



“The righteous . . . shall grow  
like a cedar in Lebanon”

Psalm 92:12

Reading Companion  
to the Book of  
**Revelation**

*“So they read in the book in the law of God . . .  
and caused them to understand the reading”*

Nehemiah 8:8

By

Bill Daniels

## **Preface**

The contents of this book were the essence of a course taught in the Bible College at New Germany Baptist Church in 2006. In order to present these materials in a form more readily available for further class use we have kept the class divisions used in the course. Therefore listed separately on the Contents page you will find the starting pages for both the 20 class portions as well as the 22 chapters of Revelation.

An honest study of this book of Revelation is as frightening as it is heartening. Within these stunning, stirring chapters we find greatest hope; of justice upon the wicked, of Christ's return to His kingdom, of redeemed man's complete restoration and joy in God's presence, and of the eternal torment of the lost. A study of Revelation is most effective together with or following a careful study of Daniel's prophecy, for therein is provided the framework for an understanding of all of God's prophecy. May you find the blessing promised in the first and last chapters of this blessed book (Rev. 1:3; 22:7). May you find the One revealed within these pages.

Bill Daniels

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As well as; “Through the Beloved Book of Books  
A Survey of the New Testament”

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“Behold, He cometh  
with clouds;  
and every eye shall see Him,  
and they also  
which pierced Him”

(Revelation 1:7)

## **Class 1 – Introduction**

The Apostle John's book of Revelation is the great New Testament (N.T.) book of prophecy. This final contribution to the Bible is a bit like that ancient image of Moses standing up on Pisgah's height, the wind gently blowing his gray beard, squinting his aged eyes as he looked out over the hazy view of the Promised Land of Canaan from across the Jordan. He could not go there then, but he would some day. Even so the book of Revelation is the last breathtaking gaze off into the misty, distant future from the summit of God's faithful revelation. We can't go there now, but we will some day.

In the book of Genesis, the beginning of God's revelation to man, we find the record of the beginning of heaven and earth and all that are in them, the fall of mankind into the tragedy of sin, and the beginning of God's supreme expression of love in His plan of redemption for fallen man. Throughout the 66 books of the Bible never do we find man recovering himself from his fall to sin (quite the opposite). His evil sinks to its very lowest at the last. Yet God's determined response throughout the Bible record is relentless grace and enduring patience in man's behalf. The whole divine programme leads progressively upward to the

height of the closing chapters of this book of Revelation with mankind fully and finally restored to God at last, dwelling with Him in the new heavens and earth. In this final book of John we experience that magnificent *crescendo* of the heavenly cantata of the ages. Here is the *capstone* of all of God's earth works, the last glorious chapter in God's story of man, sin, justice, judgment, redemption, and restoration.

Throughout the centuries since the day God gave this book of Revelation human hearts have been stirred to encouragement, optimism, and *terror* through a study of it. Believers have believed it, and infidels have ignored it, laughed at it, or attempted to explain away its message. And as a result, all manner of highly imaginative views have sprung up over the years concerning the meaning of this prophecy. But understood properly, this book of prophecy becomes one of the most uplifting and motivational books of the Bible, filling the perceptive reader with hope and courage. For the ultimate victory is already recorded in its pages. The Lord of the book challenges the reader to perceive (13:18; 17:9), implying that an understanding of the details here is kept on a bit of higher shelf. Yet this is the only book of the Bible carrying a conspicuous promise of blessing to all



who read it and hear what is written with understanding and “*keep those things which are written therein*” (1:3). Does it not then become one of the strangest quirks of church history that the one book containing such a striking promise would become the one most avoided (or twisted) by church leaders? I *want* that promised blessing, and I want it for you. Therefore I refuse to drift to the other side of the road and pass this blessed book by on our way to the Celestial City.

## **Background**

We’re told by John in Rev. 1:9 that he “*was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*” History confirms that John was banished to this little windswept island of 35 square kilometres off the coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) by the Roman emperor, Domitian, toward the end of the first century. He banished there for reasons made obvious in 1:9, “*...for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*” John would have been an old man, well into his 90’s at that time. It was a day when prejudice against the Christian religion was on the rise. And it was while there in that place of punishment and dishonour that John received the visions recorded in this crowning book of the Bible.

See how God turns the tragedy of persecution, a barren isle of shame, into a veritable Mont-Aux Sources! God did the same with the tragic unfairness of Joseph's dungeon, transforming that dismal chapter of his life into a springboard to blessing. He did the same through Daniel's captivity in Babylon, putting him there at the head of "*the times of the Gentiles*" to chart the way forward. Out of bitterest persecution in the present came clearest perspective into the future, both for John and for millions of blessed readers ever after.

## **Theme**

John was instructed by the Lord in 1:11 to write down what he was to see and to send the book to seven churches throughout the province of Asia, the heart of the Christian world at that time. What the Apostle was to see becomes evident from the very first words of the book. It was "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*". John's book receives its name from the first word of the book in the Greek, *apokalupsis* (apocalypse), meaning to remove from hiding, to unveil or uncover. This book is the revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ. It is the disclosure of His glory, leading up to the spectacular event of His coming in all of His splendour, with events before and following that crowning event of history. This

central theme of the Messiah's splendour unveiled is confirmed from the first, through the record of John's stunning encounter with Jesus Christ, the Lord of the churches, in the second half of chap. 1. God's entire revelation through the whole Bible holds Christ as its pivotal point throughout, and the book of Revelation is that Christ-centred theme rising to its *very summit!* There are constant allusions to the Old Testament (O.T.) throughout John's Apocalypse, particularly to the book of Daniel. Displayed in this book is the coming together of all things prophesied, all themes converging and conclusively entwining the Old and New Testaments together.

Now consider with me how that phrase in 1:1, "*the Revelation of Jesus Christ*", could also be understood a bit differently. It could refer to the revelation of Jesus Christ in that He is the One revealed, or it could speak of Him as the One revealing. Perhaps a touch of both? Christ revealed to us, or what Christ reveals to us. And this latter sense of revelation, not only *about* Jesus but also *from* Jesus, finds support in 1:1-2. God the Father gave the message to Jesus, who sent it through an angel to John, who wrote and sent it to the seven churches, and through them to all churches of every age. Father to Jesus to angel to John to

churches to world. And don't miss a very important point here. John does not hesitate in 1:2 to refer to this record coming down to us from God the Father, through this chain of both heavenly and human links, as *"the word of God"*.

So we have in these words recorded by John an awesome but accurate, terrible but true accounting of the future, final events leading up to the very pinnacle of world history, the resplendent return of Jesus Christ to His earthly kingdom. The record of it as true and trustworthy as God Himself! Makes me smile!

## **Purpose**

The Apostle John, that aged representative of the worship of Christ, was being persecuted under the ban of human government and banished to a remote island of the Aegean Sea. The setting is representative of the world's attitude toward the true religion of Christ. Thus the stage was set for the book's purpose;

- To encourage saints to perseverance under persecution for *"the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"*, with an eye to the greatest trouble the world will ever experience yet to come at the last (Matt. 24:21).

- To put momentary persecution into an eternal perspective.
- To instil hope;
  - Of the ultimate victory of Christ and all who are His, no matter what we face on earth.
  - Of final deliverance from evil.
  - Of justice upon evil in all of its forms.

Running throughout John's book is such a note of victory! Revelation is a book just brimming with singing saints and gloriously promising announcements to God's own people!!

## **Major Views**

Over the centuries there have arisen many views of interpretation of John's Apocalypse. This development perhaps for many reasons;

- Because of the seemingly strange and disconnected visions and scenes in the book.
- Because of the abundance of figurative language.
- Because of the graphic, and even bizarre details of predicted judgments.

- Because of the differing kinds of human hearts seeking interpretation, and moved by various purposes, some good and some not.
- Because of the Lord's purpose to hide His great truths through symbolism from those who have no eyes to see (Matt. 13:10-16).
- Because of Satan's effort to mar the message through his hatred and fear of the handwriting on the wall written into the pages of this book. For he shall be cast down out of heaven (12:7-13), down into the abyss for 1000 years (20:1-3), and then finally down into the Lake of Fire to "*be tormented day and night for ever and ever*" (20:10). His doom is underscored here like no place else.

Irving Jensen lists four basic schools of interpretation of Revelation;

1. The symbolic view – Does not view Revelation as prophecy (foretelling) of any specific future events at all, but only a teaching of general spiritual truths about suffering and affliction and such through a symbolic style.
2. The preterist view – Acknowledges some reference to future things in the last two chapters, but apart from this it sees the

message of Revelation as fulfilled in the first century.

3. The continuous-historical view – Recognizes that chapters 19-22 speak of Christ's coming and events following, but sees chapters 1-18 as symbolically, prophetically describing the entire time period from Christ's first coming to His return. For example, they commonly equate the mighty angel of chap. 10 with the Reformation. Predictably these folks differ widely among themselves over the details of interpretation.
4. The futurist view – Sees chapters 1-3 as written for the churches of Asia, but with application throughout church history, and then chapters 4-22 as speaking of end time events yet future, basically describing the final 7-year tribulation period before Christ's return. Here is where conservative scholars tend to land. Some folks of this persuasion see the seven churches of the first three chapters as predictive as well, of stages of church history.

Then there are differing views as to the interpretation of the first half of chapter 20, more specifically the 1000-year reign repeatedly

mentioned there;

1. Premillennial view – Future events will be in the order described in chapters 19-20, according to a normal reading. Christ will return to the earth before (*pre*) His earthly rule of an actual 1000-year period.
2. Postmillennial view – Christ will return after (*post*) a “millennium” (not necessarily a literal 1000 years) period of blessedness and prosperity upon the earth. Something like Israel’s kingdom rising to her golden era under David and Solomon.
3. Amillennial view – There will be no (*a*) actual 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. Christ’s reign is spiritual, in heaven and in the hearts of His saints on earth, extending throughout this age, from the time of His death and resurrection to the end. Such folks suppose that God only ever meant for Christ’s promised kingdom to be understood in this spiritualised sense. Yet Christ never discouraged the expectation in His disciples of an actual earthly kingdom.

A normal reading of the book leads to a *futuristic* and *premillennial* viewpoint. We find key verses in 1:7 & 19, clearly pointing out the forward, future



look of John's vision (*"and the things which shall be hereafter"*), and centring around the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ (*"Behold, he cometh"*). Don't miss the very physical references in the summary statement of 1:7 (clouds, eyes), highlighting the literal, physical, actual nature of Christ's return, *"in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11). We read it simply, normally, as we're taught throughout the Bible to do.

## **Basic Outline**

Chap. 1-3 – Letters to the Churches.

Chap. 4-5 – Heavenly Throne Scene.

Chap. 6-7 – Seal Judgments.

Chap. 8-11 – Trumpet Judgments.

Chap. 12-14 – Characters in Conflict.

Chap. 15-16 – Bowl Judgments.

Chap. 17-18 – Babylon's Destruction.

Chap. 19-20 – Christ's Coming & Reign.

Chap. 21-22 – New Heaven & Earth.

## **Highlights**

**Chap. 1-3** – Letters to the Churches.

- 2:1-7 – Ephesus church was commended for their righteous intolerance of evil, but had lost their first love.
- 2:8-11 – Smyrna church was encouraged against fear of persecution. Not that they would be kept from such, only that they were not to fear it.
- 2:12-17 – Pergamos church was commended for their faith and martyrdoms, but was too tolerant of evil.
- 2:18-29 – Thyatira church was commended for their love, service, faith, patience, and works, but was tolerating the presence and even the propagation of evil (vs. 20).
- 3:1-6 – Sardis church only had a few yet undefiled, mostly dead, living only a name. So it was from a bit of evil among the good at Pergamos to a bit of good among the evil at Sardis! From *intolerance* of evil (Ephesus), to tolerance (Pergamos), to tolerating its promotion (Thyatira), to evil tolerating the presence of some good (Sardis)!
- 3:7-13 – Philadelphia church with a little strength had kept the word and had not denied God's name.

- 3:14-22 – Laodicean church would be spewed out of Christ’s mouth as useless. Things both hot and cold were good for something, but things lukewarm were good for nothing.

### **Chap. 4-5** – Heavenly Throne Scene.

- 4:1 – From the Lord’s command to “*Come up hither*” the word “*church*” suddenly goes conspicuously missing. This is in sharp contrast to the *20 times* the word “*church*” is found in the first three chapters. It’s a picture of the focus of God’s attention upon the church in this current age, and then the removal or Rapture of the church before God’s judgments fall on the earth.
- Chap. 5 – The Lamb alone is worthy to open the seals of the book.

### **Chap. 6-7** – Seal Judgments.

- 6:1-8 – The four horsemen are a picture of antichrist; the white horse depicts Antichrist’s rise in peace, the red horse, his about-face at the midpoint of 7-year Tribulation with peace quite gone, the black horse, the resulting worldwide devastation by famine, the pale horse, death to ¼ of the earth’s population, especially God’s people.

- 6:9-11 – Martyrdom of saints will characterize Antichrist’s rule.
- Chap. 7 – Two multitudes; 144,000 Jewish sealed servants (evangelists?) and a (resulting?) great multitude redeemed out of tribulation.

### **Chap. 8-11** – Trumpet Judgments.

- Chap. 8 – Destruction by thirds (“*third*” found 11 times).
- 9:1-12 – Fifth trumpet (first woe) – Demonic creatures from the pit.
- 11:1-14 – Two witnesses – Marking the midpoint of the 7-year tribulation, with the time remaining greatly emphasized (vs. 2-3, 9, 11).

### **Chap. 12-14** – Characters in Conflict.

- Chap. 12 – Conflict on earth and in heaven, showing the heavenly causes for the earthly conflicts.
- Chap. 13 – Rise of antichrist and false prophet, characterized by blasphemy, persecution of saints, demand for universal worship, and “*great*” miraculous powers

granted to him.

- 14:14-20 – A glimpse of the approaching horror of human harvest at Armageddon.

### **Chap. 15-16** – Bowl Judgments.

- Chap. 16 – A chapter of great things (*mega* found 11 times in the Greek).

### **Chap. 17-18** – Babylon's Destruction.

- Chap. 17 - Religious Babylon falls.
- Chap. 18 – Commercial Babylon falls.

### **Chap. 19-20** – Christ's Coming & Reign.

- Chap. 19 – Two suppers – The marriage supper of the Lamb (vs. 9) and the great supper of God (vs. 17-18).
- 20:1-7 – The 1000-year earthly reign of Christ. The duration repeated *6 times* so even amillennialists might not miss it.

### **Chap. 21-22** – New Heaven & Earth.

*Breath-taking prospect!!!*

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## Think About It

Consider God's sovereign control of world history, so strongly underscored in this book.

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Consider how very many things come in sevens in this book;

Churches, spirits, golden candlesticks, stars, angels, lamps seals, horns, eyes, trumpets, thunders, thousands slain, heads, last plagues, golden vials, mountains and kings.

The word "*seven*" is found *40 times* in the book. The most prominent number.

.....

Consider what will flee from the hearts of all, as a dream when one wakes, in the moment Jesus Christ splits the skies at His actual, physical return;

- Every thought that Christ is less than magnificent.
- Every hope of in any way deceiving Him.
- Every doubt of His reality.
- Every hope of escape.
- Every sneering scorn, and all laughter on the

lips of pseudo-intellectual scoffers and heretics.

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Consider how John's Patmos experience is perhaps that to which Christ was referring in His comment to Peter in Jn. 20:21-23. At the end of his long life, before he left this world for the next, John "saw" the return of Jesus Christ. Compare Christ's comment in Matt. 16:28, speaking of His coming transfiguration (Matt. 17:1ff), in which some would see Him "*coming in His kingdom*". Not that they would still be living in the day of that great event, but that they would see the prelude of it.

“Write the things  
which thou hast seen,  
and the things which are,  
and the things which  
shall be hereafter”

(Revelation 1:19)



## Class 2 – Revelation 1

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*Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:*

*Rev 1:2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.*

---

### Chapter 1

#### 1:1-8 – Introduction

Vs. 1 – This is the book of “*the Revelation of Jesus Christ*”. Though its content has much to do with *what* will come, its primary concern is with *who* will come, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s the display of who He really is, His revealing in His return.

Vs. 2 – As we considered earlier, we find in these first two verses the source and sequence of this book’s presentation to us; God the Father → God the Son → “*his angel*” → John → churches → world. And without hesitation John described what was written as “*the word of God*”.

*Rev 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear  
the words of this prophecy, and keep those things  
which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

*Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia:  
Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is,  
and which was, and which is to come; and from the  
seven Spirits which are before his throne;*

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Vs. 3 – May we ever be seekers of this promise as we pursue an understanding of this book.

*“For the time is at hand”* – Compare vs. 1, *“things which must shortly come to pass”*. We are constantly reminded in God’s Word that the end of all things is near. We are ever to live with an expectant hope. And to be sure, the brevity of our life and of this current age will be so apparent from the perspective of eternity.

Vs. 4-8 – John brings greeting from the triune God.

Vs. 4 – The *“Him”* of this verse appears to be God the Father, He who is and was and *“is to come”*. He is the eternal, unchangeable One who calls Himself *“I AM THAT I AM”* (Ex. 3:14), for He is eternally self-existent.

*“The seven Spirits which are before His throne”* –

*Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*  
*Rev 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

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Compare 4:5. This is a description of the Holy Spirit in the fullness of His glory and power.

Vs. 5-8 – Notice from the start here the great emphasis upon Jesus Christ. With brief greetings from Father and Spirit, the show is now largely handed over to God the Son. Jesus had said of the Spirit, *“He shall glorify Me”* (Jn. 16:14), and so the Spirit does here in bringing us this word from God. With the briefest mention of Himself, the Spirit quickly turns the focus upon Jesus. Every ministry truly guided by God’s Spirit will be centred the same, squarely upon exalting Jesus Christ. Concerning that exalted Son we’re taught;

- Who He is – *“The faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth”* (vs. 5). He spoke as the *“faithful witness”*. He arose as *“the first begotten of the dead”*. He rules as *“prince of the kings of the earth”*.

*Rev 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

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- What He did – He “*loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests*” (vs. 5-6). He loves as that One who “*washed us from our sins in His own blood*”. He appoints “*us kings and priests unto God and His Father*”.
- Of what He is worthy – “*Glory and dominion forever and ever*” (vs. 6)!
- What He will do – “*Behold, He cometh*” (vs. 7).

Vs. 7 – Here is the key verse of the book and the crowning summit of things future. This is the summary statement, with detailed expansion coming right up. Underscored at the outset is the absolute certainty of Christ’s coming, and that His return will touch all mankind. Again, don’t miss the very physical, earthly references here (clouds, eyes, wailing), highlighting the literal, physical, actual nature of His return. The reference here is to Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming after the tribulation, not to the Rapture of the church. And in His return Jesus will

*Rev 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

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not come as He did the first time, never breaking “*a bruised reed*” or quenching “*a smoking flax*” (Matt. 12:20; Isa. 42:3). Rather here is Christ as the all-powerful One.

“*They also which pierced Him*” – Obviously refers to the Jewish nation (Zech. 12:10).

Vs. 8 – “*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord*”. “*Alpha and Omega*” are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It’s a figure of speech meaning the beginning and the end. Compare “*Author and Finisher*” in Heb. 12:2. Jesus is the One who can and will *finish* what He began. In fact, He begins and ends this final revelation to John with the same statement (22:13).

“*Which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*” – Jesus, as God the Father, is the “*I Am*”, the eternally self-existing One. There is never a time through all eternity past or future when He is not (Mic. 5:2, “*from everlasting*”). “*The Almighty*” is a great title of God so common in this book of

*Rev 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

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Revelation; of God on His throne (4:8), of the “*Lord God Almighty*” (11:17), of “*the Lord God Omnipotent*” who reigns (19:6). Ten times this name of God is found in the N.T., nine of them here in Revelation. The name describes He who holds sway over all things, Ruler of all. It’s a name comparable to “*the Most High God*” whom Nebuchadnezzar met in Dan. 3-4 and will never forget. Yet, amazingly, it is by this divine title that Jesus is now revealed here. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is Jesus shown for who He really is. The way He shall be seen when He comes the 2<sup>nd</sup> time. All will see Him in that glorious day, and none will be the least mistaken then as to who He is, *Almighty Creator of heaven and earth!*

### **1:9-20** – Vision of Jesus Christ

Vs. 9 – John was forced to an island of exile, a “*companion in tribulation*” there to all who have ever suffered for Christ. But though evil men might force and limit the outward circumstances of that

*Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard  
behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,*

---

old saint, they could not touch his spirit. Inwardly, *“in the spirit”*, he soared to the heavens.

No earthly situation is ever so bad that we cannot see our God in it and enter boldly into His very presence there and walk with Him through it. Never do we see Jonah's spirit soar higher in sweeter communion with his God than when in the belly of a fish at *“the bottoms of the mountains”* (Jon. 2). The worst of times can be the best of times, if we are willing to meet God there.

Vs. 10 – John was *“in the spirit on the Lord's day”*. He was in a heightened spiritual state. As when Peter *“fell into a trance”* that God might show him a vision of Gentile inclusion in His church (Acts 10:10). The phrase *“on the Lord's day”* employs an uncommon word in the Greek behind the English, indicating a day especially relating to the Lord. Some believe *“the Lord's day”* a reference to Sunday. More likely the point is that John was transported in the Spirit to *the day of the Lord*, that day so prominently featuring in the prophets, that day when the Lord holds sway and shows Himself.

Just as Peter, James, and John experienced “*the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*” at Christ’s transfiguration (Matt. 16:28ff), even so this was a preview, like stepping into a time machine and put there at the end. There John heard “*a great voice, as a trumpet*”. Compare 4:1, where it seems he heard the same voice speaking in the same manner. The clear, loud, and un mistakeable sound of the trumpet was often used for announcements and commands in the O.T. (Lev. 25:9; Num. 10:1-10; Zech. 9:14). In the N.T. we often see a trumpet involved in the Lord’s coming (Matt. 24:31; I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16). Again, this is the voice of Jesus in His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. In His 1<sup>st</sup> coming His voice was gentler, bringing the offer of salvation. In His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming He comes with authority, announcing God’s judgment. Now He stands at the door of human hearts, shut out and knocking (3:20). Then He breaks down every closed door. His word, as a sharp sword, will then overwhelm every foe (vs. 16; 19:15; Heb. 4:12).

Further on the voice of Jesus, we read in vs. 15, “*and His voice as the sound of many waters*”. Booming like continual thunder, alarmingly loud and majestic, like the pounding of the powerful ocean waves on the shores of Patmos. It’s a voice of terribleness to the lost, expressing God’s thundering



*Rev 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.*

---

authority before whom all human authority withers. Compare the power in Christ's words when all fell backward in the garden with His simple statement, "*I am He*" (Jn. 18:5-6). Compare the power in the words of He who spoke creation into existence. Note elsewhere the sound of such power in God and His messengers (Ezek. 1:24; 43:2; Dan. 10:6; Rev. 14:2; 19:6).

