nations apart. At this time, there won’t be any barriers to keep us from being close to Christ and God.

Verse 2:

John sees “New Jerusalem” as part of the new heaven and the new earth. What does he mean? The city of Jerusalem had been the center of worship for God’s people in the past. Now he is using the same metaphor to describe the new relationship between God and His people. Don’t look for a physical “new” city to replace the ones destroyed by fire. This is similar to the reference in verse one, which does not refer to a new physical heaven and earth but rather to an abode for the redeemed.

Paul, in Hebrews 12:22-23, refers to Jerusalem as the church. The church is now in a state of purification. It is prepared, pure and ready to be the bride for Christ.

Verse 3:

John hears a “great voice” from heaven. This mighty voice shows that it was spoken with authority. The information that is to be given is important.

The tabernacle was the place where God dwelt for the Children of Israel. It had three sections; the outer court, the holy place and the most holy place. Only the priests could go into certain parts of the tabernacle. After the second coming, all the redeemed will be able to live in the same area as God. This shows the close relationship the redeemed will have with God and Christ.

Verse 4:

Our physical condition is an important part of life. There are many things that can go wrong with our bodies to cause pain and sorrow. The message that the voice wants his followers to know is that all of those concerns will be gone.

Tears represent grief and sorrow and God wants his people to know that the redeemed will have neither. The whole verse emphasizes the condition under which the redeemed will live. The bad things that we think about; death, sorrow, crying and pain will be gone. The reason is that our old bodies are gone and we are dwelling in our spiritual bodies.

Verse 5:

God concludes these sayings by stating that he is making all things new. In verse one, there was a new heaven and a new earth and in verse two, there was a New Jerusalem. These were necessary because the old heaven, the old earth and the old Jerusalem had been destroyed.

John was given the specific instruction to "write." This is the third time he is specifically told this (14:13 and 19:19), not counting the letters to the churches. He is also given the assurance that the information he has received is correct.

Verse 6:

"It is done," is the phrase used to tell us that all things planned and predicted have been completed. God is speaking with reference to the finishing of the events predicted in chapter twenty and the first part of this chapter. What is "Alpha and Omega"? They are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. By using this reference, he is saying that all things have been accomplished. The phrase "beginning and the end" has the same meaning as the "Alpha and Omega" phrase.

In Matthew 5:6, Christ teaches that we should hunger and thirst after righteousness. Christ told the Samaritan woman that whoever drank of the water he had would never thirst again. Now we will have the opportunity to freely drink of that water. The cost has been paid.

Verse 7:

In chapters two and three, there were promises given to the seven churches of salvation if they overcame their problems. The promise is given again to those who are faithful or overcome. If we do, we will be the sons of God and as sons, have a right to the inheritance. (Romans 8:14-17)

1 John 5:4-5 reads that it is by faith and belief in Christ Jesus that we will be able to overcome the temptations of the world.

Verse 8:

This verse gives a list of those who will not be included with the sons of God. It reads they will be cast into punishment. The place that is mentioned here is the same place where Satan is cast (Revelation 20:10) and where the beast and the false prophet are cast (Revelation 19:20). In addition, "death and hell" are also cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14).

Being cast into the "lake of fire and brimstone" is called the second death or eternal punishment. This is the same term that is used in chapter twenty, verse six.

Verse 9:

John receives an invitation from one of the angels that had poured out the vials on the earth. John is able to identify the angel. The angel invites him to view the bride of the Lamb, the glorified church.

Verse 10:

John's body remains on Patmos but his spirit is taken to a high mountain. This is symbolic of being able to look down and see all things. He sees "holy Jerusalem descending." What was John seeing? What had he been invited to see in the previous verse? The angel said he would show him "the bride, the Lamb's wife" which would refer to the church. Ephesians 5:25-33 refers to the church as a bride. Hebrews 12:22-23 calls it a city. The descending from heaven would show the origin of the church or where it comes from.

Commentators have made various statements concerning what is meant by the phrases "coming down" and the "New Jerusalem." Some of those comments are given below:

Clark:

The Jews thought these were a spiritual temple, a spiritual tabernacle and a spiritual Jerusalem and they could not be destroyed. They also thought they came from God and come down from Heaven.

Verse 9 – Bride – The pure and holy Christian Church.

Verse 10 – Holy Jerusalem

Interpreters Bible:

The New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ. In Galatians 4:26, Paul talked about it being the mother of true Israel. Now this is the new and eternal dwelling place of redeemed Christians. The scene is similar to Ezekiel 40:2.

Living Word:

Heaven and earth together represent the total creation of God (Psalms 101:25, Acts 4:24 and 17:24) the spiritual counterpart was promises and anticipated by Israel (Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22).

John sees a holy city. Chapter 2:12 also talks about the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. The Gospel of John uses the same idea (John 3:13 & 6:33, 38). There as the bread of heaven comes down and gives life.

Here the emphasis is on the origin of the city of God. "Coming down" would describe the heavenly origin of the city.

Johnson:

This shows the glorified and heavenly church, pure and beautiful as a bride prepared for the bridegroom. This chapter presents a vision of the final condition of the redeemed and triumphant church.

Zerr:

Verse 2 – Holy city New Jerusalem means the church that is to be united at the last day in the final marriage of Christ as the bridegroom.

Verse 10 – Descending from heaven – This is appropriate because while the church is composed of men and women its design and origin is from the dwelling place of God.

Barnes:

The whole of chapter 21 and the first five verses of chapter 22 relate to scenes beyond the judgment and are descriptive of the happy and triumphant state of the redeemed church. The happy state is depicted under the image of a beautiful city.

Jerusalem was regarded as the peculiar dwelling place of God and it became the symbol of the heavenly world. The concept of describing the future condition of the righteous under the image of a beautiful city is in keeping with that.

Coming down – It is a representation of the heavenly state under the image of a beautiful city.

Verses 11-23:

These verses describe what John saw when he viewed this Holy City. The city is symbolic and the terms used to describe it are the most magnificent that man could understand.

What does it represent? This would represent the glorified church. The symbols here have been changed from a woman to a city.

I had always thought that this was a description of heaven, but John is invited to see the church, not heaven. This scene happens after the end of time. The old heaven (sky) and earth have been destroyed.

What are we seeing here? Maybe it's both, that is heaven and the redeemed church.

Verse 11:

This starts the description of the holy city, the New Jerusalem. The city (the church) has the glory of God. Verse 23 states, because of the glory of God, there is no need for a sun. The light is represented as a jasper stone. (Jasper is an opaque impure variety of quartz.) There are colors of jasper but the one referred to here is listed as clear and bright. This stone is used as in chapter 4:3 to show the majesty and glory of God.

Verses 12-13:

The city had a wall that was "great and high." This was typical of the time that John was writing. All cities had walls for protection. That is probably what is intended to be shown by this passage. Those who live in this city will be secure.

The city has twelve gates and there are twelve angels to guard those gates. The gates have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The names would be symbolic to represent the Children of God throughout all ages. That is because the New Jerusalem is the dwelling place of the children of God. No one who was not a child of God could come into the city.

As John paints the picture of the city, he pulls together the origin of the church; out of whom it came; who built it etc. It came out of the Children of Israel.

The city has three gates on every side. It can be approached from any direction. Jesus said in Luke 13:29, "And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."

Verse 14:

The apostles become the foundation of the church. They laid the groundwork and their teachings were the basis that others used to build the church and make it grow and prosper. This statement agrees with Paul's teaching in Ephesians 2:20.

Verse 15-16:

The angel takes a reed which he uses as a measuring rod and measures the city, its walls and its gates. John was given a reed to measure the church in chapter eleven, verse one. The measuring stick would be one of heavenly origin.

The city measures 12,000 furlongs or about 1500 miles (8 furlongs to a mile) in each direction. Based on the information given, it would be a cube, the length, breadth and height being equal.