Three things are said of Christ's voice here;

- "*A great voice, as a trumpet*" (vs. 10) – Speaking of authoritative announcement.
- "*His voice as the sound of many waters*" (vs. 15) – Speaking of booming majesty.
- "*Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword*" (vs. 16) – Expressing the overwhelming, inescapable destruction of His words in judgment at His return (19:15).

Vs. 11 – John was commanded to write all he saw

*Rev 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.  
And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;  
Rev 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one  
like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment  
down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a  
golden girdle.*

---

in a book and send to seven churches in Asia, starting in Ephesus, the centre of his labours in his latter years.

Vs. 12 – Upon turning toward the voice he had heard, John saw “*seven golden candlesticks*”. We discover in vs. 20 that these candlesticks or lamps represent the seven churches mentioned in vs. 11.

Vs. 13 – John then saw Jesus, “*the Son of Man*”, standing “*in the midst of the seven candlesticks*”. Jesus is there still, tending His churches as a vine-keeper moves about his vineyard carefully tending his vines.

Don’t miss the comparison with scenes in Daniel. Here, as in Dan. 7:13, we meet the “*Son of Man*”, that name Jesus most commonly used of Himself, describing His relation to us (even as His name, “Son of God”, expresses His relation to God). The clothing and appearance here is very similar to the

glorious One seen in Dan. 10. Compare the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9) clothed in garments “*white as snow*”.

Jesus wears the clothing of a priest here. For He is indeed our “*Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens*” (Heb.4:14). He is the “*better*” priest of that “*better*” priesthood, for He ever lives to make intercession, showing and offering the power of an endless life. One of the responsibilities of the high priest was to keep the seven-branched golden candelabra trimmed, filled, and burning through the night (Lev. 24:1-4). The candelabra in the holy place gave light only through the night, as enough light was admitted in by day through the upper windows of the holy place. The priest filled the lamp bowls at evening with holy oil, trimmed and lit them to burn until they burned out in the morning. In the symbolism here the lamps are the churches, with the unadulterated oil depicting the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence. The remnant of God’s people in every age are set as the light-bearers, shining forth the truth of God to a world dark with perversion, until the day dawns and our shining is needed no more in the excelling glory of the Son’s presence in His coming.

Now see here in vs. 13 those lamps tended

*Rev 1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as  
white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;*

---

personally by our Great High Priest, as we see Him busy with in the next two chapters. He judges each church in righteousness as to their responsibility to burn brightly. He trims for greater brightness where trimming is necessary, just as the Husbandman prunes his vines that greater fruit might result (Jn. 15). He fills to the brim and empowers with the holy oil of the Spirit. He lights the fire, enflaming our hearts in His cause to shine His truth in the darkness. And we would be wise to join Him in this great work. We must do the same toward each other, as our brother's keeper, helping to trim away the old grave clothes of our pre-salvation life, helping to wash the saints' feet, helping each other to burn our very brightest for Him.

Vs. 14 – *“His hairs were white like wool”* – Compare again the *“Ancient of Days”* in Dan. 7:9. This presents Jesus in His pure righteousness, venerable dignity, wisdom of countless years, perfect maturity, discernment, and understanding. As the dignity of an old wise one who has seen every aspect of life, has observed every cause and effect,

and knows where every path chosen now will eventually take us. Even that O.T. name “*Ancient of Days*” speaks of the same. It is the superlative of the Hebrew idiom “full of days”. “Fullest of days” is the God of eternity, both Father and Son, seeing and knowing *all!*

*“And His eyes were as a flame of fire”* – Eyes represent awareness and understanding. In tracing the eyes of the Lord through the Bible, we see a picture of the wholly penetrating gaze of His omniscience;

- Everywhere – *“The eyes of the LORD are in every place”* (Prov. 15:3).
- Everyone – *“Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men”* (Jer. 32:19).
- Everything – *“For He knoweth the secrets of the heart”* (Ps. 44:21).

We see the same in Jesus during the days of His earthly ministry, His awareness penetrating to the secret thoughts of men (Matt. 9:4; 12:25; Mk. 2:8; Lk. 6:8; 7:39-40; Jn. 16:19). As well, with each of the churches in chapters 2-3 the Lord begins with His acute awareness of them, *“I know thy works”*. For *“nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be*

*Rev 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they  
burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of  
many waters.*

---

*known and come abroad” (Lk. 8:17).*

The flame in Christ’s eyes speaks of fiery judgment, for we are introduced here to a judgment scene. First judgment upon the churches of Asia, representing the church throughout this age. Then judgment upon the world (19:12). Compare the great focus upon fiery flames from God’s throne in Dan. 7:9-10. Here is a visual commentary on Christ’s penetrating awareness, and piercing, consuming, enflamed indignation toward all evil in that day of His coming, all things open and exposed before *“Him with whom we have to do”*. Compare the coming refiner’s fire of Mal. 3:1-5 and I Cor. 3:11-15. The only right response for man is to *turn now* to Him with the heart of the psalmist, saying, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”* (Ps. 139:23-24). *“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me: try my reins and my heart”* (Ps. 26:2).

Vs. 15 – *“His feet like unto fine brass, as if they*

*Rev 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*

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*burned in a furnace*” – Brass is often used in the Bible as a symbol of things strong or lasting (Job 40:18; 41:27; Ps. 107:16; Jer. 1:18; 15:20). It’s also used as a picture of hard-heartedness, obstinacy, and insensibility (Isa. 48:4; Jer. 6:28; Ezek. 22:18). With Christ’s feet of brass He will tread “*the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*” (19:15; 14:19-20; Isa. 63:1ff). God meets man’s brazen sinfulness with brass in judgment, ultimately returning brass for brass, attitude for attitude. In contrast, Jesus touched John, His own dear one, with His hand (vs. 17). The Lord’s attitude toward all sin is *hard* and unbending like brass. He is by no means soft on sin. Even in the O.T. tabernacle all points of contact with sinful man were made of brass (altar of burnt offering, grate, altar vessels, pots, and censers). Jesus Christ is revealed standing in the midst of the churches and dealing with them and the world on the basis of divine and righteous judgment.

Vs. 16 – “*His countenance was as the sun shineth in*

*Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.  
And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me,  
Fear not; I am the first and the last:*

---

*his strength*” – At last John looks fully upon the glory of Christ’s face. “*Countenance*” refers to the area of the face. In attempting to describe what he saw there he makes comparison to the brightest thing in our earthly experience, the sun shining in its full strength. Absolute, unclouded brilliance is the image of God’s glory. It is the brilliance that blinded Paul on the Damascus road. “*Above the brightness of the sun*” is the way Paul described that light (Acts 26:13). John saw the same in Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, where “*His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light*” (Matt. 17:2). Here is He who is;

- The “*day star*” (II Pet. 1:19).
- The “*true Light that lighteth every man coming into the world*” (Jn. 1).
- “*The bright and morning star*” (Rev. 22:16).
- The “*Sun of Righteousness*” (Mal. 4:2).

Vs. 17 – Such a vision of Christ in His stunning brilliance filled John with such terror that there



*Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold,  
I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of  
hell and of death.*

---

simply was no strength in him. All within him crumpled and withered as if he were dead. Of all men John was closest to Jesus, that “*disciple whom Jesus loved*”. Yet look well to John’s reaction here. This is no friendly handshake and shoulder clap. Jesus is no chummy buddy. *He is God!* John’s response is further proof of Christ’s deity. Men respond so only to *God* (Isa. 6; Ezek. 1:28).

Then the tender touch of the Lord, and words of comfort (as Daniel in Dan. 10). The unsaved receive no such word of encouragement when facing Christ their Judge at the last. *Dreadful thought!*

Vs. 18 – Jesus Christ conquered death in His resurrection, and thus holds the keys of death and hell. He is Lord of death and the place of the dead. He is the One with ultimate power over man’s greatest enemy. No man dies without Christ’s divine permission. No man finds eternal life without the same. If you have not received eternal life from Jesus Christ, then you *do not have it at all!!* Such can be found in no one but Him.

*Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;*

*Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

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Vs. 19 – Here in this verse is the basic outline of the book of Revelation;

- *“The things which thou hast seen”* John was already recording in this 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.
- *“The things which are”* relate to the state of the seven churches at that time (chap. 2-3).
- *“The things which shall be hereafter”* the bulk of the book relates, from chap. 5 onward.

Vs. 20 – The seven stars in Christ’s right hand *“are the angels of the seven churches”*. He holds them protectively in His right hand, a place of honour. The term *“angels”* literally means “messengers”. These angels in Christ’s hand could refer to guardian angels over each church, or they could perhaps refer to human “messengers” of the churches. The word translated “angel” here is generally used in the N.T. to refer to actual angels,

though the word can be used of human messengers (Matt. 11:10; Lk. 9:52). As well, we do see angels acting in guardian roles of some sort over children (Matt. 18:10), over believers (Heb. 1:13-14), over the nation of Israel (Dan. 12:1), and over other nations of earth (Dan. 10:13, 20). But if these are actual angels, could Jesus address letters of concern “*unto the angel of the church*” (2:1, 8, 12, 18, etc.)? Could Christ express concern with the *failings* of a church’s guardian angel, when God’s good angels always keep His words in every way (Ps. 103:20-21)? Could perfect spirit beings be called upon to repent? These “*angels*” must rather be human messengers of the churches, the pastors or representatives of the individual churches. And my heart skips a beat when I look again to those stars in Christ’s hand! In His *right* hand! *Held in a place of honour!* There is no greater occupation for a man on earth than to be a spiritual leader of Christ’s church. It is such a place of privilege, responsibility, opportunity, commendation, reproof, reward, chastisement! And even though these leaders and churches had diminished the Lord’s place in their lives, He held them still in His right hand. **GRACE!!**

*“If we deny Him, yet He abides faithful”.*

And note the close association between leader and

church. If the pastor alone had left his first love (2:4), he could simply be removed. But Christ seems to speak to the whole church of their lampstand potentially removed (2:5). Leader and church are inseparably linked! The church rises and falls with leadership. It will seldom rise above its leadership. With what greatest care you should be praying for your pastor!

## **Class 3 – Revelation 2:1-17**

We find in these next two chapters of Revelation personal letters dictated by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to seven individual churches then existing in what was then the province of Asia (western Turkey). In chap. 2 we find 4 letters, to the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. In chap. 3 we find 3 more letters, to the churches of Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The order of the presentation of the letters is geographical, scribing something of an arch, north from Ephesus, then east and then south. These are not normal letters. There is none of the customary introduction that we see in other N.T. letters. They all follow a similar pattern;

- The church is named.
- The author, Jesus Christ, is described. Descriptions vary each time but express aspects of the descriptive vision of chap. 1. In each case there is perhaps some agreement between the aspect of Jesus presented and the condition of the church addressed or what Jesus promises to do; the One tending the lamps threatens to take away their lamp, or the One with the sharp sword threatens to use it.

- A statement of the church's condition. Three churches have both good and bad, Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira. Two have only good, Smyrna and Philadelphia. Two have only bad, Sardis and Laodicea.
- An exhortation to do something.
- A call to hear.
- A promise to the overcomers or true believers among them.

Questions arise. What does the message to these churches mean for today? Why were these churches chosen out of the many then existing? Obviously God would not have included these brief letters in His Word if there were no benefits for us today. Indeed He has assured us in 1:3 that there is treasure to be found in these pages. It seems these churches were chosen by the Lord in order to express His counsel to His church in typical situations arising in essence again and again throughout this age. These letters were aimed, as the larger epistles of the N.T., at an immediate audience, yet they were meant as well for the wider hearing and instruction of the church through the age.

Some hold to a prophetic view of these seven

churches. Such interpreters see in each church circumstance a progression through the various eras of church history, from the 1<sup>st</sup> century until Christ's return. They might suggest that the situation at the first named church, the church at Ephesus, depicts the nature of the church as a whole in the world during John's day and into the following decades. The church at Smyrna then perhaps describes the character of Christ's church on earth through the next couple of centuries, marked by persecution. It might be suggested that the church at Pergamos depicts the nature of the church in the era of Constantine (about 300-600 A.D.). Thyatira, the founding and prominence of Catholicism (600-1500 A.D.). Sardis, the Reformation era (15-1800's). Philadelphia, the missionary era of the mid 1800's to mid 1900's. Laodicea, the modern rise of neo-evangelicalism from the mid 1900's, with right doctrine but wrong behaviour and careless associations. Such a view is neat and fanciful, but unsupportable. The Bible gives no clear authorization for such a view, neither do the details really fit with church history. And as well, such a view destroys the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ. In our study we will approach these letters just as we would any other N.T. epistle, recognizing a local, immediate message to the church addressed, yet placed here in the

*Rev 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write;  
These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in  
his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven  
golden candlesticks;*

---

Book of books that we might glean what God would have for us as well.

These are messages of reproof and reassurance from the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour and Guardian of the churches. He who is loving yet holy, watchful and concerned. He who walks among the churches, tending them as a shepherd his sheep, watching over them with the keenest interest and most penetrating awareness. He who loves us enough to wash us from our sins in His own blood.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2:1-7** – *“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus”*

The city of Ephesus had seen an abundance of labour through God’s men and women over the decades. Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla, Paul, Timothy, and John all lived, loved, and laboured there. Over 40 years before the writing of this letter the Apostle Paul had laboured for about 3 years in



*Rev 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy  
patience, and how thou canst not bear them which  
are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are  
apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:  
Rev 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my  
name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*

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and out of Ephesus (Acts 19), with the result that  
*“all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the  
Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks”* (Acts 19:10).

Vs. 2-3 – The Lord knew these saints at Ephesus for their patient, persevering labours for Him. In their favour was their righteous hatred of both evil and error. They were a gloriously intolerant, uncompromising church. They carefully examined folks and were not readily given to believing their claims, in an effort to keep Christ’s church pure. They were more concerned for purity than personal feelings, more intent upon the Lord’s happiness than happy people. They joined the Lord in His hatred of *“the deeds of the Nicolaitans”* (vs. 6). Nobody knows for sure who these “Nicolaitans” were or what they believed or practiced. The point here is that they were false teachers whose deeds were appropriately hated by the believers at Ephesus. These were saints valiant for truth, right, and purity, who were hard on sin and sinners. And for

this the Lord of the churches gave His “Well Done” (*“this thou hast”*). Hear His praise, oh generation so given to compromise in moral purity and truth! In the churches of our day there is more a lurching after the world than a righteous pitching of it. We want to dress like prostitutes and sing like pagans in the pews. We want to hold hands with any and every soul who says, “Oh I’m a Christian too”, rather than examining whether they really show the truth of it, the fruit of it, before we join with them. We try nothing, test no one, proclaiming God’s love quite tolerant of most every religious perversion. We play down doctrinal purity for the sake of unity and tolerance. We bow to the demand of conventional wisdom that we come down from our pedestal of *“the pillar and ground of the truth”* on which the church is meant to be propped, that we rather join them in their drift from the sure moorings of God’s Word. As the lion looks up to the monkey in the tree, and with toothy grin says, “Come on down here. We’re both creatures of God’s making. Let’s be one”. With a far different meaning of oneness than his words might imply. As the louse looks up to the bird, and says, “Come down here. We’re meant for close fellowship”. To the bird’s detriment. So the world speaks to every believer and church standing strong and true. God’s wisdom on the other hand insists that it’s

*Rev 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee,  
because thou hast left thy first love.*

*Rev 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art  
fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I  
will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy  
candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

---

wise to be loving enough to hold firm to sound doctrine for the eternal good of mankind. Even if that makes “Christians” angry. Even if that means division through intolerance of views that do not lead to the glory of God or the eternal well being of men. We pitch doctrine instead of holding it dear and pitching those who won’t. We care little about purity of life and beliefs before the Lord and give ourselves to comfort and popularity before the world. Don’t miss the Lord’s commendation here! *“He that walketh with wise men will be wise: but the companion of fools shall be destroyed”* (Prov. 13:20).

Vs. 4 – Backslidden in love. Though these saints were valiant for truth and purity, yet they had lost their first love, and in this the Lord was calling them back.

Vs. 5 – How severe the warning! The Lord threatens to remove the light of their testimony from earth. The Lord of compassion speaks praise where praise

*Rev 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

*Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

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is due. He is not ambiguous in this, leaving no uncertainty about what pleased Him. But as well, He is firm and forthright in reproof where there is fault. He is far from vague in this either. Many in our modern world promote the powers of positive affirmation, teaching the need to lavishly pour on the syrup of positive praise in dealing with children, and to back off on the more negative side of reproofs and punishments. Such an approach is like sandpaper without the sand, devoid of any real shaping power. Tact and tolerance to the point of tepidity. In Jesus we see the proper balance of forceful shaping and genuine compassion. God means business and is not to be taken lightly, yet He loves with an everlasting love!

It's not that these at Ephesus had departed entirely from love for God, but the fervency and depth of their love was not as it once was. Zeal of stance and busyness had in some sense replaced passion it seems. More the cloud of dust and blur of

motion, but with a marked decline in devotedness to the Master Himself. Martha waxing, and Mary waning. “*That good part*” was slipping away (Lk. 10:41-42). Orthodoxy and service are not enough. The Lord looks with clearest insight upon the heart, upon the reasons and motives for what we do. He is the white-haired One, who knows where today’s trend will take us tomorrow. The sincere devotion of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation often moves the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation to adopt the standards and practices of the 1<sup>st</sup>, yet without the inward passion of their parents, not really knowing the reasons for what they do. These at Ephesus were 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christians. What they were doing was good, but the why of it was deficient, for they were losing sight of the Who. The Lord sought to curb that common pattern where *consuming love* turns to a *cooling off*, falling to *compromise*, and then to *corruption*.

What does a waning first love look like?

- Obedience and communion with God more a tedious chore than a delight.
- View of sin more the bored “so what”.
- Dying interest in God’s words, fellowship with believers, and outreach/missions.
- Conversation filled more with things of my

*Rev 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;*

*Rev 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

---

own interest than things of God.

- Passion for fashion, appearance, entertainments, leisure, and other trifling, passing-away things.

The Lord would that they (we) *remember, repent, and return*. Don't drop the insincere works to match diminished devotion, but add genuine devotion to good works.

Good Works + Devotion = Blessing

### **2:8-11** – “*Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna*”

This church was passing through a time of persecution, with even greater distress forecasted. Reviling would turn to prison and even death. Note that to such ones at such a time Jesus revealed Himself in vs. 8 as one who Himself had suffered persecution and death and yet had overcome. He being Lord of life, all in Him will know endless life.

He being “*the first and the last*”, He will be there at the last when all is said and done and the wicked have done their worst here on earth.

“*And poverty*” – Perhaps robbed of their goods in a form of persecution (Heb. 10:32-34).

“*But thou art rich*” – Though outwardly poor they were inwardly rich, with treasures laid up in glory. Here is a divine perspective the Lord would have us to share with Him at all times and never lose sight of.

“*I know the blasphemy*” – Referring it seems to Jews who considered believers traitors from the Jewish faith, who mocked Jesus in dying a shameful death, so evidently cursed by God. Jews by birth they might have been, but in persecuting Jesus and His followers they lost the right to the honourable name of “Jew”. They were descendents of great men and women of faith in blood only, showing themselves rather of their “*father the devil*” (Jn. 8:44). Though the Lord’s name be on their tongues, their responses revealed a lord of a very different kind in their hearts.

Not all that glitters is gold. Not every deed of service done in the Lord’s name is acceptable to

*Rev 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

*Rev 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*

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Him, as Cain's rejected sacrifice. Not every apparent worship and prayer is real worship and prayer, acceptable to God. There is much done in God's name not worthy of His name. Satan's seat of opposition of true religion has always resided more in the "synagogue", more within religion than in the world.

*"I know"*, Jesus assures His saints of every age. He is fully aware of all we suffer. He misses no detail.

Vs. 10 – The Lord makes no promise of exemption from bitterest persecution. He promises only His help to bear it in a way victorious. He gives no counsel on how to avoid inevitable trouble. He gives only encouragement to endure faithfully, even unto death. Persecution in this world is both the *proof* of purity, and the *means* to it. It is both the *result* of pure testimonies, and *results* in pure testimonies.



*Rev 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;*

*Rev 2:13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

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### **2:12-17** – “*To the angel of the church in Pergamos*”

Vs. 13 – This Pergamos church had gotten tired of the fight and thus had fallen to compromise. Weary of maintenance, their house had fallen to disrepair. Like many churches today, they still held to a good doctrinal position, on paper. They could still point to a history of persecution, and even faithful martyrdom. But persecution was a thing of the past for them (“*in those days*”), for they had begun to allow the enemy into the camp.

“*Where Satan’s seat is . . . where Satan dwelleth*” – For reasons not given the city of Pergamos is portrayed as especially a centre (throne) of Satan’s influence. Perhaps the reference is to the temple in that city to the Greek god, Asclepius (Roman god, Aesculapius), god of healing and medicine, symbolized by a serpent. More likely the reference is to the fact that Pergamos became the centre of

*Rev 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*

*Rev 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

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the Babylonian mysteries when this ancient mother of false religion was driven from Babylon. The high priest of Babylonianism was called “Chief Bridge Builder”, in Latin, “Pontifex Maximus”, that priest bridging mortal man to the underworld, the source of the Babylonian cult stemming from Nimrod.

Vs. 14-15 – Unrighteous tolerance. In contrast to that so commendable at Ephesus, this church allowed to remain among them those who held two hateful beliefs;

- *“Them that hold the doctrine of Balaam”* (vs. 14).
- *“Them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans”* (vs. 15).

There’s an interesting parallel between the words “Balaam” and “Nicolaitan”. Both words express the idea of “dominion/ lord/conqueror over people”.

The former from the Hebrew and the latter from Greek. Thus perhaps there's some association between these two doctrines so hated by the Lord.

Concerning the “*doctrine of Balaam*”, we have the record of Numbers to explain. Balaam was that seer the king of Moab called to curse the nation of Israel when they were coming to the Promised Land. Num. 22-24 relates how the Lord would not allow Balaam to curse Israel. Num. 25 relates a further effort to bring curse upon Israel. This latter chapter displays the execution of the idea, while Num. 31:16 shows Balaam's hand in it. Balaam's “*doctrine*” was the subtle approach of drawing the people of Israel into the pagan idolatry of Moab through the eating of things offered to idols and involvement with the immorality associated with their “worship”. This invitation to participation in pagan corruptions proved very popular and effective, and would have been more devastating had it not been for the strong, hard actions of the spiritual leaders in forcefully stamping it out (Num. 25). Balaam's corrupting doctrine was simply this, if you can't *kill* them or *curse* them, *corrupt* them! Make them cursable through their toleration of religious and moral freedoms within God's own camp. If God won't curse them as they are, then make them such that God would curse them, by

means of subtlety. God's answer to this is for His wise and watchful leaders to purge evil out. *"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you"* (II Cor. 6:17).