The idea of vastness or capacity may be what John is trying to get across. There will be room for all who are the Children of God. As with most of the other numbers listed, which cannot be taken literally, this probably does not represent an exact size.

Verse 17:

The wall measured 144 cubits (12 x 12). At 18 inches per cubit, this would be 216 feet. This would represent the thickness of the wall, as you couldn't protect a city 1500 miles high with a wall 216 feet high.

The last phrase, "according to the measure of a man" means the angel used the same method to measure and the same standards in measuring as a man would use.

Verse 18:

The wall itself was made of jasper. The jasper is a quartz or diamond. The city was constructed of pure gold which was like clear glass. This would mean that all of the impurities had been removed. It is difficult to imagine a city with a wall 216 feet thick and 1500 miles on each side made from diamonds with the basic building material being pure gold. John is trying to describe, as he does in the rest of this chapter and the first part of the next chapter, this city in the most glorious terms man can understand. The things mentioned would not be literal items, but would represent something even more glorious than we can even imagine.

Verses 19-20:

The foundation of the walls was garnished with precious stones. They are described this way for the same reasons the walls were described. These stones listed were the most precious known to man at that time.

The colors of these stones are: Jasper – red or yellow, Sapphire – azure or sky-blue, Chalcedony – whitish color, Emerald – green, Sardonyx – reddish yellow, Sardius – fiery red, Chrysolyte – golden, Beryl – sea green, Topaz – transparent green, Chrysoprasus – greenish golden, Jacinth – deep purple or reddish blue and Amethyst – violet.

There are some differences among different sources about the exact color of the stones that are listed. It doesn't make a lot of difference about the exact color. The purpose of John's writing was to show that the foundations were adorned with the most beautiful and precious material that man was aware of at that time.

There are some other references to these stones in the Bible. They are:

- Jasper – was included on the high priest's breastplate (Ex 28:20 & 39:13)
- Sapphire – also included on the high priest's breastplate (Ex 28:18)
- Chalcedony – not mentioned elsewhere – is like agate or onyx - named after a town in Asia Minor – Chalcedon
- Emerald – included on the high priest's breastplate (Ex 28:18) also Ezekiel 27:16
- Sardonyx – not mentioned elsewhere – one layer of sard and one of onyx – named after the city of Sardis
- Sardius – included on the high priest's breastplate (Ex 28:17 – also named after the city of Sardis
- Chrysolyte – not mentioned elsewhere – word means golden stone
- Beryl – mentioned in Exodus 28:20 – similar to an emerald except emeralds are purer and richer green
- Topaz – listed as part of the high priest's breastplate – (Ex 28:17)
- Chrysoprasus – not mentioned elsewhere – a variety of quartz
- Jacinth – probably identical to jacinth in Exodus 28:19
- Amethyst – included on the high priest's breastplate – (Ex 28:19)

Verse 21:

The twelve gates for the openings in the walls are each made of a single pearl. This is again figurative language used to describe the grandeur of the city. The same is true with the characterization of the streets being pure gold. This is the same term that was mentioned in verse eighteen to describe the entire city. The gold is again listed as being so pure that it is transparent.

Verse 22:

In the Old Testament, God always had a place where he could be in contact with his people. First it was the Tabernacle and then the Temple. However, now there is no need for a temple because his people are now living where God lives. Therefore, the city has no need for a temple. God and Christ are the temple.

Verse 23:

In the beginning, there was light before there was a sun. (Genesis 1:2 & 1:16) In the end, there will again be light without a sun. The glory of God and Christ will provide the light. There will be no source of light except God and Christ. Their glory will light the city. This agrees with the prophecy of Isaiah in chapter sixty, verse 19.

Verse 24:

The people that are going to live there (New Jerusalem) are those who are saved and have had their robes cleansed in the blood of the Lamb. The question was asked in chapter 7, verses thirteen through fifteen; who are these people? The answer was those who came through the tribulation and remained faithful to Christ. Isaiah 2:2 reads "...all nations shall flow unto it." Also Isaiah 60:3 reveals who will come into the light

The expression, kings paying honor, would show the relationship of the best on earth (kings) to the city listed here. In comparison, earthly kings would bring tribute to this city because the city is so much better.

Verse 25:

The city has gates (verse 21) but they are not shut. It was normal for walled cities to shut their gates at night to keep out the enemies and, in normal times, to leave the gates open during the day. Because the cities' light source (God) is "on" all the time, there is no need to close the gates. Because there is no night there, the gates are never closed.

Verse 26:

This verse is similar to verse 24 but it expands the scope to include everyone, not just kings.

Verse 27:

There is a prerequisite that is required before you can enter the city. Your name must be written in the Lamb's book of life. It also identifies two groups that will not be included. Those are ones who are defiled because of abominations and lies.

This chapter used the number twelve several times. The number twelve usually represents a complete number. Listed below are the times the number twelve is used in this chapter:

Vs. 12	12 gates
	12 angels at the gates
	12 tribes of Israel
Vs. 14	12 foundations
	12 apostles
Vs. 16	12,000 furlongs
Vs. 17	144 cubits (12X12)
Vs. 19-20	12 foundations
	12 precious stones
Vs. 21	12 gates
	12 pearls

REVELATION 22

The first five verses of this chapter continue with the description of the "New Jerusalem." The balance of this chapter is similar to an epilogue in which the visions are over and John gives some final teaching along with some final blessings and curses.

Verse 1:

John sees a river of life that is flowing out of the throne of God and the Lamb. It was mentioned in chapter 21, verse 6 where it was called a fountain of waters. With either name, it represents the source of eternal life. Since the water comes out of the throne, we know that the source of the water is God. The fact that the water was "clear as crystal" would show that it was pure. Also, there is enough volume of water to create a river.

Verse 2:

John also sees the tree of life located here. Where was the last place it was located? In Genesis 2:9 & 3:22 it is recorded that the tree was located in the Garden of Eden. When John was writing to the church at Ephesus, he said, "...to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7)

The tree of life is not just one tree any more but rather a group of trees that provide the same service that the tree provided in the Garden. They are planted on both sides of the street and the river runs down the middle of the street to provide water.

Here there are two sources of life; water from the throne and food from the tree of life. The trees' supply of food is without end as it bears fruit every month. Also the different kinds of fruit would give variety. John again uses the number twelve to show the completeness of the food source.

In addition, the leaves of the tree are good for healing. John is not writing that there will be disease that needs healing, but rather he is trying to show that the life we will have there will be without need, and that it will be a pleasure for anyone who will be living there.

Verse 3:

What was the curse that came on man? The curse was death because of sin. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve sinned because they listened to Satan rather than God. (Genesis, chapter three) Because of that sin, man was condemned to die and in addition, the earth was cursed (Genesis 3:17).

Now, in heaven, there is no curse (death or sin). The reason is that there is no sin in heaven. John again emphasizes that we (the redeemed) will be together with God and Christ. The word "serve" here means to worship.

Verse 4:

This verse shows the closeness that God will have with his redeemed. In the past (here on earth), no one had been permitted to see God's face. (John 1:18) Now, the redeemed will be able to see his face.

A mark in the forehead is very plain for everyone to see. Therefore, this symbol indicates that the followers of God's will be apparent. The mark is symbolic, not literal, so the actions and lives of the redeemed will be what it takes to make the allegiance apparent.

Verse 5:

The information given here is similar to what was provided in chapter 21 verse 23, where it was recorded that God is the light. Also, this verse gives the length of time that is covered, "forever and ever." There is no end to the time that will be spent with God and Christ in heaven.

The visions are ended with these verses.

Verse 6:

In chapter twenty-one, verse five, the one "that sat upon the throne" told John that "these words are true and faithful." Now the angel tells John the very same thing.

The angel also tells John where all this information came from and who was the messenger. The information came from God and he used an angel to deliver the message.

The book started out by revealing that the message that God was sending to John would be "things which must shortly come to pass." (Revelation 1:1) As the book is closing and the message is complete, the angel again tells what has been said are "things which must shortly be done." The events that are listed, by symbols, would begin to happen shortly after John wrote the book. The final conclusion of all the events wouldn't happen until Christ comes again to claim his followers.

Verse 7:

The word "quickly" in this verse is from the same basic Greek word as "shortly" in verse six. In verse six, the word is *tachos* which means prompt, swift and quickness. The word in this verse is *tachus* which means basically the same thing.

The emphasis is put on keeping the teachings of this book. That is what will make you happy or blessed.

Verses 8-9:

You can put more reliance on the testimony of an eye witness to an event or series of events. John testifies that he is an eye witness to the events described in the book.

John had tried to worship the angel that delivered the message about the marriage of the Lamb and those who invited him to the marriage supper. The angel at that time told John, "See thou do it not" because he was also a fellow servant. He told John to "worship God." (Revelation 19:10)

John again tries to worship the angel and again the angel stops him. He stops him by using the same words again, "See thou do it not." The angel again gives the same reason, "I am thy fellow servant." This is followed up with the same direct statement he gave John in the previous passage, "worship God." This is about as direct as you could say it and its good information for us.

Verse 10:

John is given the instruction not to "seal" the information he has received. To "Seal not" would mean that he was to let the prophecy be known. The phrase "the time is at hand" is similar to statements made in verse six and in 1:1. The events that were seen by John and reported were going to start almost immediately.

Verse 11-12:

We are at the end of time. The time for change has past. Those who are sinners will remain so and those who are righteous will also remain so. This is not a time when men can change their destiny. Everybody will be rewarded according to how they have lived their lives.

The fact that Christ is coming quickly is mentioned again. This is the same information that is provided in verse seven.

Verse 13:

This is a similar statement to the one made in 1:8 and 21:6. The earthly drama opened with God and Christ and it will close with God and Christ.

Verse 14:

This is one of the more quoted verses in the Bible. It teaches us how we will be happy or blessed. The happiness comes from doing his (Christ's) commandments. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15) 1 John 2:3-4 reads that no one can "know" Jesus without keeping his "commandments."

Some translations use the phrase “wash their robes” (RSV & NIV) instead of “do his commandments.” This is true in the sense that unless we have our robes cleansed with the blood of the Lamb, we cannot be part of his kingdom. (Ephesians 1:7, Acts 20:28 and 22:16 and Revelation 1:5 and 7:14)

By keeping those commandments, we will get access to the city. With access to the city, we also get access to the tree of life which is life eternal.

Verse 15:

The previous verse taught who would be allowed into the city. Now this verse reveals those who will be not permitted to enter the city. This doesn't mean they are just outside the walls trying to get in, but rather they are the ones who have been cast into the lake of fire. The list given here is similar to those who were cast into the lake of fire in chapter twenty-one, verse eight.

The use of the term “dogs” usually means that the person has no respect for the one who is being discussed. The Jews referred to the Gentiles as “dogs” because they thought they were inferior to themselves. The term can also refer to a man of an impure mind. However, in this instance, the term “dogs” probably means male prostitutes or sodomites, men who had sex with other men (Deuteronomy 23:18). This is the definition given by Thayer in his lexicon.

The word “sorcerer” is not only a magician but is also one who prepares and uses magical remedies. *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary* defines the word as “one who uses drugs, potions, spells and enchantments.”

The word “whoremonger” is defined by Thayer as “a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse.”

The terms “murders, idolaters and liars” are more straight forward in their meaning. Murders are those who kill and those who hate their brother (John 3:15); idolaters are, in addition to those who worship idols, covetous people (Colossians 3:5); and liars are those who tell untruths and those who make idols and contrive false miracles

Verse 16:

In chapter one, verse one, it was announced that the revelation that was to come would be Christ's revelation. Also, it was announced that it would be an angel who would be the one to deliver the message. As the message is being completed, this information is again stated for the reader.

In chapter five, verse five, Christ is called the root of David. Here he is showing that his kingship came through David and his prophecy had been fulfilled.

The morning star is brightest and outshines other stars. Christ is like that. Christ is referred to as the “morning star” in chapter 2, verse 28. Peter also refers to Christ as the “day-star.” (2 Peter 1:19)

Verse 17:

Christ has said in verses seven and twelve of this chapter that he will come quickly. Now we get the reaction of the bride (the church) to that fact. It says come. Come and be a part of those who will be included and those who will live in the city. The invitation goes out to all who want salvation. That is those who hear and those who are athirst. It is available freely to anyone who desires salvation. It is looking forward to something that you desire. All these groups are waiting on the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to return.

Verses 18-19:

These verses are the penalty verses for changing the information that Christ, through the angel and John, have given to us. If we add to the information, we get the plagues and if we subtract from the information, our name is taken out of the book of life.

Moses gave the Children of Israel the same kind of information about changing God’s word in Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32. Paul gave the Galatians similar information in Galatians 1:6-9. If anyone preaches any other gospel, Paul wrote they would be accursed.

Verse 20:

The phrase, “I come quickly” is again used. This is the third time in this chapter (verses 7 and 12). This would have given hope for the future to those who were reading the revelation. They were facing a cruel and severe persecution and the hope of Christ’s quick return would have helped them hold on to their faith. John also adds his statement asking the Lord to come.

Verse 21:

There is a usual closing statement for this book. It is similar to statements that are used in other books.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

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APPENDIX

The attached items are items from different sources of materials which the reader may find interesting and informative. However, there are differences of opinion on the meaning of some of the symbols. Therefore, it will be necessary on the part of the reader to form his own opinion as to the correct meaning. In addition, the writer may also have taken a different meaning than any those that are listed below.

These are presented with the hope that they will enhance your study of this book.

The material attached is:

1. An outline of the Book of Revelation by Albert Barnes and included in his commentary on this book.
2. A table of symbols by B.W. Johnson contained in the introduction to Revelation in *The Peoples New Testament*.
3. An appendix of symbols by B.W. Johnson contained in his book *Vision of the Ages*.
4. Numerology by Ivy Conner from his book, *Revelation Revealed*.
5. A chart outline of the book of Revelation from an unknown source.
6. An article on "The Millennium" by John Lee that appeared in *The Gospel Message* in May of 2003.

REVELATION – BARNES OUTLINE

- I. General Introduction – Chapter 1
 - A. The title and design of the book – 1:1-3
 - B. Dedication to the seven churches of Asia – 1:4-8
 - C. Vision of the Redeemer – 1:9-18
 - D. Commission to write to the seven churches – 1:19-20
- II. Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia – Chapters 2 & 3
 - A. Epistle to the church at Ephesus – 2:1-7
 - B. Epistle to the church at Smyrna – 2:8-11
 - C. Epistle to the church at Pergamos – 2:12-17
 - D. Epistle to the church at Thyatira – 2:18-29
 - E. Epistle to the church at Sardis – 3:1-6
 - F. Epistle to the church at Philadelphia – 3:7-13
 - G. Epistle to the church at Laodicea – 3:14-22
- III. Preparatory Vision – Chapter 4
 - A. The scene laid in heaven – 4:1-2
 - B. The vision of God, of the elders and of the living creatures – 4:3-8
 - C. The worship rendered to God – 4:9-11
- IV. The external relations of the Church – the relation to secular affairs – political changes and revolutions, as bearing on the Church – Chapters 5:1 to 11:18
 - A. The Sealed book, containing the record of these events, in the hand of him that sat on the throne. The Lamb of God only could open it. The joy in heaven that one was found who could open the seals – 5:1-14
 - B. The opening of the Seals
 - 1. The opening of the first seal – 6:1-2
The white horse – Peace, prosperity and triumph fulfilled in the state of the Roman Empire from the death of Domitian, A.D. 96 to the accession of Commodus, A.D. 180
 - 2. The opening of the second seal – 6:3-4
The red horse – Bloodshed, discord and civil strife; fulfilled in the state of the Roman Empire from the death of Commodus, A.D. 193 and onward
 - 3. The opening of the third seal – 6:5-6
The black horse – calamity, distress, want, trouble; fulfilled in the Roman Empire in the scarcity of food that prevailed; the excessive taxation; the special order not to destroy the olive-yards and vineyards; the sources of revenue in the time of Caracalla, A.D. 211, and onward
 - 4. The opening of the fourth seal – 6:7-8
The pale horse – the reign of death, in the form of famine, pestilence, disease; fulfilled in the Roman Empire in the bloodshed, famine and pestilence that prevailed in the time of Decius, Gallus, AEmilianus, Valerian and Gallianus, A.D. 243-268
 - 5. The opening of the fifth seal – 6:9-11