Much of the modern church has fallen for this same doctrine through the mentality that we must join the world if we would win them, that we must make Christianity acceptable, more user-friendly to the world. Through this devil's doctrine many have sold out to the corruptions of "Christian" rock and raves, discos and drinking, immorality, homosexuality, and women's lib, etc., all in the Lord's name. Thus promoting the foolish representation that the world doesn't have to give up their old ways or religious beliefs to become a "Christian". They need only make the slightest adjustments. With the ruinous result that many of the abominations for which Christ died have become associated with the name of Christ!

The church at Pergamos was sound on paper, but was much too tolerant of sin and those who practice it. In the same way the moment Israel stopped fighting and became tolerant of evil in Canaan, their rising graph peaked and began a downward plummet.

*Rev 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly,  
and will fight against them with the sword of my  
mouth.*

*Rev 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit  
saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I  
give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a  
white stone, and in the stone a new name written,  
which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*

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Vs. 16 – The Lord demanded repentance. “You turn from your foolish tolerance of what is wrong, and you return to the wisdom of hating what I hate! You show the wisdom of Nehemiah in ejecting Tobiah from the temple” (Neh. 13:4-9).

.....

## **Overcomers**

Jesus turns at the close of each letter to words of encouragement and promise for “*him that overcometh*”. Are these believers? Some special group of believers? John tells us in I Jn. 5:4-5, “*whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world*”. It seems clear that “*him that overcometh*” refers to those with a true heart of faith. But carried as well here is the thought that true believers;

- *Will keep God’s commandments* (I Jn. 2:3-5; 3:24).

- *Will* do righteousness (I Jn. 2:29; 3:10).
- *Will* not continue in sin (I Jn. 3:6-9).
- *Will overcome!*

So in each of these seven letters the Lord first addresses the church as a whole, and then gives special promise to the true believers in the congregation. At Ephesus (2:7), true believers are promised *“the tree of life . . . in the midst of the paradise of God”*. At Smyrna (2:11), they are assured of no *“hurt of the second death”* (20:6). At Pergamos (2:17), they are promised *“the hidden manna”*, and *“a white stone”* with *“a new name written”* in it. Jesus is the *“bread of God”* who came down after the manner of the manna in the wilderness (Jn. 6:33ff), and all who *“eat of this Bread . . . shall live for ever”* (Jn. 6:51). And in ancient courts of justice, when one was condemned he was handed a black stone, and when acquitted a white stone. One given a white stone was called an overcomer. Pictured is the believer’s heavenly acquittal before God through the work of Christ our great Advocate. The new name speaks of the believer’s new and special relation to the Lord.

## Class 4 – Revelation 2:18-3:13

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*Rev 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;*

*Rev 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*

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### **2:18-29** – “Unto the angel of the church in Thyatira”

Thyatira was a city famous for its manufacture of purple dye. Do you remember Lydia in Acts 16? She was saved in Philippi when Paul and Silas passed through on the 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey of Acts. Lydia was a seller of purple, from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:14-15).

This 4<sup>th</sup> letter is the longest, and one of the severest of the 7 letters. The spirit of worldliness had gotten a large hold in this church.

Vs. 18-19 – The Son of God, with eyes like a flame of fire, knew their works, expressing His penetrating awareness as well as His burning indignation. And what did their attentive Lord notice? The tilt of their impressive numerical growth chart? Afraid

*Rev 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*

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not! Pastoral academic qualifications? Nope. Thriving income? Building programme? Vision? Five & ten year plan? Great team approach to ministry? No, no, no! Have you noticed that there is not a *shred* of reference to the size or growth rate of any of these churches? Not the least mention of any dung collection of pastoral pedigree either. Only commendation for their love, service, faith, patience, and works. Things available to us more regular folks. There is much the Lord speaks well of here. None of the other churches were commended for their love.

*“The last more than the first”* – Seems their labours were on the increase.

Vs. 20 – Though mention is made of *“a few things against thee”*, one principle objection is raised. Wicked toleration! These folks were allowing a woman referred to as *“Jezebel”* to promote evil among them. Claiming to be a prophetess, the doctrines of this one were the same as Balaam’s (vs.



14), the subtle promotion of immorality and idolatry. These two vices go hand in hand.

Look well to the progression;

- Ephesus was faithfully intolerant of evil and error.
- Smyrna was not tolerated by evil, and therefore persecuted. The world and worldly church are tolerant of all but those intolerant of evil.
- Pergamos tolerated the *presence* of those who believed wrongly. Standing against the tide in an unpopular place can be tiring and lonely. These finally succumbed to the pressure, allowing what they knew they should not.
- Thyatira now actually tolerated the *promotion* of evil and error in their midst! The step further. When evil secures a place within, its forward agenda soon begins.

The insidious cancer of evil and error is virulent and missionary. It is never idle! Once allowed in, it comes as a seed seeking opportunity for self-promotion. Even as the speck of a germ leads to complete infection. Paul warned Timothy of the influence of those who promote error, that “*their*

*Rev 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.*

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*word will eat as doth a canker*” or gangrene (II Tim. 2:17). Forceful removal, cutting it out, is the only hope for saving the body.

Vs. 21 – Space of grace. God in His grace gives every soul time and opportunity to repent, for He’s not willing that any should perish. The scoffer misunderstands God’s judgment delays, thinking them license to carry on. Compare Ps. 50:21; Eccl. 8:11; Rom. 2:4-5.

The work of this woman appears to have been much like her O.T. predecessor of like name. Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, sought to use her position of prominence among God’s people to thoroughly corrupt the worship of the Lord in Israel, that ultimately it might be snuffed out altogether and replaced by the worship of Baal. Even so the approach of this N.T. Jezebel involved a subtle depravity that gradually pushed aside the restraints of moral right, obscuring and redefining holiness to suit her own unbridled lusts, allowing, and even promoting, unholy practices, while claiming to belong to Christ.

*Rev 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.*

*Rev 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

*Rev 2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.*

*Rev 2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.*

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Vs. 22-23 – Certain judgment was promised upon this Jezebel and her followers if repentance was refused. Part of the purpose of judgment is purity, that others might see and learn to fear (I Tim. 5:20).

Vs. 24-25 – Notice that we find no instruction here to remove the evil. There is now no threat of the Lord's coming with the purging sword of His mouth (vs. 16). At Thyatira it was just too late to talk about removal of corruption. The inroads of evil had pressed too far, too deep. They could only hope to hold on to what was left. Time and again history has repeated itself. A godly institution is less than vigilant to stand against and purge out ungodliness, and to do it early, diligently, firmly, in an Ephesus fashion with continual watchfulness. And with time

godless, carnal, compromising influences become too great, too entrenched. Until the only recourse is for the godly to cut their losses and get out altogether, beginning all over again somewhere else. If a man should be nurturing the foolish notion that evil tolerated, in self, children, family, church, business, etc., will wishfully get better or will in some way sort itself out, then his day of tragedy is already on the calendar. There is a place for hesitating long enough to pray, but the whole leaning must be toward the *refusal* or *removal* of evil, either from the heart and hands of the person involved, or those persons removed from the midst (I Cor. 5:13). True Christianity comes demanding an end of all things morally wrong. It stands in the way of carnal pleasure. To be sure, it will appear to be a strange, unwanted killjoy, considered ridiculously restrictive by the world. The worldly wise laugh, quite convinced that such a head-on, “legalistic” approach simply isn’t the way to win friends and influence people. If you want to build up your church membership then you cannot afford to make yourself so far-out, with restrictions few will tolerate. Nobody will even stick around to listen to your gospel if you make your Christianity such a drag. This was Jezebel’s approach and purpose, the subtle and even forceful encouragement toward compromise. The same driving purpose is ever with

us, ever promoting its doctrines in the church of every age. Coming even with the good outward motivation of evangelism, seeking to draw more souls to Christianity. Yet peddling carnal, arm-of-flesh methods in achieving this goal faster and “better”. Seeking to lead “narrow” (biblical) Christianity to think more broadly, more in keeping with current views on ministry approach and religious life. Demanding a make-over of the old religion of Christ to something more “relevant”, more attractive to the masses. Justifying compromise of holiness for the “greater good” of wider acceptance and message coverage. Still Christianity, mind you, but with just the slightest touch here and there of little brush strokes, using the more popular earthy hues of the world. Yet again, those subtle, earthly touches come with the principle of propagation onboard. For every shade of compromise is in essence a turning away from the Lord. And the ultimate direction and purpose of all compromise is complete corruption. Full-blown Baal worship is where Ahab’s Jezebel was aimed, with the true worship of the true God relegated to the religious museum. Be wise to recognize this pressure to adopt or accommodate worldly standards, toward the end of greater popularity. Be wise to ever stand strong in the Lord’s strength against the weariness of fighting that relentless,

*Rev 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:*

*Rev 2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.*

*Rev 2:28 And I will give him the morning star.*

*Rev 2:29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

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driving current. *“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint”* (Isa. 40:31).

Vs. 26-28 – Believers’ rewards.

Vs. 26-27 – Promise of co-reigning with Christ in His kingdom. Compare 20:6; Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; II Tim. 2:12.

Vs. 28 – Promise of *“the morning star”*, referring to the bright dawning of Christ’s return.

## **Chapter 3**

**3:1-6** – *“Unto the angel of the church in Sardis”*

This was the church of dead orthodoxy.

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

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Vs. 1 – The One holding the Spirit of God, the very source and Author of life and revival, appeals to these who were dead. The only thing that lived there was a name. N.B. the focus upon “names” in this letter (vs. 1, 4, 5). Reputation appears to have been an issue of import among these. Interestingly it seems they struggled with none of the troubles the other churches faced. No persecution or opposition. No false teaching mentioned. No immoral practice or idolatry. No specific difficulties of any kind mentioned. All appeared to be quiet and even-keeled. Apparently they even tended to be appreciated, with a reputation for life and godliness. But in reality they were quite dead – destitute of spiritual life. Ordinance, orthodoxy, and organization gave an external impression of spiritual vitality. But all was a façade, like the whitened sepulchres of Christ’s stinging analogy. With their mouth they voiced love, but with hearts far from God. Let the world and worldly church have their names so honourable on earth. With Paul *“I am crucified with Christ”* (Gal. 2).

This Sardis church had only a few yet undefiled among them, for they were mostly dead. *A bit of good among the evil now!* See how the image has fallen to almost *all* earthy hues, with only the odd little brush stroke of heavenly brilliance. The seed of evil had effectively pushed its agenda and done its ruinous work within. The result was spiritual DEATH, even as the parasite that kills its host.

“*And art dead*” – Too many among these were unsaved, still spiritually “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (Eph. 2:1). As well, consider how the father of the prodigal used the term “*dead*” of his wayward son (Lk. 15:32). No less a son than his brother, but dead in that he was;

- Wholly distracted by “*the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in*”, choking out the fruitfulness of God’s Word in his life.
- Wholly given to himself. Spending on himself what he had inherited from his father.
- Serving *others*, far from his father’s fields of service. Distant from his father.
- Wrenching his father’s heart.
- Travelling the downward spiral to ruin where such an attitude always leads.



*Rev 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.*

*Rev 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

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With his son in such a selfish spiritual coma the father called him “dead”. In this same way it seems many true sons of God at this church of Sardis were dead as well.

Vs. 2-3 – Jesus now levels His cannon and fires 5 sharp commands at them;

- Be watchful. They had left off all observation, falling into a stupor. How commonly the N.T. commands us toward vigilance.
- Strengthen or keep the things remaining.
- Remember what you received and heard (Eph. 2:5).
- Hold fast.
- Repent.

There’s an interesting history behind Sardis. The city was ideally situated for defence. It stood on the

*Rev 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.*

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northern slope of Mt. Tmolus, high above the Hermus Valley. The city was surrounded by steep cliffs, at the base of which flowed the River Pactolus, serving as something of a moat. It was a city considered practically impregnable. But in 549 B.C., when under siege by the Persians, Cyrus sent an able soldier up the sheer rock face in the dark of night. He made it up, crept into the sleeping city unawares, and opened the way for the Persian army to enter. Over 3 centuries later Rome took the city by the same method. Overconfidence and failure to watch caused the city's fall on both occasions. Thus the city's history fixed a proverbial importance upon watchfulness. The lesson for us is the same. Be ever aware of the dangerous inroads of compromise with evil. This is particularly the function of spiritual leaders, who must take the oversight (I Pet. 5:2). Watch always your own heart for that relentless tendency to get too caught up in our own things, with little time for the Lord and His surpassing things. The subtle soldier of evil attempts to make his cunning entrance when none are watching, that he might then throw open the

*Rev 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*

*Rev 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

---

way for the greater onslaught of compromise, ultimately bringing death to the warmth of our spiritual life. The only answer is eternal watchfulness over the flock and our own hearts, dealing hard with the first efforts of evil or error to make their subtle entrance, before it becomes entrenched. **No compromise!** Christian, keep your heart with all diligence! Spiritual leader, keep your church with all diligence!

Vs. 5 – “*I will not blot out his name out of the book of life*” – The book of life appears to be a heavenly roll of those who will enter the eternal rest and joy of God’s presence. In fact, the Great White Throne judgment of those eternally lost will be based on names not found written in this book (Rev. 20:12 & 15, twice repeated for emphasis). Comparing other Bible mentions of this book leaves a bit of uncertainty, but it seems that all names begin in the book of life, with some later blotted out when confirming their souls in sin (Ex. 32:33; Ps. 69:28).

*Rev 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;*

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Understand that Christ's words here are more assurance of eternal security, than inference of *insecurity*. Though some consider this promise a problem for the biblical doctrine of eternal security, to be fair, this is only an assurance of names not possibly removed, proving the possibility of gaining such security without threat of removal. 'Tis a word meant to *release* not *increase* anxiety.

**3:7-13** – *“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia”*

The city of Philadelphia still exists today, now called Allah Shehr or “City of God”.

Vs. 7 – *“He that is holy”* – That Jesus would be referred to in this way seems again to set Him as equal with God. Could a mere man be so described?

*“The keys of David”* – Keys speak of authority or power over the door or way of entrance. Jesus quotes here from Isa. 22:22. Because Jesus, as

Eliakim there in Isaiah's record, showed Himself faithful and zealous for His Father's house and things, He as well is made keeper of His Father's house, having complete control over His Father's domain. His will is supreme, such that none may oppose. Even so all who are zealous for the Father's things and faithful in the lesser responsibilities of earthly opportunities shall be entrusted with much in kingdom appointments.

The battle between Jesus and the Jewish leaders over the Sabbath was a lordship thing as well. Was the Sabbath day *servant* or *master* of the Almighty? The Jewish leaders cherished their position as lordly administrators of all-powerful tradition. Many times throughout the centuries religions have sought to wield the same power, assigning to ordinances the power to save. To all such Jesus has given answer, "*For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day*" (Matt. 12:8). He Himself is Lord of all, holding the only key of entrance to God's blessing. Churches or religions do not save or administer grace or hold the power to admit souls to heaven or to commit them to hell. *Jesus Himself* is the door (Jn. 10), holding "*the keys of hell and of death*" (1:18). Every soul who would find his way to heaven must find it through Jesus Christ. He alone is that One with whom we have to do. And

*Rev 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

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

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everyone claiming to come “*by some other way, the same is a thief and a robber*” (Jn. 10:1).

Vs. 8 – This faithful little flock had kept the Lord’s word and had not denied His name. This Jesus noticed and recorded. Again and again we see the reminder that every faithful work done for Jesus is seen by Him, as well as every dark and filthy thing. All is naked and exposed before Him. Don’t ever pine for man’s praise or recognition or appreciation. Don’t ever cut corners or cheat the Lord concerning what’s right. Let the Lord see and Him alone.

Vs. 9 – Again there was opposition from the “*synagogue of Satan*”, as at Smyrna (2:9). This apparently refers again to unbelieving Jews. Jesus promised these troubled saints that even their persecutors would be made to recognize who God’s true loved ones were, and they would pay them homage.

*Rev 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my  
patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of  
temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to  
try them that dwell upon the earth.*

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N.B. that the two persecuted churches (Smyrna & Philadelphia) were the two praised churches. Whether their persecution brought their purity or their purity their persecution we are not told. But bring on the persecution if we must have it that we might know our Saviour's praise! Men don't normally choose the way of compromise with evil because they're particularly comfortable with it in their spirit, but because of the perceived advantages it brings. Just as normal folks don't go out of their way to mess with a beehive because it's an especially comfortable thing to do, but because of the sweet honey to be found there. Very often the immediate payback of compromise is sweet peace, the momentary ceasing of scorn, the quieted storm of troubling persecution, acceptance into the fellowship of others, breaking the stifling isolation. This is why God's pure ones are earthly persecuted and heavenly praised. Because it is with God that they prefer to have sweetest peace. Because *His* acceptance they would seek above all else. And the world cannot tolerate one who denies their pleasure

*Rev 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

*Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

*Rev 3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

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to pursue God's holy pleasure.

Vs. 10-12 – Believers' rewards.

Vs. 10 – A pointer to the pre-tribulation Rapture of the true church?

Vs. 12 – Again the new name expresses personal relation with Jesus Christ (compare 2:17).



## **Class 5 – Revelation 3:14-4:11**

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*Rev 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

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**3:14-22** – “Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans”

The church at Laodicea is the last of the seven churches addressed by the Lord, and they received the most scathing letter of all. The city of Laodicea, mentioned repeatedly in Paul’s letter to the Colossians, was just down the valley from the city of Colossae. Today the old city site is a heap of ruins. It’s an interesting ponder that both the churches (messengers) at Sardis and Laodicea were severely reprov’d by the Lord in these seven letters, and both city sites are windswept wastelands today. On the other hand both Smyrna and Philadelphia were commended by the Lord, and both remain thriving cities to this day. Could it be that we just don’t realize the extent to which the church influences the world, when the world is not allowed to influence the church?

*Rev 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

*Rev 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

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Vs. 14 – *“These things saith the Amen”* – The word “amen” means truth or true. No mere man could so title Himself (Jn. 14:6). Jesus is the One is *“faithful and true”*. He is the One who saw the condition of this church as they truly were and faithfully spoke the truth to them in love. Those among them who loved the truth would respond with repentance. Those despising the sometimes painful truth would reject to their ruin.

*“The beginning of the creation of God”* – It’s a question of word meaning here. The word translated *“beginning”* can refer to the start of something as in first in order. The word can also refer to beginning in the sense of active cause, or even first as in the highest office of rulership. Jesus is the active cause or Originator of creation, and He is Chief or first over all He has made (Col. 1:16-18).

Vs. 15-16 – *“Because thou art lukewarm”* – Hot, cold, and lukewarm do not describe three different

*Rev 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

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spiritual states, as in those fervent in spiritual things (hot), those utterly unmoved by the gospel (cold), and those fallen from their previous spiritual warmth to luke-warmness. How could the Lord wish any man to be “cold” or unsaved? More likely the thought is that both hot and cold were good for something. Cold is a good thing on a hot day, as the cup of cold water Christ spoke of in Matt. 10:42 or as the cold water to a thirsty soul of Prov. 25:25 (vs. 13 as well). Hot is a good thing on a cold day. But Lukewarm is good for nothing. People of that day and culture served nothing lukewarm. Such was never appropriate, always disgusting. What is emphasized here is that these had come to the point of being good for nothing, a condition highly obnoxious to the Lord. Mingling with error had taken this messenger, with his church, even past the point of the deadness of Sardis, to the point of *repulsiveness* to the Lord. Jesus goes on to describe that to which He referred.

Vs. 17 – They were pretentious, blind, ignorant of

their true condition, self-confident, and independent. They proudly imagined themselves rich and self-sufficient. But they were deceiving themselves. God would have us think *rightly* concerning ourselves. And the only way to achieve this right perception of ourselves is for us to listen as he speaks to us straight. This only comes through unclouded, unbiased gazing into His perfect law of liberty. James informs us that it's like one "*beholding his natural face in a mirror*" (James 2:23-25). One who honestly does this will not "*think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but will think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*" (Rom. 12:3). He'll know that his heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We should not seek to be pumped up with self-esteem as some would insist. Neither should we drag ourselves through the muck of self-hate or self-pity. Both are forms of godless self-centredness. We should seek only to be full of love for a God who would love us in spite of us. Full of *Him*, not of me! Full of wonder in His grace. Remember Paul's progress in sanctification;

- I Cor. 15:9 – "*For I am the least of the apostles*". This written in 57 AD.
- Eph. 3:8 – "*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints*". Written 5 years later, in

62 AD.

- I Tim. 1:15 – “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief*”. Written 1½ years later.

From lowliest apostle to lower than the very least saint to the greatest of sinners. And all three of these portions are in a context of grace. And all three within discussion of ministry appointment. As Paul grew in the Lord he knew more fully his *exceeding sinfulness* and his utter unworthiness for the least of God’s grace, let alone His gracious appointment to ministry. But never did such self-awareness lead Paul to muck about in the mire of self-hate or self-pity. He remained ever confident of his appointment by God, ever wondering in the God of grace who would love one such as he. Every fresh reminder of his heart’s blackness, every new revelation of the further extent of the decay immediately sent his heart heavenward in confession and praise for One who would love him so, who would love Him still.

But these at Laodicea were of quite an opposite nature. Full of *themselves* they were. Self-satisfied. Not only would they not look to the Lord to fulfil their needs, they refused to even recognize their need of Him and what He longed to provide.

Perhaps these at Laodicea were materially rich. It's likely. How often a growing wealth in material things contributes to spiritual pride and poverty. If the Lord should allow you a measure of wealth, oh be diligent to ever be rich toward God! These were blind to the reality of their spiritual nakedness, as if strutting about convinced that they were gloriously arrayed, yet unaware of how silly they appeared to the only Onlooker who really matters. As a peacock stripped of his feathered finery. All pink and stubble, yet unaware of his condition, strutting elegantly as always. A sight to stir pity! As the story of the emperor with his "new clothes". Convinced in his head that he is beautifully arrayed, while in reality all laugh in their sleeves. For he's as naked as the day he was born, but none dare tell him. He had been convinced by a persuasive, smooth talker. Convinced against the obvious. Convinced of the impossible. How like such a foolish king are many "religious" people of our day. Convinced by persuasive, consoling, smooth-talking preachers. Convinced of the impossible, that one could be saved from eternal judgment without the white robes of righteousness that only Christ can give, outside of appeal to Jesus Christ.

The description of these easily fits the experience of

*Rev 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

*Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

*Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

*Rev 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

*Rev 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

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all the unsaved; wretched in God's displeasure, miserable in their troubled existence, utterly poor without the eternal riches only Christ can give. Without faith they are blind to heavenly realities and fully exposed to God's anger. That they are not in the torments of hell even *now* is purely of His grace.

Vs. 18 – To “*buy*” of Jesus is to receive freely what can be found only in Him; the priceless wealth of eternal salvation, the white robes of His own righteousness, and God's remedy for blind eyes. All are given freely in Christ. Compare Isa. 55:1ff. Jesus Christ is the only source of eternal help. Every other form of religious endeavour is a

*Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.*

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“clothing” of sorts, but is woefully inadequate to cover the nakedness of the lost. Every form of manmade religious finery covers nothing in God’s sight and is unfit attire for the wedding feast (Matt. 22:11ff).