The martyrs – fulfilled in the Roman Empire in the persecutions, particularly in the time of Diocletian, A.D.284-304; the last efforts in the Pagan world to extinguish the Christian name

6. The opening of the sixth seal – 6:12-17

Consternation and alarm as if the world was coming to an end; fulfilled in the Roman Empire in the threatening invasions of the Goths in the neighborhood of the Danube; pressed on by the Huns and producing universal alarm and consternation, A.D. 365 and onwards

Intermediate vision between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals: A view of the persecution of the church, and the glory of the saints in heaven, designed to sustain the mind in the midst of so much gloom, and to furnish the assurance that innumerable multitudes of men would be brought to glory – Chapter 7

- a. The impending storm of wrath that seemed to threaten universal destruction is suspended in order that the servants of God might be sealed – 7:1-3
- b. The sealing process, indicating the preservation of the church in these times of danger and the influences that would designate and save the true people of God in all time to come – 7:4-8
- c. A vision of an immense host before the throne, gathered out of all people and all lands – 7:9-12
- d. A view of the martyrs who would be saved; a view designed to give comfort in the trials that would come upon the people of God in the world – 7:13-14
- e. A view of the happiness of heaven, where all suffering will cease and all tears will be wiped away – 7:15-17

7. The opening of the seventh seal – 8:1 to 11:18

Seven trumpets given to seven angels to sound and the preparatory arrangements for sounding – 8:1-6

(Two series of events referring to the West and the East in the downfall of the Roman Empire)

- a. The West – to the fall of the Western Empire – four trumpets
 - (1) The first trumpet sounded – 8:7
The invasion of the Roman Empire by Alaric, king of the Goths, A.D. 395-410
 - (2) The second trumpet sounded – 8:8-9
The invasion of the Roman Empire by Genseric, king of the Vandals, A.D. 428-468
 - (3) The third trumpet sounded – 8:10-11
The invasion of the Roman Empire by Attila, king of the Huns, the "Scourge of God" A.D. 433-453
 - (4) The fourth trumpet sounded – 8:12-13

- The final conquest of Rome and the Western empire
by Odoacer, king of the Herali, A.D. 476-490
- b. The East – to the fall of the Eastern Empire – two trumpets – 9:
- (5) The fifth trumpet sounded – 9:1-12
The Mahometans or Saracens
- (6) The sixth trumpet sounded – 9:13-19
The Turkish power

The interval between the fall of the Eastern Empire and the sounding of the seventh trumpet – 9:20 to 11:13

- (a) The results of these judgments – 9:20-21
They produce no change in the moral condition of the world; fulfilled in the state of the Papal world after the conquest of Constantinople and before the Reformation
- (a) An angel is seen descending from heaven with emblems of majesty, joy and peace – 10:
Fulfilled in the Reformation;
- [1] The angel with the rainbow on his head and his face like the sun, a proper symbol of the Reformation as a work of peace and accompanied with light and knowledge – 10:1
- [2] The little book in his hand, a symbol of the principal agent in the Reformation – a book – the bible – 10:2
- [3] His crying with a loud voice, symbolical of the Reformation as arresting the attention of nations – 10:3
- [4] The seven thunders – the anathemas of Papal Rome – the thunders of the seven-hilled city – 10:3
- [5] The purpose of John to record what the seven thunders had uttered and the command not to write; the mistake which the reformers were in danger of making by regarding the doctrine of the Papacy as the truth of God – 10:4
- [6] The solemn oath of the angel that the time predicted would not then occur, but would occur in the time when the seventh angel should sound – 10:5-7
Fulfilled in the anticipations of the reformers that the world was about to come to an end and the reign of

Christ about to commence and the assurance of the angel that this would not then occur but that a long and important interval must take place

- [7] The command given to John to go and take the little book from the hand of the angel – 10:8

Fulfilled in the delivery of the Bible again to the church

- [8] The command to eat it and the consequences – sweet in the mouth and bitter to the belly – 10:9-10

The effect of the pure word of God on the soul indicated by the one; the bitter consequences in persecution and opposition that would result from the attempt to make the truth known to the world indicated by the other

- [9] The assurance that he would yet prophesy before many people and nations and tongues and kings – 10:10

Fulfilled in the restoration of preaching in the church founded on the Bible and in the immediate and ultimate influence of the Bible in making gospel known to the world

- (c) The measuring of the holy city – 11:1-2

The determining of what constituted the true church at the time of the reformation

- (d) The two witnesses – 11:3-13

Those who bore faithful testimony to the truth in all the corruptions of the church; their trials and their triumph; fulfilled in the succession of true and sincere Christians whom God raised up from time to time to testify to the truth. They would be persecuted and many of them would be put to death; they would seem to be finally silenced, and would be treated with great indignity, as if their dead bodies should remain unburied; they would however come to life again, that is at the time of the Reformation they would rise and testify against the corruptions of the Papacy, and

would triumph as if they ascended visibly
and gloriously to heaven

- (7) The sounding of the seventh trumpet. The final triumph of the church, and the establishment of the kingdom of God in the overthrow of all its enemies – 11:14-18

This ends the first series of visions; and this expresses in general terms what is drawn out more in detail in the next series of visions, Part V, embracing more particularly the rise and progress of Anti-Christ

V. The Church internally – The rise of Anti-Christ and the effect of that formidable power on the internal history of the Church to the time of the overthrow of that great power and the triumphant establishment of the kingdom of God – 11:19 to 22:15

A. General introduction to this series of visions – 11:19 to 12:17

1. A new vision of the temple of God opened in Heaven – 11:19
2. A representation of the church, under the image of a beautiful woman – 12:1
3. The particular thing designed to be represented – the church about to increase and to fill the world – 12:2
4. The deadly hostility of Satan to the church and his purpose to destroy it, represented by a great red dragon waiting to destroy the man-child – 12:3-4
5. The ultimate safety of the church, represented by the child caught up to heaven – 12:5
6. The fact that the church would be a long time obscure and hidden – represented by the woman fleeing into the wilderness – 12:6
7. A scenic representation of the great contest going on in the universe about the church – represented by a conflict in heaven between Michael, the protector of the church, with his angels and Satan, the great enemy of the church, with his angels – 12:7
8. The ultimate discomfiture of Satan, represented by his being overcome and cast out of heaven – 12:8-9
9. A song of victory in view of this triumph – 12:10-11
10. The fact that Satan would be allowed, for a limited time, to persecute the church – 12:12-13
11. The church in the wilderness – 12:14-17
 - a. The church would be driven into obscurity, like a woman fleeing into a desert – representing the condition of the church while the Papacy should have the ascendancy – 12:14
 - b. The church would still be preserved, though in obscurity – represented by the woman nourished by some unseen power – 12:14
 - c. Satan would still rage against the church – represented by the dragon pouring forth a flood of waters to overwhelm the woman – 12:15