## **Chapters 4** – Heavenly Throne Scene

Vs. 1-3 – The splendour of God.

Vs. 1 – A phrase very similar to that at the end of 1:19 is used here as John is called through a door “*opened in heaven*” offering sight of “*things which must be hereafter*”. Indicated here is a shift of focus to the last great general section of this book of Revelation, prophecy of things to come. How very appropriate that the revelation of things future should begin at the throne and He who sits upon it, the Almighty Father and sovereign Ruler of all. We with John are allowed right into God’s throne room, to the very presence of the unseen One. The voice commanding John to come up is Christ’s, the same



*Rev 4:2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold,  
a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.*

*Rev 4:3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper  
and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round  
about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*

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he heard in 1:10. And as *he* was called up, so *we* have the blessing of entering with him as we read.

As suggested earlier, from the moment the Lord commands John to “*Come up hither*” the word “*church*” drops from mention, is found further in the book only in 22:16, and is never pictured again upon earth. This strange absence so sharply contrasts with the 20 times the word “*church*” is found in the first three chapters within cities of earth. This sudden absence from this point onward would appear to be an evident picture or foreshadow of the Rapture of the church from earth before God’s judgments fall.

Vs. 2-3 – John was immediately “*in the spirit*”, though his body likely remained on Patmos. Paul in a similar experience did not know the actual nature of his transport, “*whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell*” (II Cor. 12:2). Either way, John’s presence there was no less real than our presence here on earth. In heaven John saw God the Father

upon His throne. And so typical of other visions of God's throne in the Bible, no attempt is made to describe Him in any definite way. Compare Isa. 6:1; Ez. 1:26-28; Dan. 7:9-10. We're given the impression of a human-like form seated on the throne, with scroll in His right hand (5:1), but with no clarity of bodily description. "*God is Spirit*" (Jn. 4), and therefore no concrete representation of Him can be made. *Jesus* is the expression of the Father before the eyes of man (Heb. 1:3).

How beautiful the sight before God's apostle. With the words of Thomas Kelly's hymn John could join, "Look, ye saints! The sight is glorious!" Almost fumblingly, John begins to describe the splendour before him. The One seated on the throne is "*like a jasper*", a quartz-like precious stone of various colours. The same type of stone is used to describe the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, "*Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal*" (21:11).

"*And a sardine stone*" – "*Sardine*" or sardius is a very hard, deep red variety of chalcedony, a kind of quartz with waxy lustre. Sardius and jasper were the first and last stones on the breastplate of the O.T. high priest (Ex. 28:17-21).

*Rev 4:4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

*Rev 4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*

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*“A rainbow round about the throne”* – Praise God for that rainbow! It’s the emblem of His promise, that He is a keeper of His promises, especially of the promise of peace after the storm of His terrible judgment (Gen. 9:13-16). It’s as if that rainbow describes a gracious disposition encircling God’s throne. Greatness yet graciousness, terror yet tenderness, united in such a glorious way in Him.

Vs. 4-11 – God’s attendants.

Vs. 4 – Around God’s throne John saw 24 seats or thrones (same word as in vs. 2) in which 24 elders are seated, clothed in white and crowned with gold. These seem to be representatives of the redeemed of all ages. Their number (24) may express a combination of the 12 tribes of the O.T. combined with the 12 apostles of the N.T. era – glorified, rewarded, crowned, and enthroned with God!

Vs. 5 – Understand that all is not peaceful here. There is a great storm brewing. Thus the lightnings and voices and thunders from the throne. For there are unspeakable judgments about to descend upon earth. Thunder is often seen in this book (8 times), and primarily accompanies scenes of wrath and judgment. How very different the throne scene of 22:1ff. For there, instead of the threat of an approaching storm of fiery, flashing judgment, there is *“a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God”*. There all is a river of peace, for all storms will be past in that day, and eternal peace will be ours. Sin will have been entirely dealt with at last.

From Genesis to Revelation, in every age the principle is always the same, *only in righteousness can true peace be found*. And righteousness is only possible after godlessness and the godless have been removed as the dross. If you are lacking God’s peace in your heart it’s because you are lacking God’s righteousness in your heart. Only when you believe in Jesus Christ will you find true heart peace, only within the righteousness that only He can give. At the moment of faith in Him the storm of conviction brought on by the Spirit of God, the anguish of your soul’s guilt, breaks forth into release and pardon. Guilt is gone at last, and peace

*Rev 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.*

*Rev 4:7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.*

*Rev 4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

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comes flooding in as a deep flowing river. *“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever”* (Isa. 32:17). For those yet unsaved, yet outside of Christ, *“there is no peace sayeth my God to the wicked”*.

Vs. 6 – *“A sea of glass like unto crystal”* – Can we even begin to picture the breath-taking brilliance, colours, and splendour of the scene John describes, and that reflected as well from this crystal sea before the throne? We’re given the impression that this is a solid surface rather than a body of water (*“of glass”*, not *“as glass”*).

Vs. 6-8 – The living ones. We’re introduced now to some interesting creatures indeed. Though the KJV refers to them as *“beasts”*, the word behind the

*Rev 4:9 And when those beasts give glory and honour  
and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth  
for ever and ever,*

*Rev 4:10 The four and twenty elders fall down before  
him that sat on the throne, and worship him that  
liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before  
the throne, saying,*

*Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and  
honour and power: for thou hast created all things,  
and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

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English means “living creatures”. It seems the nature of these creatures is especially characterized by life. This is not the first time we meet these beings in the Bible. The prophet Ezekiel as well describes what are referred to as “cherubim” (Ezek. 1 & 10). Though we’re not specifically told, these appear to be angelic beings. They’re described with something of the form of a man, yet each with four faces and four wings and with some strange configuration of “wheels” alongside, full of eyes, seemingly depicting supreme awareness.

Vs. 9-11 – Heavenly worship. The work of these cherubim (?) is to tirelessly, ceaselessly lead the worship around God’s throne, proclaiming God’s holiness, praising Him as Creator of all. It’s praise that Satan tirelessly seeks to remove from God through various forms of deception (evolution, false

religion, materialism, etc.).

Things to consider in the flashing brilliance of this heavenly throne scene;

- Heaven is no sealed place from us. How thankful I am that God Almighty, resplendent in glory, Creator of all, would desire the redeemed beside Him. N.B. that a door opened, with Jesus appropriately the porter bidding entrance. *“I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved”* (Jn. 10:9).
- God is supreme Ruler of the universe. Though unseen, He is real nonetheless. Though men make war upon Him, forget Him, deny Him, yet He is Ruler of all. One day He will be seen so by all and will have His enemies in derision.
- God is not only holy and just, or there would be no salvation.
- God is not only mercy and grace, or there would be no punishment for evil, no justice or fairness.
- As all the colours of the spectrum combine to make white, so all the moral qualities of God combine to describe His nature as pure and unspotted, white as pure light. To emphasize

any one over others taints the pure whiteness.

- God's thunderings hold no terror for His true children, for we safely abide under the shadow of His wings. His throne is a place to approach, not to flee, a place of grace to find help in time of need.

But oh what fearful trembling such scenes of splendour bring to unsaved hearts. Peace may come in a moment, if you would only believe on Jesus.



## **Class 6 – Revelation 5:1-6:8**

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*Rev 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.*

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### **Chapter 5 – Lamb Alone Found Worthy**

#### **5:1-7** – “A book written . . . sealed”

Vs. 1 – In a sense, the glorious heavenly throne scene of chap. 4 is an introduction to the main purpose of this portion, to introduce to our attention this “book” or rolled up parchment scroll in God’s right hand, with seven seals. The chapters to follow will be the opening of those seals, with the resulting progressive revelation of the contents of the scroll. It is the unfolding of God’s mind and purpose for earth and man, both saved and unsaved. Perhaps the seals were in some way attached to the ends of the scroll so that as each seal was broken the scroll could be partially unrolled a bit more. For with the breaking of each seal more of God’s purpose is made known, each successive portion adding to our knowledge of His revealed will concerning things to come. We were told in 1:1 that what came through John was

*Rev 5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?*

*Rev 5:3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.*

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directly from the mind of God. This is God's mind, written in the scroll, acted out before us, and recorded in this book of Revelation.

Now let's take a step back and consider what we see here on the whole. The true book of the future is in *God's* hand. It is utterly sealed from man, available only by special revelation from God. The future is not in *man's* hand, so reading palms cannot display it. The future is not in *Satan's* hand, so no powers of the occult can reveal the truth of it, except as God allows. The future is not in the hands of *the dead*, thus consulting with "the dead" offers no proper help. Attempting to do so is only dialoguing with deceiving demons. There are countless ways men seek to find the future apart from God, because it's a subject of supreme interest to mankind. But they are wasting their time. The future is a book written *by God*, and sealed until He alone who is worthy breaks and opens the bread of life to us.

Vs. 2-3 – John saw an especially strong angel issue a challenge to all creation if any might be found worthy to break the seals and open the book. But none could be found. I’ve read that in ancient contests a herald would often appear first to make known the power of the champion coming after him, and issue a challenge to combat. Goliath’s challenge perhaps a variation on that theme. “Who is fit to stand against this mighty power?” he defiantly mocked, as a collective shiver went through King Saul and his army. Then young David strode out affirming, “By God’s grace I am fit!” “Who is worthy”, thunders this mighty angelic herald, laying down the challenge to all creation. And then in vs. 4-5 the Son or “*Root of David*” stepped forward to the challenge. For He alone is worthy. And look well! Does this great descendent of David come as a Goliath, facing the challenge with formidable armour and flashing sword as we might expect? No! He comes as with a sling and stones. He comes as “*a Lamb as it had been slain*” (vs. 6), yet very much alive. In His sacrificial death and resurrection, that which appeared so weak, Jesus conquered all the powers of darkness, “*that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil*” (Heb. 2:14). For in His resurrection He displayed the power of an endless life. How much more so when He at last

*Rev 5:4 And I wept much, because no man was found  
worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look  
thereon.*

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appears as the Lion!

Vs. 4 – See John weeping “*much*” here, when he thought none could reveal the contents of that book. Why these tears? Why would it matter so much to him that he have access to the words of this book? John was a man of God, a man after God’s heart. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved, but he was also a disciple who loved Jesus. And as in all who have ever loved God in truth, there is a passion to know His mind as expressed in His words. Enthusiasm for God’s words is the surest indication of true love for God. One who loves Him with all of the heart, soul, mind, and strength, as John did, would say with the Psalmist, “*O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day*” (Ps. 119:97). Here is love in truth. The psalmist actually picked up God’s Book and drank deep from it, all the day. “*His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night*” (Ps. 1). Again true love actively ponders God’s words day and night. Here is a fair measure of love. John was confronted with hope of more of God’s mind in

this sealed book and yet none could be found to open it. It was more than he could bear. He must have it! He must have all of God, all of God's heart! He was told that these were words concerning things to come. But far more than mere intrigue with things future, John was moved by a love for the church he had spent his life for, longing to know of her welfare. And he was moved by a love for Christ, longing to see Him enthroned. And he was moved by a love for the world, longing to know the outcome of God's dealing with them. And he was moved by a love for God, longing to know all of His mind and purpose, to see His kingdom come and will done on earth as in heaven, to see a responsiveness to Him below as John had seen above. Daniel was of the same heart. Do you remember how he received a brief glimpse of the future in his reading of Jeremiah? As if pressed up against the door, peering intently through the keyhole at a 2 or 3 degree angle of the great wide world on the other side. There was promise of so much more, but the door was locked. And under the same constraint of love Daniel pressed the Lord for more, fasting with sackcloth and ashes and praying his confession, until God sent His angel with answer on swift wing in Dan. 9. And that man of God received the key to God's prophecy, one of the clearest prophetic chronologies in all the Book

*Rev 5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*

*Rev 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*

*Rev 5:7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.*

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of books. And still we see Daniel pleading for more (Dan. 12:9). Even so this apostle of God wept because the book in God's hand was closed to him, and *he must have it!* And so again the Lord sent One worthy to open it. God is pleased and responds positively to our earnest search for an understanding of His words (Prov. 2:1-9). He's displeased and discouraged when there is in us only the slightest interest, when we cover a yawn and turn on the rugby.

Consider the descriptions of Jesus in vs. 5-6;

- *"The Lion of the tribe of Judah"* – Perhaps referring back to Jacob's prophecy of Judah in Gen. 49:8-12. His would be the tribe bearing the sceptre.
- *"The Root of David"* – The word translated

“root” can also refer to what sprouts from a root. Christ is the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant (II Sam. 7), the promised descendent of David’s royal line.

- “*A Lamb as it had been slain*” – Expressing Christ’s sacrificial death as the fulfilment of all of the O.T. sacrificial system, and referring back to the words of John the Baptist, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (Jn. 1). Jesus bore in His body the marks of nails, spear, scourge, and thorns, evidence of having been killed.
- Seven horns – Describing the completeness of power or authority. “*All power is given unto Me . . .*” (Matt. 28).
- Seven eyes – The completeness of insight and intelligence in the All-Seeing One.

### **5:8-14** – Creation Praising

Immediately upon Christ receiving the scroll, as if stepping forward to receive a prize or well-earned degree, the celebration in song begins, then expanding to an ever-widening extent. *What a moment John relates!* Every soul who loves Jesus Christ longs for this, longs to see Him so honoured.

*Rev 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.*

*Rev 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

*Rev 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

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Vs. 8-10 – The 24 elders, joined by the 4 living creatures, fall before Christ and sing the song of the redeemed. We who have been redeemed shall also join in singing His praise throughout eternity. Here on earth there are many breaks in the song, perhaps more interruptions than there ought to be. Joy gives way to sorrow at times. But there? The song will be continuous. The saints will never again hang their harps on the willow as God’s people did in Babylon (Ps. 137). All tears forever wiped away, our song of adoration will ever be of the Lamb.

Vs. 8 – *“Fell down before the Lamb”* – Don’t miss how they worship Jesus just as they worship the Father on the throne (4:10).

*“Which are the prayers of saints”* – The prayers of God’s children, yet unanswered, stored up for this



*Rev 5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;*

*Rev 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

*Rev 5:13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

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time when God at last begins to bring the answer. Notice that the prayers of the *unsaved* don't feature, for they are not heard by the Lord. God hears only *one* prayer from the lost soul, only the cry of the repentant publican (Lk. 18:13).

Vs. 11-12 – As in Lk. 2 over the plains of Bethlehem on the night of Christ's birth, suddenly here too John saw the throne of God encompassed and heard the voices of a praising angelic host. Literally, myriads of myriads and chiliads of chiliads, a countless host.

Vs. 13 – Now every created thing joins in, as the circle of praise expands wider, from the smallest microbe, to the largest beast, to the farthest reach

*Rev 5:14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.*

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of God's creation. In Romans 8 Paul wrote of all creation groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for God's restoration of all things. Here is now the long awaited fulfilment when every created thing joins in exultant praise to the One on the throne and to the Lamb. Compare the same rising to crescendo in Psalm 150, to the last verse, "*let everything that hath breath praise the LORD*".

## **Chapter 6** – Seal Judgments.

### **6:1-8** – Four Horsemen

Chapter 6 begins a consideration of the 70<sup>th</sup> "week" of Daniel 9. We now enter upon that remaining seven of years when God's focus shall turn again to the nation of Israel, beginning sometime after the church is removed from earth in the Rapture, beginning officially with a covenant between Antichrist, "*the prince that shall come*", and many among the Jewish people (Dan. 9:27). This is "*the day of the Lord*" featuring so prominently in the prophets, the last of "*the times of the Gentiles*".

*Rev 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.*

*Rev 6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.*

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As the Lamb begins to open the seals of the book we're introduced to the famous "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse". As the first 4 seals of the book are opened the 4 living beings successively call for John's attention. And introduced before us are 4 horses of different colours, with 4 riders, expressing 4 differing themes. Yet all 4 horsemen describe aspects of the same man, Antichrist in his coming!

Vs. 1-2 – White horse – Not a prefigure of Christ's return as some have suggested, or of the gospel conquering the earth, as the postmillennialists might like to imagine. The context here is of judgment, the *beginning* of it, not the *end* of it. And the riders to follow obviously relate to destruction and judgment coming *before* Christ's return. Daniel's prophecy helps us here, for we must remember that there is another "prince" coming. Christ shall come as Conqueror at the *end* of that final seven of years, and Antichrist shall come as conqueror at the *beginning* of that final time of

judgment. This is an image of Antichrist arising in peace and power out of the revived Roman Empire to world rulership. He is that coming one prefigured in Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the Grecian Empire, who “*shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries*” (Dan. 11:21 & 24). This is that one who “*shall confirm the [a] covenant with many for one week [seven]*” (Dan. 9:27). He shall enter onto the world stage with a covenant and he shall come seemingly bringing great promise. He shall arise to prominence as man’s great answer, all shining bright. He shall be the very ultimate of manmade solution. Man at his best, at his cleverest, at his most powerful. Remember Nebuchadnezzar’s awesome statue in Dan. 3? So imposing and terrifying, it represented all the kingdoms of man. It was an image created by man, representing man’s kingdoms as seen from man’s perspective. And in what form was that gleaming statue? In the form of *a man*! Antichrist will represent man on the throne, at his awe-inspiring pinnacle! And mankind will discover what man without God becomes when placed on the throne of ultimate world power. For this is the “*man of sin . . . the son of perdition*” (II Thess. 2:3). This is the *beast* out of the sea (chap. 13). This is Satan’s great masterpiece, the counterfeit of all that Jesus Christ is. This one will enter the scene all

*Rev 6:3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.*

*Rev 6:4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.*

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bright and white, hiding his true colours. He will come with great promise, hiding his true agenda. He will come lauded as a victor, cast in the role of a conqueror, coming on the white horse of the conqueror. So convincing he will be that even the Jewish nation will join in singing his praises. Yet he will be a beast, whose defeat is sure. He comes with a bow in his hand, but no arrows. A buzz, but no sting. A growl, but no bite. For he will be ultimately toothless. Though he be terrifying in prospect before men, though all humanity be transfixed before him, he is merely *allowed*, even *appointed* by God who is the true Sovereign of the universe. The days of this one are energetically numbered from of old – seven years, the last 3½ within which he will display his true nature (Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:6 & 14; 13:5). And then he shall be consumed at the last with the Spirit of the Lord's mouth and destroyed "*with the brightness of His coming*" (II Thess. 2:8).

Vs. 3-4 – Red horse – Here is now an image of Antichrist's about-face at the midpoint of the 7-year Tribulation, with peace quite gone. If ever there was a fulfilment of David's words in Ps. 55:21 it will be in this one, for *"the words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart"*. And quietly echoing from history past come the words of our friend, Daniel the prophet;

- Even in the initial rise of this one to power three kings shall fall before him (Dan. 7:20).
- Though beginning with a 7-year covenant of peace with Israel, watch the mid-point when sacrifices in the temple are forcibly stopped (9:27).
- He will make war with the saints and prevail against them (7:21).
- He *"shall do according to his will"* (11:36).
- *"He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god"* (11:36).
- *"He shall magnify himself above all"* (11:37).
- He shall *"honour the god of forces"* (11:38).

He is a man of war! This is in his *heart* during the first 3½ years of his rule and in his *practice* during his last 3½. This is the turning point pictured in

*Rev 6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.*

*Rev 6:6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*

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this 2<sup>nd</sup> horse and horseman. Here is where Satan's messiah displays his true colour – red;

- The colour of sin (Isa. 1:18).
- The colour of the dragon (12:3).
- The colour of the harlot's mount (17:3).

This one is Antichrist, demonstrating the very opposite of Christ in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Christ was acclaimed by the crowds, then was crucified by the same. Antichrist will be acclaimed by the crowds, and then turn to crush his praisers. With “*a great sword*” of war in his hand, all of the initial peace will be removed. “*When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them*” (I Thess. 5:3).

“*That they might kill one another*” – We can well

*Rev 6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.*

*Rev 6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*

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imagine the treacherous nature of his reign of fear.

Vs. 5-6 – Black horse – Now it's an image of worldwide famine resulting from war.

*“A measure of wheat for a penny”* – The Greek word translated “measure” here expresses a volume equal to about one litre, about the quantity a labouring man would eat in one day. The “penny” or denarius was a coin commonly paid a man for a day's labour (Matt. 20). Thus pictured is a time when the world will labour for mere survival. A day's wages for one loaf of bread, if wheat, and three loaves, if barley (cheaper grain). Nothing will be left over for anything or anybody else. A world reduced to existence living, and that barely. And woe to the man with a family to feed in that day. This is an image of the inevitable aftermath of the devastation of a war like the world has never seen.



Vs. 7-8 – Pale horse – Pale yellowish green. A ghastly coloured horse! The colour of sickness, with “Death” the name of the horseman. With war and famine and malnutrition many will fall prey to disease in their weakened condition, resulting in death to a quarter of the earth’s population! Over 1 billion people by today’s standards! It will be death on a scale like the world has never seen. These will be days unprecedented in terror and sorrow and loss. Compare Jer. 30:7 & Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24. Death has always been the king of terrors. How terrible for the one with no promise of life in Christ. And how much more terrible the 2<sup>nd</sup> death than the 1<sup>st</sup> (20:14). Only in Jesus is the 1<sup>st</sup> death made as sleep (I Thess. 4:13-15) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> death swallowed up in victory (I Cor. 15:54). This rider named “Death” frightens no true believer in Jesus.

*“And the beasts of the earth”* – Food shortage will affect the whole food chain.

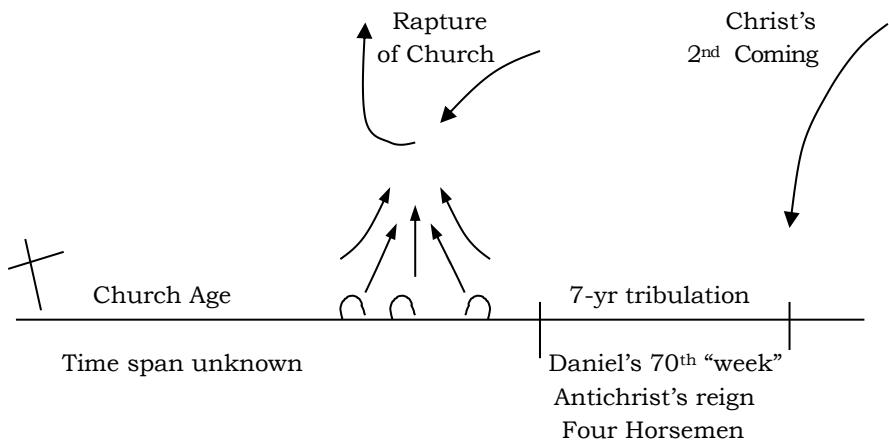
May the contents of this chapter of Revelation begin to put away from your mind the false view that God would not judge a wicked world. God is wrath as well as love, cursing as well as blessing. And His judgments can prove to be greatest blessing. I trembled one day at the law I had spurned, before the God I had denied. I came to fear Him as I

learned of Him. And in so fearing Him I found wisdom (Pr. 9:10). Moses was rebuked by God and *grew in wisdom* as he responded in humility. Pharaoh was rebuked by God and grew hardened and embittered, and perished. It all depends on the heart of the hearer.

And what of you? What will you do with God's warning of things to come? Will you be wise to find refuge in Jesus?

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## Coming Events in Picture



## **Class 7 – Revelation 6:9-7:17**

### **Chapter 6 – Seal Judgments**

#### **6:1-8 – Four Horsemen**

- White horse – Antichrist arises in peace out of the revived Roman Empire and goes forth as a conqueror.
- Red horse – Antichrist turns peace to war at the midpoint of 7-year Tribulation.
- Black horse – Worldwide famine resulting from war.
- Pale horse – Death to a quarter of the earth's population through war, famine, and *“the beasts of the earth”*.

#### **6:9-11 – Fifth Seal**

With the opening of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal there's a change from the pattern of the first four;

- A living creature does not bid John to come and see.
- No horses or horsemen.
- Focus shifts from earth to heaven.

John sees souls of the dead under the heavenly altar. They're identified as those "*that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held*". Martyrs! The Greek word translated "*slain*" here is the same used in vs. 4, a word speaking especially of violent death. The reference is to those put to death for their faith in Christ and willingness to testify of Him. Consider these martyred dead introduced here at this point, immediately following the four horsemen, that revelation of Antichrist coming and becoming what he will during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> "week". The obvious deduction is that martyrdom of saints will characterize Antichrist's rule. These are believers put to death for their faith within the tribulation period.

Now perhaps you would say, "But wait a minute! Will there be saints on earth during the tribulation period? I thought all true believers of the church would have already been raptured from earth by then, and taken to be with Jesus". Yes, there will be believers on earth during the tribulation period after the Rapture of the church. God doesn't end His work of grace in hard times of judgment. Again, those hardest times can be the best of times. Times of great persecution of believers have been times of great growth of God's work on earth. Therefore this time of *greatest* persecution will see *greatest growth!*

Obviously these martyred dead will be saved during that terrible time of great tribulation. These are not church saints but Tribulation saints. Antichrist's world will be a magnification of all that's barbaric within the human heart. He will most diligently murder every last believer he and his worldwide system of control can lay their hands on in that day. And with a techno-twist, incorporating all that computer technology and modern advanced surveillance and tracking systems can provide. Look again to God's ancient prophecy concerning this one;

- Dan. 7:21 – He *“made war with the saints and prevailed against them”*.
- Rev. 13:7 – *“It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them”*.

He will succeed, for a time. It will be a replay of Dan. 3. Not just death but *ghastly* death to all who will not dance to the monarch's music, but on a much grander, worldwide scale, making Nebuchadnezzar's efforts look like a church picnic. The reign of this one will be as Christ's, with a rod of iron, yet with absolute, unscrupulous brutality at the heart. *Woe, woe, woe to the one finding himself still on earth in those days!!* It will be a day of martyrdom on a scale the world has never seen.

*Rev 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:*

*Rev 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*

---

This “*man of sin*” will ruthlessly strive for an entire world of absolute homogeneous worship of himself.

“*Under the altar*” – Why under the altar in heaven? Remember that Moses made the earthly temple after the heavenly pattern he had been shown by the Lord on Mt. Sinai (Heb. 8:5). As there was an earthly altar in the temple, so in the heavenly temple. And as the blood of the sacrificial bulls was poured out under the brazen altar in the consecration ceremony of the priests (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7), so the position of these souls seems to indicate the pouring out of their life’s blood in sacrifice of their lives for our great High Priest. As if in consecration of Him.

Vs. 10 – They plead for vengeance upon their murderers still alive on earth, after the fashion of the imprecatory prayers of Psalms, longing for justice to prevail. And note how humbly they speak to the Lord with reverence. In fact the Greek word

*Rev 6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

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translated “Lord” here is *despotes*, meaning despot or Master. Yet we hear them freely making their heart’s desire known to the Lord. And the Lord does not reprove them. There’s nothing wrong with asking why and when and how long, if you ask it of your Master. As long as you deal with Him as if *He* is Lord, not you.

Vs. 11 – The Lord comforts, clothes, and encourages them. He tenderly gives them what they need. His answer is that they wait a little longer, for there were yet more to be killed. “My plan is best, My child. You’ve trusted Me thus far, trust Me still”. Faith and patience will be necessary there as well. The Lord treats them tenderly, as if they are His treasures, the apple of His eye. Cast out as unworthy of life on earth, these are received by God as worthy of life eternal with Him. And note again how for those who are the Lord’s and who come to Him as Master there is comfort *in*, not necessarily *out of* the fire. Compare the experience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Dan. 3.

*Rev 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;*

*Rev 6:13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*

*Rev 6:14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.*

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## **6:12-17** – Sixth Seal

It would be difficult to visualize a more terrifying scene on earth than the one here described with the opening of this seal. Not just an earthquake, but a “great” one. The sun black. The moon blood-red. Stars (meteors) falling to earth. The sky in some way departed as if a rolled up scroll (Isa. 34:1-4; Heb. 1:10-12; Ps. 102:26ff). Every mountain and island moved (Heb. 12:26-27). This seal seems to relate God more directly expressing His wrath upon earth in response to the lives of those He loves so violently taken from them. And as well, expressing experientially the passing, unstable nature of our earth and heaven. Far more stable than all we consider to be fixed and secure here on earth (lands and mountains) is the Word of God, “*which liveth and abideth forever*”. It simply is not wise to be a man of this life and earth only.



*Rev 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;*

*Rev 6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

*Rev 6:17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

---

Some would like to understand such things as we see here symbolically, expressing seasons of government upheaval throughout history or the odd pocket of anarchy. But we are wise to take this quite literally. Described here is no ordinary trouble, but *“great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”* (Matt. 24:21). These are scenes common to prophecy. Joel spoke of the day when *“the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come”* (2:31). Compare Isa. 13:9-13.

Vs. 15-17 – The reaction among men of earth. All men are brought level in such catastrophic calamity. All levels of society, from greatest to least, seek equal accommodations in Hard Rock Hotel. Where on earth do you go to find some security

when all you ever thought secure is shaken?

Vs. 17 – Don't miss the inherent recognition in the unsaved of earth in the face of such earth shaking phenomena;

- That *God* is the One doing the shaking.
- That He is *Master*, sitting "*on the throne*".
- That His *wrath* is being expressed.
- That the day of his wrath has come. There is an expectation in man of such a coming day.

"*Who is able to stand?*" – The answer to their question is found in the next chapter. Only those who have taken refuge in Jesus Christ will be able to stand in that day. See Joel 2:32.

## **Chapter 7** – Two Multitudes

This book of Revelation is chronological, fundamentally but not strictly so. This 7<sup>th</sup> chapter is now a parenthesis or pause in the chronological progression. Not advancing the narrative, but stepping aside briefly in order to express related events. It seems this chapter is placed here in answer to the question of who is able to stand in the "*great and terrible day of the Lord*". Chapter 8

*Rev 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.*

*Rev 7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,*

*Rev 7:3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

---

will pick up with the 7<sup>th</sup> seal.

Chapter 7 is a record of two groups of redeemed ones coming out of the tribulation period;

- A Jewish remnant of 144,000 sealed servants.
- A great, innumerable multitude out of every racial group.

### **7:1-8** – The Jewish Remnant

Vs. 1-3 – John saw four angels holding the four winds, such that there is no wind on the earth or sea or on any tree. As in the eye of a hurricane or the calm before a storm, expressing great foreboding. As if all of creation holds its breath. These are angels to whom it is granted to hurt the earth and sea. They are poised and prepared to

*Rev 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

---

execute their commission with power. Pictured here is ominous judgment pending, only temporarily held back. As if the horror of what had already fallen in the 6<sup>th</sup> seal was only the distant rumble of the real approaching storm. And before it falls in all of its fury God first sets apart and protects His servants.

Vs. 3 – The seal “*in their foreheads*” implies protection and ownership, as a slave was often marked. Who are these “*servants of God*”? They are some of the remnant of Israel during Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> “week”, saved out of the tribulation after the Rapture of the church. The Jews of our day do not normally know what tribe they are from, but God knows, and will select 12,000 men from each of the 12 tribes for His special sealing and service during that era. It seems these will be specially preserved from harm through the tribulation. There is tremendous emphasis placed upon these men here; sealed through angels, breathless scene on earth, and the listing of their number from each tribe in vs. 5-8. This seems to imply some vastly important

*Rev 7:5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand.  
Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand.  
Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.  
Rev 7:6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve  
thousand. Of the tribe of Neptholim were sealed  
twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were  
sealed twelve thousand.*

---

role these men will have on earth during that era. It's hard to imagine how any of God's redeemed could survive through Antichrist's determination to kill all who belong to the Lord. But we must remember;

- Noah and family were preserved by God through the worldwide devastation of the Flood.
- Rahab was preserved at Jericho because of her faith and faithfulness.
- Israel was preserved through the plagues upon Egypt, and that quite miraculously.
- The two witness of chap. 11 will as well be untouchable until God's time.

In chap. 14 we find these same men triumphant still. There will be other Jewish people saved during this time, some of whom will suffer a

*Rev 7:7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.*

*Rev 7:8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.*

---

martyr's death, but these it would appear are preserved through, untouchable by Antichrist.

Many who believe the Lord to be finished with national Israel attempt to get away from a literal fulfilment in Israel here. Such folks would tend to read this passage allegorically, identifying these 144,000 in some way with the church. But we must remember that the angel spoke to Daniel of 70 “weeks” or sevens of years “*determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city*” (Dan. 9:24). The era described here is the one remaining seven of years. Thus it will be an era relating particularly to Daniel’s people, the Jewish nation. And the fact that the Lord listed the tribes points as well to literal fulfilment, rather than symbolic. If He meant to speak of actual sons of Jacob, how could He have put it more clearly? Where does the Bible ever speak of the 12 tribes of Israel when it’s not referring to exactly that? This is not the church!

*Rev 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;*

*Rev 7:10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

---

These are certainly not specially chosen super-Jehovah's Witnesses. God continues to watch over His chosen people Israel, even in that coming day of their greatest distress. He still has a purpose for them and will fulfil *every promise* He ever made to them. "*Blindness in part is happened to Israel*", Paul said, "*until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in*" (Rom. 11:25), only until "*the times of the Gentiles*" comes to completion in Antichrist.

Notice also that there are no "lost tribes". There is no support here for the foolish notion that the ten lost tribes of Israel are perpetuated in the English-speaking people of the world as some believe.

## **7:9-17** – The Gentile Remnant

### **Oh happy throng!**

Vs. 9-10 – This is a different group than the former.

*Rev 7:11 And all the angels stood round about the throne,  
and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell  
before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,  
Rev 7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and  
wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power,  
and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

---

These are;

- Not sealed but apparently martyred.
- Not on earth but in heaven.
- Not numbered but innumerable.
- Not out of the tribes of Israel but from every nation.

Clothed in white, these are singing a symphony of praise before God's throne, ascribing salvation to God and the Lamb.

Vs. 11-12 – Again the song extends wider, now involving angels, elders, and living creatures, as in chap. 5.

Vs. 13-14 – The question and answer concerning the identity of these. They are the happy throng of those saved out of the tribulation, having died by war, famine, disease, earthquake, or martyrdom.



*Rev 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?*

*Rev 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

---

They had been hounded upon earth until at last they were captured and killed, having refused to bow to Antichrist's demand of their worship. It will be a day of greater threat upon life for receiving Jesus as Saviour than ever before, when to do so will be to face that most solemn of decisions, deny Christ and live, or hold Christ and die! And the number willing to give their lives for Him in that day is seemingly beyond human computation. This is amazing! When it will be hardest to become a Christian is when the most will come to Christ! This is a denial of the modern push toward a soft, smooth cross, seeking to make "Christianity" as easy as possible, to be sweet and inoffensive at all costs, that we might win the more to Christ.

The introduction here of this innumerable multitude of those saved out of the tribulation seems to point to their redemption resulting from the work of the 144,000 Jewish men mentioned

*Rev 7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

*Rev 7:16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.*

*Rev 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

---

first. The first appear to be “*the servants of our God*” as His protected evangelists during that era. Compare this same group associated with the preaching of “*the everlasting gospel*” throughout the earth in 14:1-6.

Vs. 15-17 – These tribulation saints are found in God’s presence, before His throne, facing “*Him that sitteth on the throne*” rather than fleeing in fear (6:16). “*And so shall they ever be with the Lord*”, serving Him “*day and night in His temple*”. Heaven is not just a place of rest from earthly labours, but a place of the privileged service of God.

Vs. 16 – The hunger, thirst, and exposure described speak of their experience on earth in their flight from the wrath of Antichrist’s regime. They will be driven from the shelter of civilization to seek refuge

in the wilderness. Hunger, thirst, heat, and cold will be their experience in those days, being *“strangers and pilgrims on the earth”* like never before. *“Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city”* (Heb. 11:13-16). Then like never before will they wander about *“in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth”* (Heb. 11:37-38).

Vs. 17 – In God’s presence the Lamb Himself will see to their care at last, all tears finally wiped away, all grief and tears past, and only *fullness of joy* in His presence. Then will be the very fulfilment of Psalm 23. There is a special place in God’s heart for those who suffer for their faith as the Lamb of God did. Remember Jesus standing to receive Stephen as he gave his life in faithful testimony of Christ (Acts 7).

These *“washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* (vs. 14). Only Christ’s blood can wash away sin and grant a sinner the white robe of God’s righteousness. *“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”* (Ps. 51:7). *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins*

*be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18).*

## **Class 8 – Revelation 8:1-9:12**

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*Rev 8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*  
*Rev 8:2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.*

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### **Chapter 8 – Trumpet Judgments**

As this chapter begins, the 7<sup>th</sup> seal judgment introduces the next round of 7 trumpet judgments. As if the trumpet judgments are contained in the last seal.

#### **8:1-6 – 7<sup>th</sup> Seal Judgment**

Vs. 1 – This period of silence in heaven compares to the great calm on earth as chap. 7 began, expressing a sense of anticipation for what comes next, as if breathlessly waiting. One writer made the comparison to the silence before the foreman of a jury reads the verdict.

Vs. 2 – John's attention is now fixed on seven angels who have stood before God, and seven trumpets are given to them. These are angels appointed by God to direct the next series of

*Rev 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

*Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.*

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judgments by means of seven trumpet blasts. Again, the trumpet or ram's horn ("shofar") is used in the Bible in making important announcements, particularly in announcing God's presence (Mt. Sinai and Christ's coming).

Vs. 3-5 – There is something of a ceremony before the trumpeters begin their work. Another angel approached the golden altar before the Lord carrying a golden censer, where he received incense to burn on that altar. A censer was used in the O.T. worship to carry live coals from the brazen altar to the golden altar of incense inside the holy place, before the veil. At the golden altar the priest would then throw incense on the live coals. And the smoke would go up before the veil of the most holy place, filling the temple with its sweet smell. The clear implication here (5:8 as well) is that the incense symbolizes the prayers of believers ("*the saints*") going up before God's presence. It's a

*Rev 8:5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.*

*Rev 8:6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.*

*Rev 8:7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*

---

reminder that our intercession is as sweet incense to the Lord. And it's an indication that our prayers *do* enter His presence. Compare Lk. 1:9-10, where the people gathered for prayer before the temple as Zacharias went in to burn incense. Compare Ps. 141:2, "*Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense*".

Vs. 5 – There follows great trouble upon earth. Compare 6:9ff, where again the martyred dead appealed to the Lord with greatest trouble resulting upon earth. God's wrath falls in response to the prayers of God's saints who are suffering at the hands of the wicked. No man is powerless upon earth who has a prayer-hearing God in heaven.

### **8:7** – 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet Judgment

Do you suppose the people of earth will actually

*Rev 8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;*  
*Rev 8:9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.*

---

hear these trumpet blasts from heaven?

With the sounding of the 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet hail and fire mingled with blood fall to earth, resulting in 1/3 of the earth and trees and all grass of earth torched. Can you imagine the effect of this upon a stunned world?! Can we even begin to comprehend the devastation upon productivity, services, communications, farms, food production and distribution, etc? *All green grass gone!* It will be a day of destruction by thirds. The term “third” appears 11 times in this chapter.

As with much that is described in Revelation, there’s a tendency in Bible commentators to not consider this literal hail and fire, but rather symbolic representation of divine chastening generally falling over any given era. The parallels with one of the plagues upon Egypt are unmistakable (Ex. 9:22-26). Were those 10 plagues through Moses only symbolic as well? We’re wise to



just read and understand it normally. It's the way God has taught us to read His prophecies.

### **8:8-9** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet

Now if earth-dwellers can hear these trumpet blasts, we can well imagine the collective, global snap to attention with the sounding of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, with all eyes heavenward, or ducking for cover. With this 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet John saw some type of meteor, something like (*“as it were”*) a great flaming mountain cast into sea, bringing the following results;

- 1/3 of sea turned to blood. No mere language of appearance is in evidence here. Actual blood is indicated. He who created all with a word, who turned fresh water to wine, can easily turn salt water to blood. Again, as the plague upon Egypt, but on a worldwide scale (Ex. 7:19ff).
- 1/3 of sea creatures dead. These events are absolutely unparalleled in history! The force of the ocean waves would be quietened by the multiplied thousands of square kilometres of floaters and bloaters. Harbours, beaches, and shorelines will be choked with great masses of rotting flesh, and stretching right out into the sunset. *Imagine the putrefying*

*Rev 8:10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;*

*Rev 8:11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*

---

*stench!!*

- 1/3 of ships destroyed. Perhaps partly through the tsunamis resulting from the impact of this great meteor.

It would seem the effects will mostly relate to the coastal areas of earth around the point of impact.

### **8:10-11** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet

With the 3<sup>rd</sup> trumpet John saw a great flaming meteor fall to earth, blazing like a torch, this time affecting the *fresh* waters of earth. Note that from the moment that angel collected fire from God's heavenly altar and cast it to earth we've seen falling flames; fire mingled with hail and flaming mountain and star. Result of this 2<sup>nd</sup> meteor strike; 1/3 of fresh water rivers and springs of earth are poisoned, bringing death to many.

*Rev 8:12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*

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Vs. 11 – “Wormwood” is a plant that grows in desert places, producing extremely bitter dark green oil. It’s a substance so bitter even worms don’t like it. It’s used in making absinthe, a medication effective in deworming.

Compare how evil men gave Jesus only vinegar mingled with bitter gall to drink in His thirst, as He died for their sins (Matt. 27:34; Ps. 69:21). They would not even give a cup of cold water to One greater than a prophet among them (Matt. 10:40-42). Now the Lord returns justice upon earth-dwellers.

### **8:12** – 4<sup>th</sup> Trumpet

With the 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet 1/3 of sun, moon, and stars are darkened, so that they don’t shine for a third part of day or night. Understand it literally. This appears to be some type of eclipse disrupting the light of all heavenly bodies. A visual representation of the way of the wicked as darkness, not knowing

*Rev 8:13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!*

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at what they stumble (Prov. 4:19).

### **8:13** – Warning of Woes

God’s messenger flies through the air speaking with a voice loud enough for all upon earth to hear, giving a triple “*woe*” to all “*inhabiters of the earth*” because of the 3 remaining trumpeters yet to sound. A “woe” for each remaining trumpet judgment. As if the horrors already having happened upon earth aren’t dreadful enough! In Jeremiah 22:29 the Lord pleads “*O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD*”. Now we hear triple woes to those ignoring His triple pleas to heed.

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## **Consider**

In Ps. 19 David proclaimed that the heavens declare the glory of God the firmament (expanse of the atmosphere) shows forth His handiwork. His reality and abilities are written there on the pages of

creation. God's creative handiwork is mentioned frequently in the Bible, as a witness to His power, wisdom, and sovereignty. In fact in Rom. 1:20 Paul declared that the invisible things of God, His eternal power and Godhead, are so clearly seen and understood through the handiwork of His creation that all men are without excuse. No man can fairly say, "But I didn't know! I didn't understand!" God assures us that every soul both knows and understands. In Jer. 31:35-36 God's prophet speaks of the sun and moon as tokens of God's faithfulness to His promises to the nation of Israel. These very emblems of blessing and revelation of God's glory, power, promise, and care now become the arena for His display of His glory and power to judge! These now become tokens of wrath, speaking only of greater outpouring yet to come in that day. How many earth dwellers have been willing to recognize the Lord's hand in the heavens? How many acknowledge the power of His voice in the booming waves of the sea? How many ever see His grace in the beauty and benefit of the trees and grass of earth? Such wonders have seldom been an occasion for thanksgiving to the living God from the hearts of "*the inhabitants of earth*". And now, that which has been from God's gracious hand and so taken for granted, the sea, the blessing of water, the beauty of majestic flowing rivers, the splendour and

benefit of sun, moon, and stars, all gifts from a caring God to an undeserving world, now all begin to come under the blight of God's judgment upon rebellious, rejecting mankind. Tokens of His undeserved blessings are turned to tokens of His much-deserved cursings! So dramatic are these judgments and so unmistakably an evidence of God's power and attitude that blaspheming men on earth can no longer ignore the fact that God is dealing with them. Yet don't miss His grace, even in this setting. Don't ever lose sight of God's grace. Look for it and you'll find it in all His works. Even in that coming day of which we read here, He does not simply lower the boom! First He turns tokens of blessing to tokens of His wrath. Unmistakably so. With ever increasing intensity. Why? In order to give ample warning. In order to lead men to repentance. Still He will not be willing that any should perish, but that all might come to repentance. He will be fishing for souls still, even in such a storm. The opportunity to turn will yet be available, but with time so evidently running short. The Lord is long-suffering indeed, but not eternally so. No soul will ever be able to stand before the Lord and claim he never had fair warning.

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*Rev 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.*

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## **Chapter 9** – Fifth and Sixth Trumpets

### **9:1-12** – Fifth Trumpet (First Woe)

Remember that these last three trumpet judgments are called “*woes*” (8:13; 9:12). We find in this 1<sup>st</sup> woe one of the most shockingly terrifying predictions in all of Revelation! Mystifying beyond description. The events brought on by the sounding of the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet are given a surprising amount of detailed explanation, implying a note of particular importance.