- d. The church would be protected, as if the earth should open its mouth to swallow up the water – representing the interpositions from an unexpected quarter in delivering the church from its perils – 12:16
 - e. The wrath of Satan against the remnant – representing the attempts of the Papacy to cut off individuals when open and general persecution no longer raged – 12:17
- B. The two beasts representing the great persecuting power in the church – 13:
 - 1. The first beast, representing the Roman civil or secular power that sustained the Papacy in its career of persecution – 13:1-10
 - 2. The second beast, representing the Papal ecclesiastical power, giving life to the former and perpetuating its influence on the earth – 13:11-18
- C. A representation designed under a succession of symbols to cheer and sustain the church in its present and prospective trials, with the assurance of its final triumph and the ultimate destruction of all its foes – 14:
 - 1. A vision of the redeemed in heaven, triumphant and rejoicing – 14:1-5
 - 2. The ultimate spread of the gospel through all the world – 14:6-7
 - 3. The fall of Babylon, the great Antichristian power – 14:8
 - 4. The final overthrow of all the upholders of that Antichristian power – 14:9-12
 - 5. The blessed state of those who should die in the Lord in any time, whether of persecution or peace – 14:13
 - 6. The consummation of all things – the final triumph of the church and the overthrow of the wicked – 14:14-20
 - a. The great harvest of the world by the Son of God – the gathering in of the righteous – 14:14-16
 - b. The final overthrow and destruction of the wicked – 14:17-20
- D. Preparation for the final judgment of the beast and his image – 15:
 - 1. A new wonder is seen in heaven; seven angels appear, having the seven last plagues to fill up or complete the wrath of God – 15:1
 - 2. Those who in former times had suffered from persecution by the power represented by the beast, but who, in the midst of trial and temptation, had maintained their faith steadfast, now appear to celebrate with a song of victory the prospective downfall of the great foe – 15:2-4
 - 3. Arrangements made for executing the wrath of God. The temple is open in heaven; seven angels come out having the seven last plagues; one of the four living creatures gives command to them to go and execute the divine purpose, presenting seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God; the temple is forthwith filled with smoke, preventing all access to the mercy seat, and indicating that the divine purpose was inexorable – 15:5-8
- E. The execution of the purpose – 16:
 - 1. The first vial – 16:1-2
 - The first blow struck on the Papacy in the French Revolution
 - 2. The second vial – 16:3
 - The scenes of blood and carnage in that revolution

3. The third vial – 16:4-7
The calamities brought by the French invasions upon the countries where the most bloody persecutions had been waged – the north of Italy
 4. The fourth vial – 16:8-9
The overturning of the governments that sustained the Papal power in the wars consequent on the French Revolution
 5. The fifth vial – 16:10-11
The direct assault on the Papal power; the capture of the pope himself and the temporary entire subjugation of Rome by the French arms
 6. The sixth vial – 16:12-16
The decline of the Turkish power; the rapid extension of the gospel in the East; the rallying of the strength of Paganism, Mahometanism and Romanism – represented by the three frogs that came out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet; the preparation of those powers as if for some great conflict and the decisive struggle between the church and its foes, as if the issue were staked on a single battle – in Armageddon
 7. The seventh vial – 16:17-21
The complete and final overthrow of the Papal power, as if in a tremendous storm of hail, lightning and thunder, accompanied with an earthquake
- F. A particular description of the judgment on this formidable Antichristian power, under a new image of a harlot – 17:
1. Introduction to the episode; the vision of the woman sitting on many waters – 17:1-3
 2. A particular description of the Antichristian power referred to under the image of an abandoned and gaily attired woman – 17:3-6
 3. A particular explanation of what is designed to be represented by the image of the scarlet-colored woman – 17:7-18
 - a. The angel promises to explain it – 17:7
 - b. A symbolical representation of the design of the vision – 17:8-14
 - c. A more literal statement of what is meant – 17:15-18
The whole designed to characterize Papal Rome and to describe the manner of its rise and the means of its ultimate destruction
- G. A description of the effect of that judgment in pouring out the seventh vial on that formidable Antichristian power, under the image of a rich and luxurious city – 18:
1. A vision of an angel coming from heaven – 18:1-3
 2. A warning voice calling on the people of God to come out of the mystical Babylon, and not to partake of her sin and her doom – 18:4-8
 3. Lamentation over her fate
 - a. By kings that had lived delicately with her – 18:9-10

- b. By merchants that had been enriched by her – 18:11-17
 - c. By mariners that had trafficked with her – 18:17-19
 - 4. Rejoicing over her fate – 18:20
 - 5. The final destruction of the mystical Babylon – the papal power-
represented by a millstone cast by an angel into the sea – 18:21-24
- H. A further episodic representation of the effects that would result from the fall
of the powers that opposed the reign of the Son of God and the introduction of
the millennium with an account of the final destruction of these powers – 19:
 - 1. A hymn of the heavenly hosts in view of the destruction of the mystical
Babylon – 19:1-7
 - a. A voice of many people in heaven shouting hallelujah – 19:1-2
 - b. The sounds echoed and repeated as the smoke of her torment
ascends – 19:3
 - c. The four and twenty elders and the four living creatures unite in
the song – 19:4
 - d. A voice heard commanding them to praise God – 19:5
 - e. The mighty shout of hallelujah echoed and repeated from
unnumbered hosts – 19:6-7
 - 2. The marriage of the Lamb as the reason of this increased joy – 19:8-9
 - 3. John overcome with this scene and filled with rapturous joy in view of
the final triumphs of the church, prostrates himself before the angel to
worship him – 19:10
 - 4. The final conquest over the beast and the false prophet – 19:11-21
 - a. A description of the conqueror – the Son of God- as he goes
forth to victory attended by the armies of heaven – 19:11-16
 - b. An angel is seen standing in the sun, calling on all the fowls of
heaven to come to the great feast prepared for them in the
destruction of the enemies of God – 19:17-18
 - c. The final war – 19:19-21

The beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gather
together for the battle; the beast and the false prophet taken
and cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone;
the remainder of the enemies of the church slain; the last
enemy of the church on earth is destroyed and the way is
prepared for its universal triumph
- I. The millennial period and the final judgment – 20:
 - 1. The binding of Satan – 20:1-3
 - 2. The millennium – 20:4-6

Thrones are placed as if there were to be a judgment; the spirit of
the martyrs and saints is revived again as if they were raised from
the dead and freed again on the earth; Satan is confined and the
church enjoys a state of repose and prosperity for the period of a
thousand years
 - 3. The release of Satan for a little time – 20:7-8

After the thousand years are expired he is permitted to go forth again among the nations and to awaken a new form of hostility to Christ and the church

4. The final overthrow, subjugation and punishment of Satan and those opposing host and the final triumph, therefore, of the church – 20:9-10

5. The final judgment of all mankind – 20:11-15

All the dead are raised; the sea gives up its dead; death and Hades give up their dead, and a solemn and just judgment is pronounced on all mankind and the wicked are consigned to the lake of fire

VI. The final condition of the righteous – the state of future blessedness – 21: to 22:5

A. A vision of the new heavens and new earth as the final abode of the righteous – 21:1

B. The blessed future abode represented under the image of a beautiful city descending from heaven – 21:2-4

C. A particular description of the city, as the final abode of the righteous; its general appearance, its walls, its gates, its foundations, its size, its light, its inmates etc – 21:9-27 to 22:1-5

VII. The epilogue or conclusion – 22:6-20

A. A solemn declaration that the things revealed in this book are true – 22:6-7

B. The effect of those revelations on John – 22:8-9

C. A command not to seal up what had been revealed – 22:10

D. The unchangeable condition of the righteous and the wicked in the future state – 22:14-15

E. The blessedness of those who have a right to enter into the Holy City – 22:15

F. Jesus declared himself to be the author of all these revelations – 22:16

G. The free invitations of the gospel to all men – 22:17

H. A solemn injunction not to change anything that had been written in this book – 22:18-19

I. The assurance of the Savior that he would come quickly and the joyous assent of John to this and prayer that it might occur – 22:20