Vs. 1 – John saw “*a star*” having fallen from heaven to earth. Now remember the Golden Rule of Hermeneutics – “If the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. Take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the immediate context, or related passages, or basic biblical truths clearly indicate that the text is not to be interpreted literally”. So John saw a “*star*” fallen here. He has seen stars fall before (6:13; 8:10), and we have had no cause to see them differently from actual material objects falling

*Rev 9:2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.*

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from heaven to earth. But this time there is a degree of personhood attributed to this “star”;

- *“To him was given the key to the bottomless pit”.*
- *“He opened the bottomless pit” (vs. 2).*

Some kind of intelligent being seems to be intended here. This fallen “star” may very well refer to Satan or Lucifer, that “*son of the morning*” who is “*fallen from heaven*” (Isa. 14:12). Jesus told His disciples how He “*beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*” (Lk. 10:18). This fall, seen by John, may be the result of the war in heaven described in 12:7-10, where the devil is cast to the earth. Perhaps this is a time indicator, marking this as the mid-point of the tribulation period.

Vs. 2 – “*The bottomless pit*” – Literally “the pit of the abyss”. This is where Satan will be bound and kept through Christ’s thousand-year reign on earth (20:1). This is where the demons begged Jesus not



*Rev 9:3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.*

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to send them to be tormented before their time (Lk. 8:31; Matt. 8:29).

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## **On Demons**

Demons are not mythology or the fabrication of somebody's imagination. They are very real beings, fallen angels, busy with Satan's evil, subtle purposes among men. Jesus dealt with demons often throughout His earthly ministry. They are intelligent beings. They are not ineffectual things, fluttering about in some other realm. They are powerful, active servants of evil (Acts 19:16), having a strong influence among men.

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Vs. 3-6 – The opening of this pit seems to release a “pandora’s box” of a confined, wicked, demonic horde. Upon opening there burst out furiously churning columns of thick, black smoke, as if out of an opened furnace, rising quickly and filling the sky, blotting out the sun. Then, out of the churning

*Rev 9:4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.*

*Rev 9:5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.*

*Rev 9:6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.*

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smoke, there began to arise a terrifying sound as of an approaching stampede (*“as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle”*), thundering and building in power. And then, appearing out the thick blackness, a great swarm of what appeared to John like locusts. Again we see a parallel with the plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 10:12ff). Yet these are locusts like the world has never seen. “Locusts of a hellish species, animated by devilish instincts and equipped with infernal powers” (Peake). Though appearing and functioning something like locusts, these will not bring threat to the green vegetation of earth as normal locusts. Instead they will be given the capacity to sting like scorpions. This feature is very prominent (vs. 3, 5, 10). Please understand that this is not figurative language referring to men in tanks or planes, or representing “heretics, or Goths, or Mohammedans, or the mendicant orders,

or the Jesuits, or Protestants, or Saracens or Turks” (Peake). Rather these are some sort of unholy, unleashed demonic host. And the focus of their attention will be the people of earth, touching all but those who belong to the Lord, even as with the plagues on Egypt. Note the effects of their sting;

- Pain with the severe intensity of a scorpion’s sting.
- No fleeting, passing pain of a few moments or days, but lasting for *5 months!!* Either through repeated stinging, or pain that just doesn’t quit. This feature is repeated so we don’t miss it (vs. 5 & 10). Who could eat or sleep?
- Will not kill people, though the effect of the terror and strangeness and agony will bring the sincere longing for death in all men (vs. 6). In fact all will be denied the death they will long for in those days.

Don’t miss the ironic twist of justice here. Throughout history the wicked of earth have forced death upon untold thousands of the righteous, murdered for their faith and faithfulness when they would have preferred to live. But they were refused that choice by wicked men. Now, in this end times turn of the table, by the decree of the Righteous

*Rev 9:7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.*

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One, the wicked will live on in the torment of their agony when they would prefer to die, *long* for it in fact. But they will be denied that choice by the Righteous One! This is the most unimaginable description of demonic domination, to such an extent that men in agony of body and soul will lose their ability of free choice as well. It is a bizarre image of demonic torment beyond even the experience of the demon possessed man of Gadara (Lk. 8; Mk. 5), who was “*always, night and day . . . crying [screaming] and cutting himself with stones*”. He too was in agony through demon activity, with the same burning preoccupation with death it seems. And his too was an existence he had no control over, no ability to end. *Then Jesus came!* And something within the man, some desperate hope, moved him to run to Jesus and bow at His feet. And he found deliverance and peace at last. It’s a picture of the unsaved, dominated by their sin, “*all their lifetime subject to bondage*”. Until Jesus is at last allowed in, bringing blessed deliverance.

*Rev 9:8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.*

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Vs. 7-11 – Detailed description of these “locusts”. It soon becomes apparent that these are no ordinary locusts. Note the prominence of the words “*like*” or “*as*”, as John attempts to describe these terrifying beings in his vision;

- Comparable in shape to horses prepared for battle (vs. 7).
- As if they wore crowns of gold.
- Faces as men.
- Hair like that of women. How so? Colour? Texture? Style? What else but length? These creatures will have long hair, women’s hair. Don’t miss God’s obvious assumption in passing here. In God’s mind there is a clear difference between the hair of men and women. Even so there should be that same clear distinction in the conduct of His saints. Women should have long hair, for their hair is their glory (I Cor. 11:15). Men should not have the long “*hair of women*”, for this is to their shame (I Cor. 11:14).

*Rev 9:9 And they had breastplates, as it were  
breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings  
was as the sound of chariots of many horses running  
to battle.*

*Rev 9:10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and  
there were stings in their tails: and their power was  
to hurt men five months.*

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- Teeth like lions.
- “*Breastplate*” (vs. 9). Shell? Exoskeleton of some type? As if iron, depicting their individual indestructibility.
- Winged – Indicating great speed, and giving them their terrifying sound as well. It will be impossible to flee or evade them. No one will be able to escape! The only escape is to flee from the wrath to come *now*, in fleeing to eternal refuge in Jesus.
- Special attention is given to their tails (vs. 10), which are compared to that of a scorpion’s. Here resides their power to hurt – for 5 months! – 150 days – 3,600 hours – nearly ¼ million minutes of agony, lusting after death!!
- This demonic horde will have “*a king over them*” (vs. 11), “*the angel of the bottomless*

*Rev 9:11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.*

*Rev 9:12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.*

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*pit*". Abaddon (Hebrew) or Apollyon (Greek). Both words mean "destroyer". This is an obvious reference to Satan. All masks of goodness and light will be stripped away in that day, and the evil one will be seen in his true character as the great deceiver and destroyer of mankind (chap. 12).

It's an awesome, fearful description of the most dreadfully terrifying experience imaginable. These "*locusts*" are instruments of God's justice upon the Christ-rejecting inhabitants of earth. How foolishly trite for people to refer to hard times as "hell on earth". *They have no idea!* And yet these are instruments of God's mercy as well. For by means of this horrific judgment many thousands will be driven to repentance and faith.

In God's presence is fullness of joy and at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore. But when Satan reigns unrestrained it's quite another story.

He brings man to eternal, unrelenting,  
inescapable, unbearable torment! Before God,  
arising with the sweet smoke of the incense are the  
prayers of His saints, calling for His kingdom of  
peace to come, prayers He will ultimately answer.  
But arising in the broiling, caustic smoke of hell,  
only Satan's sinister horde of tormenters.

***“Choose you this day whom ye will serve”***

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## **Revelation Judgments**

### **7 Seal Judgments** (chap. 6 & 8:1-2)

- **1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>** – Four Horsemen.
  - White – Antichrist arises (6:1-2).
  - Red – Peace taken away (6:3-4).
  - Black – Famine (6:5-6).
  - Pale – “Death” – ¼ dead (6:7-8).
- **5<sup>th</sup>** – Martyred souls under altar (6:9-11).
- **6<sup>th</sup>** – Great earthquake (6:12-17).
- **7<sup>th</sup>** – 7 trumpets prepared (8:1-6).

### **7 Trumpet Judgments** (chap. 8-9 & 11:15-19)

- **1<sup>st</sup>** – Hail, fire, blood, 1/3 of trees and all



grass burnt (8:7).

- **2<sup>nd</sup>** – Great flaming mount into sea, 1/3 sea blood, 1/3 sea creatures dead, & 1/3 ships destroyed (8:8-9).
- **3<sup>rd</sup>** – Great star, “Wormwood”, falls. 1/3 of fresh water poisoned (8:10-11).
- **4<sup>th</sup>** – 1/3 of sun, moon, stars darkened (8:12).
- **5<sup>th</sup>** – Abyss opened, demonic “locusts” (9:1-11).
- **6<sup>th</sup>** – Death angels released, war, 1/3 of people killed (9:13-19).
- **7<sup>th</sup>** – Great voices in heaven, lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquakes, great hail (11:15-19).

## **7 Bowl Judgments** (chap. 16)

- **1<sup>st</sup>** – Terrible sores (16:1-2).
- **2<sup>nd</sup>** – Sea as blood of a dead man, all sea creatures dead (16:3).
- **3<sup>rd</sup>** – Praise for God’s fairness (16:4-7).
- **4<sup>th</sup>** – Scorching sun (16:8-9).
- **5<sup>th</sup>** – Darkness and tongue-gnawing pain (16:10-11).

- **6<sup>th</sup>** – Way from the east prepared for Armageddon (16:12-16).
- **7<sup>th</sup>** – Voices, thunders, lightnings, never so great an earthquake, cities fell, islands fled, mountains gone, great hail stones (16:17-21).

## **Class 9 – Revelation 9:13-10:11**

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*Rev 9:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,*

*Rev 9:14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.*

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### **9:13-19 – 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet (2<sup>nd</sup> Woe)**

Vs. 13 – With the sounding of the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet John heard a voice from the golden altar before God, where the incense with the prayers of saints were offered up at the beginning of chap. 8. It's a reminder perhaps, that all recorded is in answer to the pleadings of God's saints for justice upon earth (6:10).

Vs. 14 – The voice instructed the 6<sup>th</sup> angel to release the four angels who were bound in the Euphrates River. Apparently these are not the four restrained angels of 7:1-3 with power to hurt the earth and sea. Those appear to be God's angel, where these now appear to be unholy angels. God's good angels are never described in the Bible as bound, whereas some among the fallen type are so described (Jude 6; Rev. 20:1-3).

*Rev 9:15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.*

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Vs. 15 – This seems to be another release of demons for the fulfilling of God’s intended judgments, as with the opening of the bottomless pit in the first half of this chapter.

*“Which were prepared”* for their hour of activity. Even as that great fish was prepared for the moment Jonah hit the water. In the same way these unholy servants will all chime in at precisely the determined hour, of the determined day, of the determined month, of the determined year. All marked out with precision by the great Designer in His divine plan. All is running like clockwork! The very last thing Satan would like to think himself doing is to be serving God’s plan. Yet how he has so continually raged against God throughout history in his most bitter hatred and utter insubordination, only to find his efforts tucking neatly into God’s programme. In his rage Satan stirred the world to crucify their Saviour, only to find it already prophesied, precisely as God had planned it from before the foundation of the earth, and exactly what man needed. These wicked

*Rev 9:16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.*

---

angels, with heart to hate and haste to hurt, have been hindered until the precise moment God deems appropriate. God has both blessings and distressings under His control. Both good angels and evil He uses as messengers of His purpose. And these are now designated to execute the great judgment of the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet. Their function? To kill a third of the people of earth (repeated in vs. 18). The 1<sup>st</sup> woe produces an unholy host to *torment* the people of earth. This 2<sup>nd</sup> woe produces another to *kill* the people of earth.

Now remember that the 4<sup>th</sup> seal and horseman of 6:7-8 brought death to ¼ of the earth's population. Obviously a third of the remainder brings the total dead to fully a half! Never since Noah's day has there been such vast loss of human life on earth. Jesus had said of this approaching time, "*except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved*" (Matt. 24:22). The horror of that era would bring death to the whole human race if those days were not confined within God's predefined limits and ended by Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

Vs. 16 – Now we are introduced to the instruments through which these 4 angels will accomplish their grisly task. John saw a vast, mounted army of 200 million strong! In John's day, when it's estimated there would not have been more than 500 million people on earth, the tally of this army must have been a tremendous test of faith. Yet in our day it's all so very possible. Time magazine, over 4 decades ago (21<sup>st</sup> May, 1965), reported China's army alone at 200 million, using the very same figure John used. Moral of the story – If the fulfilment of God's promise seems impossible, just wait a bit.

There is no clear statement here as to where this invading army comes from. From the east of Israel or the other side of the Euphrates seems to be implied. Described is a massive force of tremendous military power, leaving a third of the earth's population dead in its wake. Remember how Daniel as well spoke of great end-time military activities, in chap. 11 of his book of prophecy. In the closing days of Antichrist's reign "*tidings out of the east shall trouble him*" (vs. 44), and then in the next verse he comes "*to his end*" without help. A 200 million strong threat would certainly be a bit troubling! We will see similarities with the later(?) development recorded in 16:12-16 (6<sup>th</sup> bowl judgment). Two separate events? Two phases of

*Rev 9:17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.*

*Rev 9:18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.*

*Rev 9:19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.*

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the same event?

Vs. 17-19 – Horses and riders described. Very little is said of the horsemen, only the appearance of their breastplates “*of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone*”, glowing and flashing with some shade of red, blue, or purple. There is greatest focus upon the horses though, so unlike horses of earth. Their heads are “*as the heads of lions*” and issue “*fire and smoke and brimstone*” from the mouth. And this is the means by which the people of earth are killed. Language of appearance? Actual horses? The best John could do in describing some sort of bullet-spewing personnel carriers? Another unearthly demonic host? Angazi! Descriptions do imply something beyond natural horses.

We certainly find pictured here a terrible

*Rev 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:*

*Rev 9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*

---

destruction on a staggering scale. How the world longs for peace, apparently gripping the “*man of sin*” in the desperate hope of it. Only to be met with war and death and loss like the world has never seen. Only when the Prince of peace comes will we know peace. Only when the King of righteousness reigns will we know justice on this earth. Only in righteousness is there true and lasting peace.

### **9:20-21** – Reaction Among Men

We might expect such a devastating, terrifying judgment as this to bring an impenitent world to its knees in immediate, complete repentance. As Jonah’s storm at sea drove the sailors to cry out first to their own gods, and then at last to the true God. But alas, it was quite the opposite! Even as the plagues upon Egypt only served to harden Pharaoh’s heart. Compare also the result of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal earthquake in chap. 6, where men of earth



recognize that God in His wrath is involved, but they will not repent. Even so these only continue in their idolatry, murdering, thieving, whoring, and sorceries according to their own pleasure! These are only confirmed in their own self-interests. It's a further study on human nature here. Punishment in and of itself does not force a change of heart. One is moved to repentance by it, while another only becomes more fixed in sin. The only difference is in the hearts of men, bringing differing results or responses. If correction does not produce repentance then it will nurture the opposite in obstinacy, bitterness, and rebellion. Correction *will* have an effect. It serves as the point of a wedge, forcing hearts to movement one way or the other. In the context of the 10 plagues upon Egypt, which should have thoroughly convinced reason, we're told 17 times of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Never has a man faced a more convincing argument! In the same way the Jews plotted Christ's death immediately after He raised Lazarus from the dead before all (Jn. 11). Their response was so utterly unreasonable! What ought to convince man's reason, whether judgments or mercies, does not reach the unreasonable God-hater. He is only more thoroughly hardened.

In the current age God is showing His goodness. He

is slow to wrath in His “*longsuffering to usward*”. But in that coming age of “*the Lord’s day*” His approach will be so very different. Then His way will be severity, wrath, and judgments unleashed, bringing terror and death upon unrepentant man. Mankind will then have had it both ways, and will be found God-rejecters whether in peace or in peril. The true fault will be displayed for all to see. The problem is not in God or in His approach, but in the nature of a rejecting heart. ***Without excuse!!***

## **Chapter 10** – The Messenger and the Book

This chapter begins the next parenthetical section (as chap. 7), running through to 11:14. We would naturally expect the 3<sup>rd</sup> woe to follow immediately after the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. But again we find a pause here, a portion that does not advance the narrative. Do you see the pattern? There were 6 seal judgments in chapter 6, followed by the pause of chapter 7, containing two visions highlighting those redeemed out of the tribulation from among Jews and Gentiles. Then chap. 8 returned to the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, ushering in the 7 trumpet judgments. And in chapter 8-9 we’ve seen 6 trumpet judgments, now followed by another pause containing the two visions of chap. 10-11. Then 11:15 returns to the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, again ushering in the 7 bowl judgments.

*Rev 10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:*

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A round of 6 judgments, followed by a lull, *an opportunity!* Then another round of 6, followed by another opportunity. And then at last the final flurry of judgments to the end. See again the grace in the storm my friend. Our God is the God of opportunity . . . for now.

### **10:1-7** – The Mighty Messenger

Vs. 1 – Another angel now enters the field of John’s vision, and the scene he relates is a very dramatic one indeed. He saw a mighty messenger coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, rainbow on his head, face like the sun, beaming with brilliance, feet like flaming columns of fire. There are many similarities here with the description of Christ in chap. 1. Some see this mighty messenger as Jesus coming to make announcement to earth. Comparable to “*the captain of the host of the LORD*” appearing to Joshua before the conquest of the Promised Land (Josh. 5), the Lord now appears before the final conquest of the whole earth. The last time we saw the Lord Jesus He had a book in

*Rev 10:2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,*

*Rev 10:3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.*

*Rev 10:4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.*

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His hand (chap. 5). And the cloud clothing is significant as well. Again, clouds often accompany God's presence, as we considered in chap. 1 (Acts 1:9; I Thess. 4:16-17). And clouds often mark Christ's appearance in this book (1:7; 14:14-16).

Vs. 2 – His feet upon land and sea, the two major aspects of earth, seems to imply a position of dominance over all the earth, laying claim to all as Satan's domain crumbles.

Vs. 3 – In response to His great cry as if a lion roaring, the “*seven thunders*” clapped and rumbled. The whole scene is one to inspire wonder and trembling. As if a massive storm brewing.

Vs. 4 – These thunders are more than just inarticulate rumblings, for John understood them

to say something. Perhaps as when the Father spoke from heaven to Jesus, before that Jerusalem crowd who would soon crucify Him (Jn. 12:28-29). Jesus had prayed there *“Father, glorify Thy name”*, expressing His settled resolve that He was happy and willing for whatever would most glorify His Father, regardless of what became of Him. And in response there came a voice from heaven saying, *“I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again”*. Some of the people standing around said it thundered. Some suggested an angel had spoken. The dull ear hears only a meaningless rumble when the Father speaks. The dull eye sees the light, but does not perceive the meaning (Acts 9:7; Dan. 10:7-8). But John’s ears were attuned to God’s voice in the thunder. And as he was about to follow the command given in 1:11 & 19 to *“write the things which thou hast seen”*, he was stopped by that heavenly voice. What the thunders uttered was not to be recorded. Why? Why would the Lord speak at all through the thunders if we cannot know it? Why should we think that whatever God says we have the *right* to hear? Obviously what was said was for John, alone! Though our God has revealed much to all men, He has things to say only to those individuals who love Him, which are not for others to know (Jn. 14:21). He is the rewarder of them *that diligently seek Him*. The rest go unrewarded.

*Rev 10:5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea  
and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,  
Rev 10:6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and  
ever, who created heaven, and the things that  
therein are, and the earth, and the things that  
therein are, and the sea, and the things which are  
therein, that there should be time no longer:*

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There are things known and understood by those who walk with Him, which they have from Him and can never fully communicate to others. As the Apostle Paul was “*caught up into paradise*” and heard “*unspeakable words, which it is not lawful [possible] for a man to utter*” (II Cor. 12:4). It was for Paul. This is what David meant by “*the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him*” (Ps. 25:14). This is why Jesus gave eternal truths in parables (Matt. 13:11-16), to shield the precious pearls of His truth from those who would only trample them under feet.

Vs. 5-7 – The dramatic introduction of this mighty messenger is the preparation appropriate for the momentous pronouncement He brings. With hand lifted up to heaven He solemnly vows by God the eternal Creator “*that there should be time no longer*”. The sense of “*time no longer*” here is that of time run out for earth. There would be *no further delay!*

The end of opportunity was at hand, as vs. 7 further explains. When the 7<sup>th</sup> angel sounds that last trumpet the bowl judgments will then be poured out in quick succession, and that tribulation era would come crashing to its spectacular end with Christ's return. When this mighty messenger makes this pronouncement it will be in the final stages and time will be short.

Notice again the unblushing declaration of God as Creator here. It's a prominent theme in this book;

- 4:11 – *“For Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created”.*
- 14:7 – *“Worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters”.*

Here is the simple answer to all evolutionary speculations, and part-way “Christian” concessions to it. How utterly foolish the manmade view of a universe created by “chance” or through resident forces apart from God!

That there would be no more delay is in answer to the query of God's own throughout the ages;

- *“How long, O Lord?”* (6:10).

*Rev 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.*

---

- “*Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*” (Acts 1:6).

The day will indeed come when God finally says, “Now is the time!”

God’s delays are always for man’s good. They never imply God’s *inability* to deal with the mess of man. They never imply His *indifference*. They never imply God weak of purpose or resolve. God’s delays always have man’s opportunity in view. Opportunity for repentance. His delays, as His warnings, are *all of grace!*

Vs. 7 – “*The mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets*” – He does not speak of hidden things but of “*declared*” truths, the grand direction in which God has been moving throughout the ages is there in the old Book. It has been there all along, the O.T. prophecies of the glorious return of Jesus Christ with the establishment of His earthly kingdom of



*Rev 10:8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.*

*Rev 10:9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.*

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peace and righteousness, and the eternal state to follow.

### **10:8-11** – The Little Book

Look again at this mighty messenger. Notice in his hand a little open book (vs. 2). John is now told to go take that book.

Vs. 9 – Upon obeying John was further commanded by the messenger to not only take the book but to eat it, with the promise that it would be both sweet in his mouth and bitter in his belly. Compare Ezekiel's experience in his call to ministry (Ezek. 2-3). Comp Jer. 15:16-18.

To eat God words is to appropriate the commands and statements and promises contained in God's Book. This is a biblical symbol for absorbing God's words, and this always in preparation for living it

*Rev 10:10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.*

*Rev 10:11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*

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and proclaiming it to others. Thoroughly understand God's Word, so that the truths contained therein become your own, a part of you. And then faithfully live it and speak it. Some make the mistake of moving in the reverse order, of speaking what they've neither learned nor lived.

*"Bitter . . . sweet"* – Speaks of God's message of judgment mingled with His message of mercy. Here is the effect of God's words in man. In one sense they bring joy;

- In the revelation of God's goodness, grace, and long-suffering.
- In His many precious promises.
- In His faithful fulfilment of past promises, assuring the same for those yet unfulfilled.
- In His blessed message of hope to believers.
- In His assurances of eventual justice, all

wrongs put right.

*“More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey comb” (Ps. 19:10).*

Yet in another sense God’s words bring bitterness, for so many will not accept. With Isaiah we groan, *“Lord, who hath believed our report?”* Therefore the bitter warning of judgment will most certainly fall. Again, He’s faithful to keep His promises, as this book of Revelation so abundantly testifies.

What a dreadful and blessed position to be in as a preacher of God’s Word! For he who bears the good news bears also the bad news to the condemned, rebellious people of earth. Someone must do it! One concerned for others will find greatest joy in God’s work, mingled with great heaviness of heart. God’s message and those who carry it are the savour of life unto life to those who will believe, and the savour of death unto death to those who will not (II Cor. 2:16). If it were not that God is sovereign the load would be unbearable! Paul rejoiced to be a messenger of Christ (I Tim. 1:12), yet he knew continual sorrow of heart for his Christ-rejecting people (Rom. 10:1). Jesus delighted to do His Father’s will, yet *“Man of sorrows”* was His name.

Bitter-sweet! How pleasant it is to proclaim good things. How bitterly distasteful to reveal divine judgments ready even now to be poured out on the world of wicked mankind! He who created heaven prepared also the Lake of Fire. He in whose presence is fullness of joy forevermore for the believer, decrees also for the unbeliever that the smoke of their torment will ascend forever and ever with no rest day and night (14:11). Many a gutless, self-loving Christian wants only to proclaim the sweet. May we be willing for the self-sacrifice of faithfulness in bringing the whole counsel of God to man.

*Be faithful to God's words, believer!* Be a faithful bearer of God's bad news as well as the good. Contemptible false prophets and preachers throughout the centuries have always tended to shun the bad news, choosing rather, in their self-will, to carry only a message of peace and comfort. Unfaithful, selfish, cowardly shepherds!

*Be faithful to your own soul, unbeliever!* Don't foolishly deceive yourself away from faith in Christ at the peril of your own eternal welfare. Be wise to understand and believe God's warnings and assurances;

*"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not*

*the Son of God hath not life” (I Jn. 5:12).*

*“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3).*

*“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith” (II Cor. 13:5).*

“The kingdoms of this world  
are become  
the kingdoms of our Lord,  
and of His Christ;  
and He shall reign  
for ever and ever”

(Revelation 11:15)

## **Class 10 – Revelation 11**

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*Rev 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.*

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### **Think Your Way Through**

- Chap. 1 – Son (revealed)
- Chap. 2-3 – 7 Churches
- Chap. 4 – Door (opened to heaven)
- Chap. 5-6 – 6 Seals
- Chap. 7 – Heaven (2 groups of redeemed there)
- Chap 8-9 – 6 Trumpets
- Chap. 10 – Angel and Book (times up)

### **Chapter 11**

In the first portion of this chapter we are still in the parenthesis begun with chap. 10. John apparently still stood before that mighty messenger come down from heaven.

*Rev 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

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## **11:1-2** – Temple Measured

John was now given a rod or reed of a type grown in the Jordan Valley. Similar to cane, it was a lightweight and tough reed commonly used as a measuring rod. And with this John was instructed to “*measure the temple of God*”, the altar, and the worshippers there. “*Tread under foot*” describes things desecrated and dominated. John’s work was only to relate to the inner enclosure of the holy place. He was to “*leave out*” the outer court of the temple, for this was given over to the Gentiles to be trampled for a period of 42 months. It will still be “*the times of the Gentiles*” at that point (Lk. 21:24), for Gentiles will still have a hand on the control of Jerusalem until the moment of Christ’s return.

What is the significance of this work of measuring? We see the same elsewhere. Compare;

- Zech. 2 – Zechariah’s 3<sup>rd</sup> vision, of a man measuring Jerusalem in anticipation of Christ’s return.



- Ezek. 40 – The temple of the future millennial kingdom is measured.
- Rev. 21:15-17 – The New Jerusalem is measured.

Measuring perhaps reflects the ideas of ownership or taking possession, as a new owner surveying what he has acquired. As well, perhaps the idea of assurance of reality is expressed through actual physical measurement. See how there is an actual, measurable temple there in the coming tribulation period. Of course there is not one in Jerusalem today. But there will be during this 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. And Israel will be sacrificing there, for we discover in Dan. 9:27 that all such sacrifices will be stopped at the mid-point of that final 7 of years before Christ's return. The last half of this 7 of years now comes into focus with the temple still *"tread under foot"* as these *"times of the Gentiles"* come to an end, when the kingdoms of the world's Gentile dominion are destroyed (Dan. 2 & 7), and Messiah's earthly kingdom is at last established.

*"Forty and two months"* – This is the first mention in Revelation of this time period of 3½ years, seen first in Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 7:25; 9:27 *"in the middle of the seven"*; 12:7). We'll see it four more times in this book.

*Rev 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses,  
and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred  
and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*

*Rev 11:4 These are the two olive trees, and the two  
candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*

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### **11:3-14** – Two Witnesses

John is now introduced to two very unusual characters, whom the mighty messenger referred to as “*My two witnesses*”.

Vs. 3-6 – Their work or ministry. These two will receive the ability to minister as prophets for 1260 days, in spite of great antagonism against them.

1260 days = 42 months (of 30 days each) =  
3½ years = “*time and times and the dividing  
of time*” = half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> seven of years

Clearly the period of their ministry points to either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the tribulation period. There are many ties to God’s prophets in these two.

- Their designated term of ministry of course ties them to the prophet Daniel.
- Being dressed in sackcloth, an indication of mourning, their ministry will be as the prophet Ezekiel’s and Jeremiah’s, speaking

*Rev 11:5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*

*Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

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lamentations and woe (vs. 3).

- There is association with the prophet Zechariah's 5<sup>th</sup> vision of the olive tree and lampstands (vs. 4). The oil from the olive tree provides a continual supply of fuel for the lamp, describing these men raised up and supernaturally protected and empowered to be shining witnesses in their day through the Spirit's continual supply.
- After the manner of the prophet Elijah they will be empowered to destroy with fire all who attempt or even purpose ("*will*") to hurt them before their time (vs. 5). And fire "*out of their mouth*"! Don't miss the repetition of this "*must*". God anticipates the raised eyebrows, clearing of throats, and shuffling feet of the sceptics.
- As that first prophet, Moses, and as Elijah,

they will have power over rain, elements, and disease.

These two will in fact be *untouchable* during the days granted to them to prophesy.

Who are these two men? Some say they will be Moses and Elijah, because of the similarity in their ministry abilities;

- Moses called down the ten plagues upon Egypt, turning water to blood.
- Elijah called down fire upon those with a will to hurt him (I Ki. 1) and at Carmel, and shut off rain for “*three years and six months*” (Lk. 4:25). A foreshadow of this same 3½-year period. There are other interesting parallels between King Ahab and Antichrist.
- Mal. 4:5 predicts Elijah’s coming “*before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD*”.
- Both Moses and Elijah are in some sense related to Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming in Matt. 16:28ff. They were both there in that pre-view of “*the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*” on the Mt. of Transfiguration.

Others insist these “*two witnesses*” must be Enoch and Elijah;

- Since these are the only two men who never actually experienced physical death.
- And since Heb. 9:27 applies the limit that “*it is appointed unto men once to die*”. Seems Moses couldn’t return and die a second time.

Then there’s a mixed bag of interpreters who suggest that these are not actually individuals, but are rather symbolic representations of;

- The Word of God, in the Old and New Testaments, as the combined witness of God’s Word on earth.
- Israel and the church, the two earthly witnesses of God throughout history.
- Etc.

Seems obvious these will be actual men, for they will be killed, their corpses left in the street, and raised again to life. We’re just not given names. Because whom they serve and how they serve are the issues of interest to the Lord, not the who of the servant. The Master matters, not the servant.

When will these events described here take place?

During the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of that final seven of years? My vote is for the 1<sup>st</sup> half. For “*the beast*” rising from the bottomless pit will put them to death in his time of coming out (vs. 7). And the fact that they remain dead for precisely 3½ days (vs. 9 & 11) is another reminder that this is all the time left to Antichrist at that point, who will consider himself in ultimate control at that hour of “victory”. But his days have been numbered by the only true Sovereign from of old. Their focus of ministry being Jerusalem, perhaps Antichrist will be prevented from presenting himself as supreme ruler (and god) by their powerful ministries. Their deaths then are perhaps the very point of Antichrist’s ascendancy, the last obstacle to the pinnacle of world power he seeks. So it’s likely that this marks the *midpoint* of the 7-year Tribulation, with the time remaining so greatly emphasized in the immediate context (vs. 2-3, 9, 11).

As Elijah in the days of Ahab, so these in a day of even greater unbelief and apostasy will be a frustrating threat to the entire wicked world for 3½ years, with supernatural powers equalling the greatest ever given by the Lord to men. A righteous prophet is always a tormenting vexation to a wicked world and worldly believers. For they stand right where God meant for them to stand. *In the way!* In

*Rev 11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*

*Rev 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

*Rev 11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.*

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the gap.

Vs. 7-10 – Their death.

*“When they shall have finished their testimony”* – Their end comes only according to the divine time table and no sooner. As with Samson, only when God’s power is removed, the oil supply cut off, can any power from below get to them. When supernatural power is withdrawn they will be immediately killed.

*“The beast”* – This is God’s title for *“that man of sin”* who is the Antichrist (chap. 13). This one will be so thoroughly empowered by Satan as no man ever before him.

Vs. 8-9 – Though not named, the venue is obviously

*Rev 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.*

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Jerusalem. Why there? Because this is where God's, and therefore Satan's, attention is focused.

Their dead bodies will be left on the street for days, against all proper human decency! Perhaps there will be a healthy fear of even touching them after the power of their ministry? How great the indignity, but not before God. The evil world's persecution may kill the body and handle with greatest disgrace, but that's all it can do. It never touches the soul. *God's* attitude is ever the only real concern.

So significant will be the death of these troublesome witnesses, bringing such a vast relief to the inhabitants of the whole earth, that all the world will look on during those days, gawking and gloating over their deaths. The literal statement here is that they out of "*the people and kindreds and tongues and nations*", "are seeing their corpses 3½ days".



Vs. 10 – The result is celebration on a worldwide scale, so great will be the joy over these two tormentors dead at last. Described here is a global party, with great merry-making and gift exchanging.

Now take a good look there at vs. 9. Anything strike you as strange? No, not in our day of TV's, satellites, sky news, and internet. But think about the circumstance described here from the perspective of John's day, over 1,900 years ago. Can you hear the unbelieving critics of John's day? "Ha!" say they, "All 'they that dwell upon the earth' shall 'see their dead bodies?!' Within 3½ days!?" What absolute rubbish! How far could a rider get on a good horse in 3½ days, man?! You couldn't get out of sight of the Jordan Valley on the very *best* camel within so few hours, let alone foreigners making the trek back to actually see! What kind of foolishness is this Book? And even if the whole world could somehow be informed, how on earth could they all be transported to Jerusalem, and find food and water and accommodation while there?!" Well of course they won't need to actually, physically go there in our modern digital age, where we can electronically visit the streets of any city on earth in the comfort of our own lounge.

Oh be careful little critic what you doubt!

Oh be careful little critic what you doubt!

For the Father up above,

Must not be thought too lightly of!

So be careful little critic what you doubt!

Every age has considered man at his innovative limit. Again, the rule of thumb; If what God promises seems quite impossible, just wait a bit!

These two will be the last of the prophets of God to ever be silenced by death before the end comes. The faithless world may put to silence the *witnesses* to the truth, but they cannot silence the truth proclaimed, not one jot or tittle of it. God has revealed His will, and His will shall be done! His word *“shall not return void”*.

Vs. 11-12 – Their resurrection & ascension. Party’s over!

*“Great fear fell upon them which saw”* – Just imagine the stunning wave of astonishment sweeping through the gathered, high-spirited crowd (and quickly circling the globe) as these two symbols of Satan’s victory, dead for days, suddenly

*Rev 11:11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*

*Rev 11:12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.*

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stand to their feet! And then, even as the voice of God echoed through those Jerusalem streets in another day, so here, now crying “Come up here”. And before that amazed, frustrated, terrified crowd, these two will ascend bodily to heaven in a cloud. Even as Jesus did from the Mt. of Olives. In this stunning event the Lord will send a shuddering warning around the world of who is Most High. God will honour His own in the sight of their enemies, frustrating the purposes of the wicked at the last (Ps. 23:5; 112:10). Compare the man in the torments of hell able to see Lazarus comforted in Abraham’s bosom (Lk. 16).

Now if these two prophets could somehow be spiritualized (twisted) into representing the church, then we might find good cause here for believing in a mid-tribulation Rapture. But there is no fair indication that these two men are to be read that way.

*Rev 11:13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

*Rev 11:14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.*

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Vs. 13-14 – In the same moment that these two are taken up a great earthquake will rock Jerusalem with 7000 dead as a result. The timing will be too obvious, the supernatural too evident. Compare the earthquake at Christ's death, and again in response to the pleas of the martyred dead in chap. 6. God will trouble the earth over His troubled saints! And that those left alive and terrified "*gave glory to the God of heaven*" does not mean they will be saved. Only that they will recognize God's involvement to a degree.

God's ageless imperative is *payday someday*. He may not pay at the end of every day, but at the end of the day He pays! Don't allow the injustices of a perverted world to frustrate you, for God Himself will one day turn Frustrator in your behalf. As you in living for Him have been treated as if the bitterness of wormwood here, understand that the day comes when God will be serving up wormwood

*Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

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to your tormentors. For *“He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed”* (Isa. 66:5). Be wise to wait *upon* Him as you wait *for* Him.

### **11:15-19** – The 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet

God’s revelation through John leaps forward now to His ultimate triumph, looking all the way through into the soon coming millennial kingdom.

Vs. 15 – Finally the 7<sup>th</sup> angel sounds, and John heard great voices in heaven. All proclaiming together. This is unlike previous instances where a single voice made announcement. This time there’s a great symphony of voices exalting together in the triumph of Christ as Sovereign of earth. Here is hope for the whole of creation, groaning and travailing in pain together until now (Rom. 8:18-25), waiting, waiting, waiting for renewal, restitution, resolution, rectitude, righteousness. It will be so close at this point that the anticipation will be electric. Beyond and above all the chaos of the battle still raging on earth at that point, victory is

*Rev 11:16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,*

*Rev 11:17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*

*Rev 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*

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already assured, the song and shouts of triumph already beginning to be heard above the wails from earth. Oh the longing in the hearts of those touched by God for that day when visible dominion over all creation passes into the hands of “*our Lord, and of His Christ*”. Oh the longing for the Lord to at last fulfil His many promises of His coming kingdom (Dan. 2:35, 44; 7:14, 26-27; Zech. 14:8ff). “*He shall reign forever and ever*”, and never again will the earth be governed by man! This is the very thing God the Father promised His Son in Ps. 2:6-9, that His reign would be established, with all rebellion dashed to pieces.

Vs. 16-19 – With this heavenly proclamation John saw the 24 elders fall from their thrones upon their

*Rev 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

---

faces in worship and thanksgiving before God. See how to bow to the Lord in service is no dark bondage, but full of happiest scenes of praise and adoration. These have found true happiness in their clear recognition of who He is;

- The Almighty God of power who reigns over all.
- The Eternal One.
- The One who meets human wrath with divine wrath.
- The One who is Judge.
- The One who is Rewarder of all, both small and great, who diligently seek Him. He forgets none. He misses no service. He has a book of remembrance (Mal. 3).
- The One who meets destroyers with destruction.

Vs. 19 – John then saw the heavenly temple of God

opened, the most sacred things of God open to the gaze of men. This indicates God's willing exposure of His things to His saints. God Himself will dwell with men. Yet still there are clear indications of His judgment at the same time in the lightnings and voices and thunderings and earthquake and hail. To the one who believes and receives, *open house!* To the one who refuses, *searing judgment* poured out in fullest potency. Always both are together, God's holiness and His love. At the same moment the Lord was lifting a faithful Noah above the Flood, He was snuffing out a faithless world of rejecters. At the same time the Lord was hauling reluctant yet believing Lot out of Sodom, He was hailing fire and brimstone on those godless cities. At the same time that He was bringing the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian captivity on wicked Judah and Jerusalem He was scattering the witness of Himself through the Jewish nation throughout Nebuchadnezzar's world, and He was transferring Daniel to the place of his greatest work and ministry and blessing. Blessing *and* cursing. Both bitter and sweet for those dwelling by choice either upon Mt. Ebal or Mt. Gerazim.

Where have *you* chosen to live?



## Class 11 – Revelation 12

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*Rev 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven;  
a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under  
her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:  
Rev 12:2 And she being with child cried, travailing in  
birth, and pained to be delivered.*

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### Chapter 12

In this chapter we discover heavenly causes for earthly conflicts. And we're introduced as well to several acting characters. The 7<sup>th</sup> angel has sounded his trumpet (11:15), yet the final round of bowl judgments it introduces does not begin until chap. 16. So again we are in a portion which steps away from strict chronology, describing events and characters relating to the mid-point of the 7-year Tribulation. Allusions to Daniel's prophecies abound here.

#### **12:1-2** – First Heavenly Sign

There appeared to John a “*great wonder*” or sign in heaven; a woman, the sun thrown around her like a garment, the moon under her feet, a crown of 12 stars on her head (she's encircled with celestial

bodies, making her a central point of focus), pregnant and soon to deliver. In fact even as John looks the woman cries with the labour pains upon her.

John tells us here that this vision of the woman was a sign. When we're told by John of things he sees, we must tend to read it normally, not looking to "interpret". But when he tells us that he saw a "*wonder*" or sign it begs interpretation, suggesting some meaning other than face value. Who or what could this woman represent? Clues;

- The son born to this woman in vs. 5 is to "*rule all nations with a rod of iron*". This is from Ps. 2:9, speaking of Israel's Messiah/ King (Rev. 19:15). Compare Heb. 1:5, where Ps. 2 is applied directly to Jesus Christ. This son is caught up to God's throne in what could only describe Christ's ascension (Acts 1). Some would like to see this child as representing the church, which would offer happy support for Amillennial doctrine. But the church is pictured in the Bible as the bride of Christ, not as the offspring of Israel (19:7-8; 22:17; II Cor. 11:2).
- The sun, moon, and stars remind us of Joseph's dream in Gen. 37:9-10. Jacob, who

*Rev 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven;  
and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads  
and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*

---

became “Israel”, is represented in this dream by the sun, Rachel by the moon, and the sons by the stars, that source out of which the Messiah or Seed of the woman would come.

Clearly this woman describes the nation of Israel, the source of Messiah’s coming into the world as Saviour and Redeemer. The Catholic church of course sees Mary in this woman, mother of Jesus, with this scene picturing the crowned splendour of that queen of heaven now resplendent in glory. Where could we find support for such an exaltation of Mary elsewhere in the Bible? Signs alone cannot be the foundation of one’s doctrine. The nation of Israel is the source or channel by which the Lord brought Jesus to the world, Mary only in a lesser degree as the actual human vehicle. This image is much bigger than gentle Mary, meek and mild.

And don’t miss, my amillennial friend, how that Israel (the woman) does not disappear from the scene with the rise of the church. Rather she is preserved through to the end (vs. 6).

*Rev 12:4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

*Rev 12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

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### **12:3-4** – Second Heavenly Sign

John then saw another sign in heaven; “*a great red dragon*”, which vs. 9 clearly identifies as Satan. And the dragon had 7 crowned heads and 10 horns. Crowns and horns signify power or authority. Compare 13:1 & 17:3, 9-13. The ties with Daniel’s prophecy are obvious. Compare Dan. 7: 7-9 & 23. By means of like symbolism connection is made here between Satan and the last world empire of Antichrist, that one to be replaced by Christ’s earthly kingdom. Daniel never informed us that this final kingdom is somehow connected with Satan. Revelation now builds on the old prophecy, filling in the details. Thus;

- The woman = Israel.
- The dragon = Satan.
- The man-child = Christ.

Again, the colour red signifies sin or evil (Isa. 1:18; Rev. 17:3-5). God's colour coding is a clue as well to the identity and true associations of Antichrist in his coming out, pictured in the red horse of the 2<sup>nd</sup> seal judgment (6:4-5).

*"His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven"* – There are many different views of what this means. This is rather surprising in view of the clarity vs. 9 offers, where we see the same phrasing, "cast to the earth". Seems obvious that this is a reference to the host of angels who fell with Satan's fall in pride, becoming his host of demons. On Satan's fall, compare Isa. 14:12, *"How art thou fallen from heaven O Lucifer"*, and Lk. 10:18.

Note Satan's position, poised and ready to devour the woman's child the moment it was born. Since the first prophecy of the Seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15 Satan has sought to kill or corrupt the seed;

- He killed Abel through Cain. Replaced by Seth.
- He corrupted much of the godly line through compromise in the pre-Flood days.
- He attempted to substitute Ishmael for Isaac through Abraham's carnal effort to help God keep His promise.

- He tried to turn the blessing from Jacob to Esau, seeking to counter God's words.
- He would have tried to kill Jacob through Esau had Jacob not been removed to a far country.
- He attempted to kill every Jewish male born in Egypt through Pharaoh's decree (Ex. 1).
- He tried to wipe out the Jews through Haman in Esther's day.
- He made a try, through Herod, to destroy "*the one born king of the Jews*" in the Bethlehem massacre (Matt. 2).

And as Satan sought to destroy the Son of God from the moment of His birth, so he seeks the destruction or corruption of *every* child of God from the moment he is born again.

.....

## **On the Side**

Herod was an Edomite, a descendant of Esau. From the days of Esau the Edomites were the enemies of Israel and his descendants, resulting in Herod's ready willingness to massacre Jewish babies. That bitter hatred for Israel in Esau's descendants can still be found in the Muslim race.

*Rev 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*

*Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,*

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Israel is hated because Jacob usurped Esau's leadership, and then slipped away out of reach into a distant land. Avoiding the blow, he instead received a bride. Do you see the similarities here? Through His resurrection and ascension God's Son slipped out of Satan's reach into the safety of heaven, receiving the kingdom and dominance Satan thinks to be his right. And there the Son receives His bride in the church.

.....

Vs. 6 – The woman flees from Satan's wrath and will be protected from his effort to starve her out for a period of 1260 days, or 3½ years. Again, the time remaining is underscored (vs. 6, 14). And again the point of focus is the midpoint or turning point of the Tribulation period.

### **12:7-13** – Satan Cast from Heaven

*Rev 12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven*

*Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

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Vs. 7 – Compare this image of heavenly war with Dan. 12:1-2, where Michael stands up for his people, describing the same final days of Antichrist's (Satan's) reign.

Vs. 8-9 – Prior to the moment pictured here it seems Satan has access to heaven. But at this point he with his host are finally shut out and confined to earth.

Vs. 9 – “*Devil*” (*diabolos*) means slander or slanderer, a word found 38 times in the N.T., 35 times as a title for the Devil and 3 times as an act;

- I Tim. 3:11 – Forbidden of the wives of spiritual leaders.
- Titus 2:3 – Forbidden of the older women.
- II Tim. 3:3 – In the list of last days unholy ways.