J. The benediction – 22:21

TABLE OF SYMBOLS

By B. W. Johnson
The People's New Testament

- Adultery** – Idolatry or apostasy; especially the latter. As Christ is represented as a bridegroom and the church as a bride, apostasy or unfaithfulness to him, would be spiritual adultery and a false church properly represented as a harlot.
- Angel** – Any agent or messenger of the divine will. The term may be a symbol of any movement of nations, or in history which carries out the divine purposes.
- Ascension to Heaven** – Exaltation in power and glory. Prosperity.
- Babylon** – The city which carried Israel into captivity. Hence, a symbol of any power that renders them captive, whether it be Pagan or Papal Rome.
- Balances** – A symbol of justice, but when used to denote the weighing out of food, a symbol of scarcity.
- Black** – The color of mourning; hence a symbol of calamity and sorrow.
- Black Horse** – The horse was not used as a beast of burden by the ancients, but for purposes of war. Hence it is a symbol of war, and a black horse is a symbol of calamitous war.
- Blood** – A symbol of the carnage of war.
- Beast** – The term rendered "beast" in the Revision means a savage wild beast. Hence it is a symbol of a cruel, tyrannical persecuting power. The term used in chapter 4 rendered beasts in the Common Version, is not the same. Instead of "Four Beasts" that should be rendered "Four Living Creatures."
- Binding** – This symbol means to restrain, to hold; also to deprive of power and render helpless.
- Book** – The record of the divine will. To seal a book is to conceal its meaning, since ancient books were rolls and could not be read when sealed. To open seals is to disclose the meaning. To devour a book is to become master of its contents. The book with seven seals is the book of human destiny, an outline of the great events which connect themselves with the church until its final triumph. The opening of its seals is the revelation of future history.
- Bow** – The bow, a warlike weapon, when held in the hand is a symbol of war.
- Bride** – The spouse of Christ, the Church, the New Jerusalem.
- Bridegroom** – Jesus Christ.
- Candlestick** – A symbol of a church, which should be a light in the world. The seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches. A symbol of any light-giving agency.
- Chain** – A symbol of bondage or affliction. To chain is to render powerless. To bind Satan with a chain is to destroy his power.
- Cloud** – An emblem of power and majesty. To ride upon the clouds is to appear in glory and exaltation.
- Crown** – The symbol of royal majesty. To enjoy exaltation and honor. To receive the crown of life is to receive the honors of eternal life.
- Darkness** – The well known symbol of calamity and affliction.
- Day** – "I have given you a day for a year." One revolution of the earth on its axis is a symbol of its annual revolution in its orbit. "Twelve hundred and sixty days" means as many years.

Death – A symbol of destruction.

Dragon – The old pagan Roman Empire. The dragon was originally a symbol of a monarch. In Revelation it means the persecuting monarchy of Rome.

Earth – The ancient civilized world, which corresponded in John's time with the Roman Empire. Political powers.

Earthquake – Political and moral revolutions and convulsions of society. The shaking of the established order of things. The subversion of states and fortunes.

Eclipse – Or the darkening of heavenly bodies, means the obscuration of glory of kings and potentates of which sun, moon and stars are symbols.

Egypt – The place of spiritual bondage. A condition of sinfulness. Opposition to Christ.

Euphrates – The symbol of the Turkish power. To be "bound by the Euphrates" is to be restrained at that river.

Elders – Probably princes of righteousness.

False Prophets – A false spiritual power which falsely claims divine authority for its teaching.

Fire – Fierce destruction. Never the symbol of a blessing, but of a curse.

Fire from Heaven – Divine destruction; but fire brought down from heaven by the two-horned dragon, means excommunication and anathemas of as false spiritual power.

Flood – Symbol of overpowering. Distress from persecution or any cause.

Forehead – A mark in the forehead means a public profession.

Fornication – Idolatry. See adultery.

Grave – To put into the grave, signifies to consign to oblivion. "Not to suffer dead bodies to be put into the grave," means that they shall be remembered.

Hail – Ravages and destruction.

Hand – A mark in the hand means the manner of life or practice.

Harlot – An idolatrous community. The great Harlot is the apostate church. See adultery.

Heavens and the Earth – The world. The political and religious universe. A new heavens and new earth imply a passing away of the old order of things and the establishment of a new order.

Horse – Used only for warlike purposes by the ancients and hence a symbol of war. The color of the horse indicates the condition of his rider and the state of the war.

Horns – "The great horn is the first king;" Daniel. A symbol of kings, kingdoms or power. Seven horns indicate enormous power.

Incense – The prayers of the saints.

Islands – European states. In the prophets the "isles of the sea" meant the countries in and beyond the Mediterranean; hence, Europe.

Jerusalem – The capital of Judea and the seat of the temple becomes a symbol of the church of Christ. The "holy city" is contrasted with the "great city," Jerusalem with Babylon, or the true with the false church.

Jezebel – An unholy woman is a symbol of an unholy influence in the church.

Key – A symbol of power to deliver or imprison, to open heaven or hell, or to shut them; of power to save or destroy.

King – Supreme power of any kind. A government; a kingdom.

Lamb – The symbol of a sinless, sacrificial offering. The Lamb of God is Christ slain as a lamb from the foundation of the world.

Lion – A symbol of kingly power.

Locusts – The locusts, a devouring pest bred in the deserts of Arabia, are a symbol of devouring Arabian armies. The Arabians under Mohammed.

Manna – The bread of life. The truth of Christ.

Measuring Reed – The standard by which the church is measured. The Word.

Mountain – Some person or power conspicuous among men. Highly elevated. A great prince or government. A burning mountain is a baleful, destructive power.

Moon – A symbol of powers, rulers and great men which are not supreme. A light which shines by reflecting another light.

Merchants – A symbol of those who make a gain of godliness and traffic in religious privileges.

Palm – A symbol of joy or victory.

Pale Horse – An image of desolating war, and a reign of death.

Red Horse – An image of cruel, bloody war, distinguished by awful carnage.

River of Life – Christ is the fountain of life. The abundant, ever flowing life that Christ bestows, is fitly symbolized by a river. The river and tree of life mean essentially the same.

Rod – The symbol of rule. The rod of iron is a symbol of resistless sway.

Scarlet – This color, the color of blood, symbolizes bloody cruelty. A scarlet woman is a persecuting church.

Seven – The perfect number. Completeness.

Stars – Shining lights in the world. Conspicuous men, whether in the church or the state.

Sun – As the great light giver, in one sense a symbol of Christ. Also a supreme ruler. The moon and stars indicate great lights of society, but inferior to the sun.

Sword – A symbol of slaughter. Also of conquest. A sword in the hand indicates conquest by carnal weapons. A sword proceeding from the mouth indicates conquests by the word of God.

Temple of God – The church of which the tabernacle and temple were types. The temple of God in heaven, open, is the abode of God, heaven itself, the church above.

Throne – A symbol of authority

Trumpet – The blast of a trumpet signifies the forward march of armies, carnal or spiritual. Also the proclamation of war or peace.

Time – Time, times and half a time is an annual revolution of the earth, a year, two years, a half year, or three and a half years. "Seven times" passed over Nebuchadnezzar, or seven years.

Wine Press – A symbol of an effusion of blood and of distress.

White – To be clothed in white is to be innocent, pure and to be triumphant.

White Horse – Triumphant and glorious war. See horse.

Whore – Apostate church. See adultery

Winds – Symbol of commotion; of mighty movements. The "Four Winds" are four invasions of the Roman Empire.

Witness – The two witnesses are the two Testaments, for such in the meaning of the latter word.

Woman – The "woman clothed with the sun" is the pure and faithful church. The Great Harlot is the false, faithless, apostate church. The church is often symbolized by a

bride or a woman bearing children. A pure woman represents a faithful church; and adulterous woman, "a harlot," a false apostate church.

TABLE OF SYMBOLS

By B.W. Johnson

Vision of the Ages

- Adultery – Idolatry or apostasy. As Christ is represented as a bridegroom and the Church as his bride, apostasy or unfaithfulness to him would be spiritual adultery and a false church properly represented as a harlot.
- Angel – Any agent or messenger of the divine will. It may be a Celestial spirit or a movement of earthly nations etc.
- Ascension to Heaven – Exaltation in power and glory. Prosperity.
- Babylon – The city that carried God's people into captivity. Rome.
- Balances – A symbol of justice, but when used in connection with food they are a symbol of scarcity.
- Black – The color of mourning or affliction.
- Black Horse – The horse is a symbol of war. A black horse would mean calamitous war.
- Blood – A symbol of carnage and therefore to war.
- Beast – A wild, savage beast indicates a usurping, cruel, tyrannical persecuting power.
- Binding – This symbol implies to deprive of power, to weaken or render helpless.
- Book – To seal a book is to conceal its meaning; to open a book is to reveal its meaning. The book with seven seals is the book of destiny. The opening of the seals is the revelation of future history.
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- Chain – A symbol of bondage or affliction. To chain is to render powerless. To bind Satan with a chain is to destroy his power.
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- Death – A symbol of destruction.
- Dragon – The old pagan Roman Empire. The dragon was originally a symbol of a monarch. In Revelation it means the persecuting monarchy of Rome.
- Earth – The ancient civilized world, which corresponded in John's time with the Roman Empire.
- Earthquake – Political and moral revolutions and convulsions of society. The shaking of the established order of things. The subversion of states and fortunes.
- Eclipse – Or the darkening of heavenly bodies, means the obscuration of the glory of kings and potentates of which sun, moon and stars are symbols.
- Egypt – The place of spiritual bondage. A condition of sinfulness. Opposition to Christ.

Euphrates – They symbol of the Turkish power. To be “bound by the Euphrates” is to be restrained at that river. The “drying up of the Euphrates” is the gradual decay of the Turkish power.

Elders – Probably heavenly princes.

Fire – Fierce destruction. Never the symbol of a blessing, but of a curse.

Fire from Heaven – Divine destruction, but fire brought down from heaven by the two-horned dragon, means excommunications and anathemas of Rome.

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Islands – European states. In the prophets the “isles of the sea” meant the countries in and beyond the Mediterranean; hence, Europe.

Jerusalem – The capital of Judea and the seat of the temple becomes a symbol of the church of Christ. The “holy city” is contrasted with the “great city,” Jerusalem with Babylon or the true with the false church.

King – Supreme power of any kind.

Lamb – The Lamb of God is the Messiah, slain as a lamb from the foundation of the world.

Locusts – Devouring armies, who pillage and ravage a country. The Arabians under Mahomet.

Manna – The bread of life. The truth of Christ.

Mountain – A mountain denotes one highly elevated and conspicuous among men. A great and powerful prince or government. A burning mountain is a destructive conqueror.

Moon – A symbol of rulers or great men, but not supreme.

Merchants – Those who traffic in religious privileges. Those who make merchandise of religion.

Palm – A symbol of joy or victory.

Pale Horse – A symbol of war and of the reign of death.

Red Horse – A symbol of cruel, bloody war, distinguished by awful carnage.

River of Life – Christ is the fountain of life. The abundant, ever flowing life that the Savior bestows is symbolized by the river of life. The tree of life means virtually the same.

Rod – They symbol of rule. A rod of iron is a strong rule.

Scarlet – Bloody cruelty. The color worn by the cardinals of Rome

Stars – Conspicuous men. Shining lights in the world.

Seven – The perfect number.

Sun – A supreme ruler. The moon and stars indicate great lights of society, but inferior to the sun. The moon is also a symbol of the Jewish state and the sun of the Christian.

Sword – A symbol of slaughter or of conquest. A sword proceeding out of the mouth indicates the spiritual conquests of the word of God.

Temple of God – The Church. The temple of God open in heaven, is the abode of God, or heaven itself.

Throne – A symbol of authority

Trumpet – The blast of the trumpet means the forward march of armies, or the proclamation of war or peace.

Time – Time, times and half a time is an annual revolution of the earth, a year, two years, a half year or three and a half years. “Seven Times” passed over Nebuchadnezzar, or seven years.

Wine Press – A symbol of an effusion of blood and of distress.

White – To be clothed in white is to be innocent, pure, and to be triumphant.

White Horse – Triumphant and glorious war. See Horse.

Whore – Apostate church. See Adultery.

Winds – Symbol of commotion; of mighty movements. The “Four Winds” are four invasions of the Roman Empire.

Witnesses – The two witnesses are the two Testaments, for such is the meaning of the latter word.

Woman – A body politic, civil or religious. The “woman clothed with the sun” is a pure and faithful church. The Great Harlot is the false, faithless apostate church.

NUMEROLOGY

By Ivy Connor
Revelation Revealed

Symbology and Numerology – Two basic things a student must learn when studying the book of Revelation. There is no other book as full of figurative and symbolic language and the use of symbolic numbers as is the Revelation.

Numbers – Special numbers meant very important things to the ancient mind. Numbers conveyed powerful images in the minds of the people of John's day. We shall take a brief look at the figurative or symbolic use of numbers in the Bible and especially in Revelation.

One (1) – unity, oneness, or it could represent God

Not used symbolically in the book of Revelation

One is the number of God. "The Lord our God is one God" (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Two (2) – strength, as "two are better than one" (Revelation 11:3-4)

Redoubled courage and/or energy (Deuteronomy 17:6)

Two witnesses – two or three gathered together (Matthew 18:20)

Three (3) – family, perfection, Deity

Love found in the home: mother, father, child (three)

Later came to be a number for perfection

Points to the Divine; Father, Son and Holy Spirit (three, but one, See Matthew 28:19, Revelation 1:4-6. Also Revelation 4:8)

Four (4) – man's universe

Man lives in a world of four: four walls, four directions, four winds. Four became the cosmic number for man's world.

We find four living creatures, four horsemen (of the Apocalypse, for sure)

Along with these are the four corners of the earth, four winds, four horns, four angels

Revelation 4:6, 7:1-2, 9:14, 20:8, 21:16

Seven (7) – complete, mature

Seven – Man's perfect world (four) added to God's Divine number (three) equals seven. The number seven was the most sacred number to the Hebrews, symbolizing God's completion and maturity (perfection).

In the Revelation we find many sevens: seven churches of Asia; seven angels; seven stars; seven golden candlesticks; the seven sealed book (scroll); the seven trumpets; the seven thunders; the seven bowls of wrath; the seven spirits (see Revelation 1:4, 12, 16; 4:5; 5:1, 6; 10:3,4; 12:3; 17:3).

There are, of course, seven days in a complete week

Three and One Half (3 1/2) – Seven cut in half becomes three and one half or times, time and half a time, which will be explained later.

The “broken seven” expresses incompleteness, or that which is imperfect. It stands for indefinite and dissatisfied.

Eight (8) – The number of new beginnings. Also known as the resurrection number.

Children were circumcised on the eighth day (Genesis 17:13; 21:4)

After the flood cleansed the earth, eight souls came from the ark to the beginning of a new world

Jesus rose on the first day of the week (Mark 9:1). The disciples met together eight days later (on the first day of the week, John 20:26)

Other literature attributes the number 888 as the number of Jesus

Ten (10) – Complete as seen from man’s perspective

Man looks at himself and finds five fingers on each hand and five toes on each foot to a total of ten fingers and ten toes. A complete or perfect man (physically) was one who had all his members intact.

In the Bible we have ten times four equals 40: 40 days and nights; 40 years wilderness wandering; 40 days fasting; 40 years for the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon

In Revelation we have ten days; ten horns; 1,000 years; 12,000 people and 144,000 people – all multiples of ten

Remember 70x7 – we should forgive a brother – completely, as long as he asks forgiveness! (Matthew 18:21-22)

Interesting. See Revelation 2:10; 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 12, 16

Twelve (12) – Four (man’s complete world) times three (Divine) equals 12 – God’s number for organized religion of earth.

Think back, the 12 sons of Jacob later became the 12 tribes of Israel, God’s family and kingdom in the Old Testament

Jerusalem has 12 gates into the city, God’s city the place of the Temple

Now, in the New Testament, the church is set forth under Christ and the 12 apostles

In Revelation there are 24 elders about the Throne, a multiple of 12 – organized religion

The city foursquare in Revelation 21: had 12 gates with 12 angels; 12 names of the tribes of Israel; 12 foundations; names of 12 apostles; the city measures 12,000 furlongs cubed; the wall is 144 cubits (12x12); 12 precious stones; and gates of 12 pearls

When we get to chapter 21 this idea will blow your mind (maybe). What a conclusion to look forward to

More twelves in Revelation 22: 12 manner of fruit and 12 months

What do you suppose the twelve is? Again, organized religion. Remember, in the New Testament, that’s Christ’s church! Wait until you hear the rest of the story. See Revelation 7:5-8; 12:1; 21:12, 16; 22:2

Twenty-four (24) – Signifies organized religion (12 doubled). Perhaps combining both Old and New Testament or simply strengthening or underlining this fact, see Rev 4:4

One Thousand (1,000) – Simply man's complete number cubed ($10 \times 10 \times 10$). 1000 is used often in a symbolic way.

Psalms 50:10 teaches us that "every beast of the forest is mine (God's) and the cattle on a thousand hills!"

Deuteronomy 7:9 says: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations."

God talks about the 10,000 things of his Law (Hosea 8:12)

Peter teaches us that a day with the Lord is as 1,000 years and a thousand years as a day (2 Peter 3:8).

The number 1,000 represents completion or all there is. It is an indefinite number, used like the "x" is in an algebraic equation. It is flexible and varies.

Keep in mind we have 1,000 years of living and reigning with Christ and a thousand years binding of Satan. Wait of the rest of the story on this one!

Twelve Thousand (12,000) – So here we have the numbers $12 \times 1,000$ equals 12,000 or 12 (organized religion on earth) times 1,000 (complete) means God's people on earth, all of them.

One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand (144,000) – This is simply figurative language or symbolic terminology for $12 \times 12,000$ or organized religion times completion (Revelation 7:4; 14:1, 3).

One number has been saved until last in our study of symbolism – the number six (6)

Six (6) also Six Hundred and Sixty and Six (666) –

To the Hebrew, the number of man

Man was created on the sixth day (Genesis 1:26-28)

Six also had sinister connotation of evil

Six is so close to seven. It aims at it and almost reaches it, but it falls short. It has victory within sight; but fall short. It looks good; but it is defeated. It has within it the stroke of doom: it looks good; but fails to measure up! Keep this information in mind when we get to Revelation 13:18 and examine the number 666, the mark of the beast.

In studying the book of Revelation let us keep in mind the symbolic value of the numbers, not their numeric value. Much of the unscriptural dispensational teaching has come from the forcing of literal numbers! Look for the symbology in Revelation in order to understand it (Revelation 1:1).

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

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The Millennium

John W. Lee

Several issues ago I discussed the Rapture. Afterwards I received numerous requests to discuss some aspects of that topic in more detail. Accordingly we will discuss the concept of the Millennium this month.

"Millennium" comes from the word "mille", or 1000, and has come to mean a thousand year reign of Christ. The scriptural reference for this concept comes from Revelation 20:4 where it states that the souls of martyred saints "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years". As with the Rapture, we must consider the Millennium to be real and scriptural. The question is not "Is the millennial concept scriptural?"; it is. The key is in understanding what is and is not meant by the thousand year reign referred to in Revelation 20.

Interpretations of the millennial reign can be classified into three camps: Premillennialism, Postmillennialism and Amillennialism.

Premillennialism teaches that Christ will return and reign as an earthly King for a thousand years. "Pre" connotes that Christ will return prior to the thousand year reign.

Postmillennialism teaches that the thousand year reign will precede the return of Christ. "Post" connotes that Christ will return after the thousand year reign is ended.

Amillennialism takes a more spiritual approach to the Millennium, viewing the thousand years referred to in Revelation as symbolic and spiritual rather than literal. This view of the Millennium sees the 1000 year reign referred to in Revelation 20 as a spiritual reign rather than a physical earthly reign.

Looking at Revelation 20:4 we need to notice several things in order to come to grips with the proper interpretation. First of all, note that it is the "souls" of the beheaded saints that will reign with Christ, not their bodies. John's phraseology carries a clear spiritual connotation. Were the Millennium to be a physical rather than spiritual event why would he confine his language to the concept of "souls" rather than that of resurrected bodies?

Secondly, a physical reign of Christ on this earth implies the establishment of a physical kingdom. However, when scriptures refer to the "kingdom" of Christ, it is not in reference to a physical kingdom. This was one of the key mistakes the first century Jews made: Looking for a physical rather than a spiritual kingdom. In fact Christ states that "my kingdom is not of this world" John 18:36. The kingdom of Christ is not a physical place but a ruling place. The kingdom is wherever Christ rules. Therefore, Scripture often refers to heaven as the kingdom, because God rules there. Other times the Church is referred to as the kingdom, for Christ is to rule there. The king-

dom is even referred to as "in our hearts" as we let Christ rule our lives. The kingdom is a spiritual connotation of Kingship and ruling by the Godhead rather than a physical kingdom. Both the Pre and Post millennialist make the same mistake of the first century Jews; they look for a physical kingdom.

Thirdly, the concept of 1000 years, may not carry the literally reference to a 1000 years. Scriptures use this concept to denote long periods of time. Exo. 20:6; Eccl. 7:28; Psa. 50:10 and 2 Peter 3:8 are all examples of this. Reference there is to simply show an extended or long period of time.

Fourthly, Hebrews teaches us that Jesus is now our High Priest. However, Jesus was of the tribe of Judah and earthly High Priests were to be of the tribe of Levi (Numbers 3:10; Heb 7:14). Were Jesus to set foot on earth again his priesthood would contradict God's rules for the Priesthood. Hebrews 8:4 even explicitly states the "if he were on earth he would not be our priest". If Christ should ever stop being our High Priest, then our access to God, as the plan of salvation requires, would be broken.

The millennial reference in Revelation 20 is not depicting an earthly kingdom or earthly, physical reign of Christ, but

***"Both the Pre and Post
millennialist make the same
mistake of the first century Jews;
they look for a physical kingdom."***

rather a period of time in which Christ will spiritually constrain Satan. Satan's constraint during this period is, however, to effect his power over whole nations, not his power to over individuals. Revelation 20: 4 says Satan will not be able to deceive and rule whole nations as he was able to during the Dark Ages. But we should not be fooled into thinking Satan will not continue to be able to fool us as individuals. His destructive power will continue till the end of time when the earth is destroyed and the faithful are taken into the air to be with Christ forevermore.

Scriptures clearly outline the events of Christ's second coming: The earth shall be burned up (2 Peter 3:7-10); the simultaneous resurrection of all mankind, good and bad (John 5:28-29); and the final judgment of all men (2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 20:11-12). Christ's Second coming will see with Him in the clouds and His children going up to be with him (1 Thess. 4:13-18), not with His coming to earth and establishing an earthly kingdom. Christ completed his earthly ministry during His first coming and He said "It is finished". There remains no reason for Christ to set foot on earth again.

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