Slander is the voicing of criticisms against another,



either openly or by insinuation, speaking either that which is false, or even what is true but with a measure of hostile intent. Slander colours, shades, or exaggerates reality based on a seed of truth. Compare the “*evil report*” of the spies, greatly exaggerating the obstacles in the Promised Land. Slander is a sin of the proud (III Jn. 10). In Ps. 15, another of those portions relating the ways of the godly, we read that God’s man “*backbiteth not with his tongue*” (vs. 3). The Hebrew idiom there is literally to “go about with his tongue”, spreading around harmful statements about another. God’s book of wisdom names one who “*uttereth a slander*” as “*a fool*” in Prov. 10:18, and then goes on to give clear instruction on how to handle a concern we might have with another in Prov. 25:9. Compare;

- David’s kingly resolve to “*cut off*” every one who “*privily slandereth his neighbour*” in Ps. 101:5.
- The guiding principle of the upright in Prov. 11:3. The word translated “*integrity*” there reflects an honest, sincere simplicity of mind. A fundamental innocence moved by no shred of evil purpose or malicious intent.
- God’s judgment upon those who sin with their mouth in Jer. 9:1-9.

The word “*satan*” means “adversary”. Satan ever works in opposition to God and all that are His.

*“Which deceiveth the whole world”* – The action of the verb here is present and continuous. This does not speak of what Satan is attempting to do, but of what he *is* currently doing. His great work of the ages is a world fooled like Eve into believing;

- That they can ignore God’s words and get away with it.
- That man can lift himself and make his own way to God or deity.
- That God is less than perfect and loving in His designs.
- That momentary pleasure is the end all and be all.

Satan is ever busy speaking essentially the same words of temptation as in Gen. 3. He fills our eyes and poisons our hearts with scenes of sex and violence and calls it entertainment. He consumes our time and thoughts with the useless drivel of sport under the same title. He makes wrong to seem right and calls it alternative lifestyle. He puts girls and women in public, clothed essentially in their underwear, and calls it a swim costume or

*Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven,  
Now is come salvation, and strength, and the  
kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for  
the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which  
accused them before our God day and night.*

---

fashion. He sanctions the murder of millions of helpless unborn babes and calls it a woman's choice. He fills our land with criminals through a soft view on society's evils and calls it humanitarian. He bleeds the church of holy fervency and calls it relevancy. He sanctions sin and calls it human rights. He makes lust legitimate, calling it love and romance. He promotes the approval of pride and selfishness and calls it self-esteem. *We live in a thoroughly deceived world!* Satan, as a prowling lion, seeks to get the advantage of us, to get a toehold in our lives, to make inroads into our thinking, purposes, desires, and habits (II Cor. 2:11; I Pet. 5:8). He works as the lions work a herd, seeking to isolate one alone, away from the strength of the group (James 1:14). And then he approaches with the same old tried and trusted tactics of *"the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life"*.

Vs. 10 – Satan ever seeks to accuse believers *"before our God day and night"*. As if a prosecuting

*Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

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attorney, he points to our imperfections, which are indeed many, more than we may care to admit. He of course sees our every deceptive manoeuvre, every sideways glance, every whispered oath. Satan simply cannot fathom imputed righteousness or a God of grace. Though our subtle sins be secret on earth, they are open scandal in the spirit world. The evil one assumes these must surely disqualify us from hope of God's presence. And these he throws up in God's face as evidence that we don't belong to Him, and that He's wasting His grace on us. Compare Nathan's words from the Lord to David in II Sam. 12:14, "*by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme*". Though the angels of heaven rejoice with every soul saved and put right with God, the demons of hell rejoice with every saint put wrong with God! But here is where Jesus, our great Advocate and High Priest (ombudsman), steps forward in our behalf (I Jn. 2:1). He, in grace, as our defence attorney, continues in our behalf to plead the cause of the believer before the Father upon the merits of His own shed blood. With a

*Rev 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

*Rev 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*

---

priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, He never dies, never quits, *ever lives* to make intercession in our behalf (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 5:9-10). Our awareness of this truth counsels our heart against our ever returning to sin. And if Christ be for us who can fairly be against us (Rom. 8).

Vs. 12 – This “*woe to the inhabitants of the earth*” indicates the reason for Satan’s change of program at the mid-point of the tribulation through Antichrist. Because at this point he is cast from access to heaven and infused with utterly irrepressible rage with only the limited field of earth within which to pour it out.

Vs. 13 – Unable to get to the God he hates, he turns his rage upon all that is called after God’s name (Israel, believers) through the instrumentality of “*the man of sin*”.

*Rev 12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.*

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### **12:14-17** – Israel Supernaturally Protected

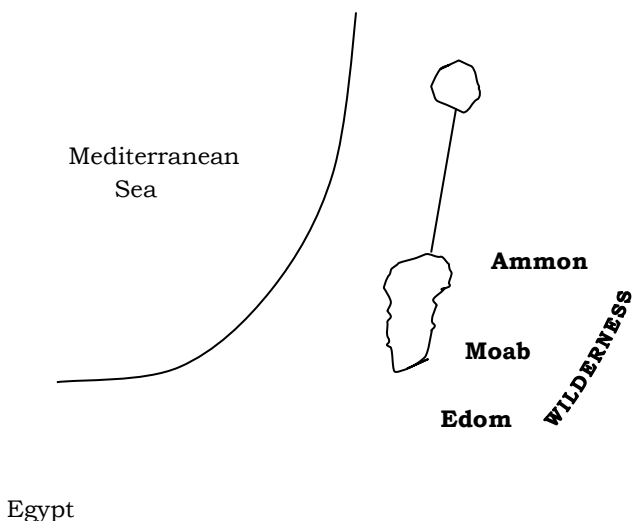
This again relates the mid-point of Daniel’s final seven of years, with now the spiritual motivation behind the earthly treacheries given. Hearing and obeying Christ’s warning and instruction for those of that day who see the “*abomination of desolation*” (Matt. 24:15-20), many of the Jews will find ability to effectively flee from Antichrist “*into the wilderness*”. This ability and protection is another token of God’s grace to an undeserving people.

Now I’m reminded of those interesting words in Daniel’s prophecy, at 11:41, speaking of the three countries of Edom, Moab, and Ammon, which somehow “*escape out of his hand*” during the days of Antichrist’s reign of terror. Could these protected countries perhaps represent the “*wilderness*”, that “*place prepared of God*” to which Israel flees, finding refuge and nourishment there for the remaining 3½ years of Antichrist’s rule?

*Rev 12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.*

*Rev 12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*

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Vs. 15-16 – Satan will move to stop Israel with “*water as a flood*”. But the Lord will use the earth to swallow up the flood, even as He used the same to deal with the sons of Korah in the wilderness. Compare Dan. 9:26. Will this be literal water? The “*flood*” of an army, as the attacking Assyrians described in Isa. 8:7? Angazi. Both Napoleon and

*Rev 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman,  
and went to make war with the remnant of her seed,  
which keep the commandments of God, and have the  
testimony of Jesus Christ.*

---

Hitler when marching against Moscow lost to the snow. The earth or climate countered their offensive. Perhaps Antichrist's experience will be something of the same.

Vs. 17 – Compare the attitude and approach of Antiochus Epiphanes against “*they that understand among the people*” in Dan. 11:32-35.



## **Class 12 – Revelation 13**

In chapter 12 we were introduced to three characters;

- The woman = Israel.
- The great red dragon = Satan.
- The man child = Jesus Christ.

The dragon sought to devour the child even as the woman brought him to birth, but the child was caught up to the safety of heaven. The woman (Israel) then fled to the safety of the wilderness where she will be kept and nourished in a place prepared of God for 3½ years (cf. Matt. 24:15-22). This marks the mid-point of the tribulation. She will flee from Satan's effort to destroy her, because Satan's permit to heaven will be revoked at that point, and he with his demons will be cast to earth raging at all that is called by God's name, raging at that nation used of God to bring Messiah into the world and Satan's mortal wound through Him, raging "*because he knoweth that he hath but a short time*" (12:12). But by God's grace a remnant of Israel will be granted deliverance from his power.

In chapter 13 we are now introduced to two more

*Rev 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*

---

important characters, both arising from earth, rather than related to heaven as in the chap. 12;

- The beast out of the sea – Antichrist rising to his brief day on the throne of world rule.
- The beast out of the earth – The “False Prophet”, unholy sidekick of the first.

We find in this chapter interesting insight into the nature of the tribulation era, with its single world government, united world economy, and miraculous things in evidence.

## **Chapter 13** – Satan’s Two Servants

### **13:1-8** – Rise of the Beast

Vs. 1 – In his vision John stood on the shore looking out over the sea, out of which he saw a beast rise. Comparable to the dragon of chap. 12, this beast had 7 heads, 10 horns, 10 crowns upon his horns, and names of blasphemy on his heads. We cannot help but to see comparisons here with

*Rev 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*

---

our study of Daniel. There the prophet described in the latter stage of the 4<sup>th</sup> and final kingdom of man, an empire based in the area of old Rome (see discussion of Dan. 7 & 9 in Reading Companion to the Book of Daniel). Out of some type of European confederacy of ten nations or kings there will arise a “*little horn*”, a king who will begin small but will rise to world prominence. This “*little horn*” will be characterized by a mouth speaking blasphemy and by persecution of believers. Daniel has already told us that the ten horns are 10 kings who shall be reigning when the “*little horn*” arises (Dan. 7:24). Compare Rev. 17:9ff. Satan’s crowns are on his seven heads, showing him the hidden power behind the totality of man’s earthly kingdoms (17:9-10). The beast’s crowns are on his ten horns, showing him to be supreme ruler over the ten-nation confederacy of his day (17:12).

Vs. 2 – This beast incorporates aspects of all of the creatures in Daniel’s chap. 7 dream;

- “*Like a leopard*”, as the Grecian Empire (Dan.

7:6).

- Feet like that of a bear, as the Medo-Persian Empire (Dan. 7:5).
- Mouth like a lion's, as the Babylonian Empire (Dan. 7:4).
- Empowered and enthroned by the dragon (Satan), the "*dreadful and terrible*" beast of the 4<sup>th</sup> world empire (Dan. 7:7-8).

These creatures Daniel as well saw "*come up from the sea*", which Daniel interprets as arising "*out of the earth*" (7:17; Rev. 17:15). Pictured in this rising beast is an empire that will be the very pinnacle of all earthly empires combined. Compare Nebuchadnezzar's Dan. 2 dream of all human kingdoms comprising one image of an awesome man. Again, through the dream of the pagan king the image of the kingdoms of men was the stunning statue of a man. Through the dream of the prophet of God (Dan. 7 & 8) the same kingdoms are depicted as beasts. Man in his pride is as a beast in God's eyes. We see Satan's influence intertwined in that king and kingdom like none ever before it (II Thess. 2:9, "*whose coming is after the working of Satan*"). This is affirmed in the comparable appearance of beast and dragon with heads, horns, and crowns (12:3). Again, so much of the symbolism used here

we've already been given the basis for understanding in Daniel. Described here is the rise of that infamous "*little horn*" of Daniel 7, out of the sea of humanity;

- Who will be different from all others (Dan. 7:24).
- Who will arise in a 10 king confederacy, subduing three kings in his rise to power (Dan. 7:8, 24).
- Who "*shall speak great words against the Most High*" in blasphemy (Dan. 7:25).
- Who "*shall wear out the saints of the Most High*" in worldwide war against God's people (Dan. 7:21, 25).
- Who shall "*think to change times and laws*" (Dan. 7:25).
- Who will be given a free hand for 3½ years (Dan. 7:25).
- From whom dominion shall be taken away at the last "*to consume and to destroy it unto the end*". Even "*whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming*" (II Thess. 2:8). "*Yet he shall come to His end and none shall help Him*" (Dan. 11:45).

*Rev 13:3 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.*

*Rev 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?*

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Vs. 3 – Here is an intriguing, mysterious, and vital aspect of the impressiveness of this one. The beast will receive a wound at some point after his rise to public prominence. A deadly wound, “*as it were wounded to death*”. Yet it seems it will only be “as if” he “*were wounded to death*”. He won’t actually be killed, though it’s going to appear so, for we read here that he will be “*healed*”, not resurrected. Yet this event will be so significant it will cause all the world to wonder after this one. Perhaps the nature of this “*deadly wound*” will be such that it would normally have brought certain death. The healing will be distinctly supernatural, “*as it were*” a resurrection from death. The great significance of this event can be seen as well in the beast later repeatedly characterized by it (vs. 12, 14; 17:8).

Vs. 4 – The world will be utterly dazed with wonder and worship for this one. Their “*worship*” or ascribing of worth to the dragon, the beast, and his

image is mentioned several times in this chapter. How insulting to God is the unseeing, unsaved world! The Lord of glory, the eternal Son of God actually did die and rise from death. But there was no such wholesale wonder over Him or worship in heathen hearts! Only yawning indifference. Yet now this beast, this son of Satan, is healed from a wound that only *looks* like death. And the world is absolutely befuddled in wonder and amazement. Because this one will arise from men, being one of their own and full of the evil one, rather than coming down from heaven and full of the Spirit. God Himself, Creator of heaven and earth, writes a book and the world yawns, and time covers it with dust. Yet some godless author or “prophet” writes another novel and they can’t keep the shelves stocked. God gives us the glorious gospel, the grand story of redemption, in the *clear language* of the Bible text and the world is barely even stirred to cast a glance. Then they do handsprings and cartwheels, filling their headlines over ridiculous computer-generated, coded, cryptic, imagined messages supposedly *hidden* in the text. It doesn’t make sense! With no appeal in gold that’s real, they’re all atwitter over worthless glitter! Jesus explained it when He said, “*My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me . . . but ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep*” (Jn. 10).

*Rev 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*

*Rev 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*

---

The world loves its own (Jn. 15:19), one out of the sea, not One born from above. And when Satan and his point-man arises to power with impressive displays in those last days all superficial lip-service to God will be flung to the wind as men display their true nature and affinity, running after Antichrist in fawning wonder and worship. Satan's purpose has always been to receive the worship due only to the Lord (Isa. 14:14).

Vs. 5-6 – This beast will be characterized by blasphemy and self-exaltation, putting down the true God as he seeks to promote himself as god. As Daniel said of this one, *“he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods . . . he shall magnify himself above all”* (Dan. 11:36-37). And as the Apostle Paul added, *“who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called god, or that is worshipped”* (II Thess. 2). This *“man of sin”* will become like the Devil behind him, the great



*Rev 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*

*Rev 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

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slanderer, talking down the only One truly worthy of praise.

*“Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months”* – Again his time limit is underscored. And the giver of this day of sway can only be God. He is both the Giver and the Limiter.

Vs. 7-8 – Antichrist will demand universal allegiance after the foreshadows we see in Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3) and Ahab, attempting to rid the world of every last soul who will not worship according to his demands. Satan’s principle is absolute zero freedom of religion. He will give to Antichrist what he offered to Christ in His temptation, *“all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them”* (Matt. 4:8-10).

All *“whose names are not written in the book of life”* – Compare 17:8 & 20:11-15. Those whose names are found written there will understand to not

*Rev 13:9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.*

*Rev 13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

*Rev 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*

---

follow the voice of a stranger (Jn. 10:4-5).

### **13:9-10** – A Word of Courage

Here is a glimmer of hope for God's saints in the midst of the worst empire of evil the world will ever endure. God will indeed bring all things level. *"Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord".*

### **13:11-18** – Rise of Beast II

*"I beheld another beast"* – Compare this 2<sup>nd</sup> character with the 1<sup>st</sup>. Similarities;

- Described by the same term, *"beast"*.
- The word translated *"another"* in vs. 11 reflects another of the same kind.
- This one is also horned.
- He speaks as the dragon or Satan, showing a similar source of his words.

*Rev 13:12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*

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- He has all the power or authority of the 1<sup>st</sup> beast.

#### Differences;

- Rises from the earth instead of from the sea.
- Two horns rather than ten.
- Apparently only one head rather than seven.
- Resembled a lamb rather than aspects of Daniel's beasts of prey.
- Distinct from the other in that he ministers "*before*" the 1<sup>st</sup> beast and directs world worship to him (vs. 12).

This unholy associate of Antichrist, who will be like him yet distinct, is referred to throughout the rest of Revelation as "*the false prophet*" (16:13; 19:20; 20:10). This title, combined with his resemblance to a lamb, seems to suggest some religious nature to his work. While the focus and function of the 1<sup>st</sup> beast revolves around political power and

*Rev 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he  
maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in  
the sight of men,*

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prominence, the function of this 2<sup>nd</sup> is specifically to direct world worship to the 1<sup>st</sup> beast, as some kind of servant of the other's exaltation or minister of worship. This one seems to be cast in a dark version of the Holy Spirit's role in relation to Jesus in seeking to glorify Him (Jn. 16:13-14). Note in the relation of these unholy characters to each other the comparisons with the Trinity of God;

- Satan's sinister role compares to God the Father's as the unseen source of all.
- The Beast holds a comparable role to God the Son, the *antichrist* of the true Christ. He briefly becomes king of the kings of earth and the human representative of the supreme spiritual power behind him. Both Christ and Antichrist are struck down and raised again and become the focus of exaltation and worship.
- The False Prophet is comparable to the Holy Spirit, lifting up or glorifying the first beast, directing all worshipful attention to that earthly representative.

*Rev 13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

*Rev 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

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Behold Satan's great counterfeit trinity and religion!

Vs. 13-15 – In leading all people of earth to worship the first beast, this 2<sup>nd</sup> will perform “*great wonders*”, a term never even used of Christ's miracles. He will perform wonders such as calling down fire from heaven to earth. Of course Elijah is well known for having done the same (II Ki. 1), but it's not a “*great*” wonder to the blind world until Satan's man does it.

Vs. 14 – He will cause the people of earth to “*make an image to the beast*”, an icon, a figure or likeness or physical representation.

Vs. 15 – The False Prophet will then be empowered to “*give life*” to that image, such that the image will actually be able to speak, unlike every dumb idol before it. Somehow this will become the means by

which all who refuse to worship the image of the beast will be put to death. This remarkable image is so significant that it's mentioned several times further in this book (14:9-11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).

Now the question arises how this abominably wicked one, this servant and director of worship to the greatest blasphemer of all time, could have such power to give life to this idol? The text says he gives life or breath to it, not just “as if it were” or the impression of it. This does not appear to be some computer-generated virtual reality thing, or some kind of profound mechanical or digital brilliance. That sort of thing has become old news even in our day. But this will be impressive enough to induce universal worship. The text says actual life or spirit will be given to this image, the very thing God has always made the point that an idol does not have (Ps. 115 & 135). Satan is also a created being and does not possess this divine ability to give life. But it will be given to him! In the interesting phrase “*he had power*” (kjv), found both in vs. 14 & 15, the literal statement in the Greek behind the English is “it was given to him”! And what could be the source of this ability but God? But how could God empower Satan to empower this False Prophet to empower this image to live? How could God provide

the means to lead the people of earth to worship the beast and his image? Please understand that the Lord has already informed us in II Thess. 2:9-12 that He will allow this, giving there the reasons why as well. As He allowed for the lying demon to lead Ahab to his death in I Ki. 22, even so in that last day He will allow for the deception and thus the destruction of all who stubbornly refuse to believe and receive the truth of the gospel. And He will allow this through the ability granted of *“all power and signs and lying wonders”*, through the miraculous. What shall you do in the day God Himself rises up against you to lead you to destruction? If God be for us, who can be against us? But *if God be against us, who can be for us?!* Who shall be able to stand when the great day of His wrath is come?

Thus this devilish duo will exercise a two-fold thrust in forcing the world to universal worship of the beast. From a positive direction they will lead the world to worship through their miraculous powers. And from a negative direction they will drive the world to universal worship, through the ability to sift the world's population, preserving alive only those who are willing to honour the beast, and rooting out and putting to death all those unwilling to bow.

*Rev 13:16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:*

*Rev 13:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

*Rev 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.*

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Please understand that Satan uses the miraculous to attract to his cause too, and more so as we approach the last days. Supernatural manifestations alone do not ensure a work or ministry or event to be of God! *God's* Spirit does not contradict His words. It's the other spirits at work in churches who subtly direct the attention of people away from the word of truth to more interesting "revelations" and manifestations.

Vs. 16-18 – Rooting out the "rebels". The very effective means to be used in sifting the people of earth is now given. Think about how the public library is rather selective about who borrows books. And through a card system, only those who are recognized and approved, only card-carrying members can remove books. In the same way Antichrist will essentially proclaim the world his



own and all the kingdoms and people and produce of it. And he will be selective as to who may access the goods of earth. He will require every individual of age to receive a mark of identification on his right hand or forehead. To receive that mark will offer the privilege of participating in buying and selling on earth, i.e. access to food or the right to not starve. However, in that day one will only be able to receive that mark by affirming allegiance to Antichrist! But to receive that mark in that era will mark one out for much more than just greater ease of existence. It will mark one for *God's judgment!* For every one so marked;

- Will not be among those with name written in the book of life (vs. 8).
- Will drink of God's undiluted wrath (14:9-10).
- Will be tormented without rest into the ages of the ages (14:10-11).
- Will be excluded from the Lord's presence in glory (15:1ff).
- Will be the objects of God's judgments on earth (16:1ff).

That mark in that day will be the deciding factor, involving a decision of the most incredible importance. To receive it and "live" will be the final,

irrevocable choice for Satan and against the Saviour. To refuse will mean almost certain death, but to accept will mean certain *eternal* death! Every person on earth by this means will be forced to the decision whether to worship Antichrist or to suffer the penalty of death. Again, the decision to take that mark in that day, to side with Satan, will seal one's eternal destiny!

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## **On the Side**

Compare the difference in approach. God *draws* a soul through pleading, as the earnest cry of wisdom in the streets (Prov. 8), patiently encouraging our choice for what is true and right, quietly loving and sacrificing in man's behalf. God allows rejection for a time, giving a man freedom of choice, yet with clear promise and warning of where our choice will lead. By His goodness He leads to repentance.

Satan on the other hand *forces* a man's conscience at threat of death. When in power he allows *no freedom!* He's a harsh, utterly impatient taskmaster, refusing all refusal. He is so insecure that he cannot handle the threat of rejection, and thus brutally forces all to acceptance. Every religion that uses such evangelism by force reveals itself as sourced in the evil one.

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By the way, don't get your knickers in a knot over credit cards, microchips, ATM's, bar codes, and such in our day. Concerns over this mark and Antichrist's regime relate only to the last half of the tribulation period, long after the church has been removed from earth in the Rapture.

Vs. 18 – Please don't let yourself be drawn into wasting much time in tracking what the world is up to these days, seeking to understand the puzzle of this intriguing number or the identity of the Antichrist. There have been countless efforts down through the ages to interpret the meaning of 666. Many views are presented with such firmness of conviction it would seem there could be no reasonable doubt. Usually these efforts involve counting "*the number . . . of a man*" in the sense of assigning letters with their numerical value (in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin). Many thought Caesar Nero was the one. When his name is written in Hebrew the corresponding number values add up to 666. So solid was the conviction of some in this regard that one man wrote, "No valid objection can be found here to the Neronic explanation of the number". Others have suggested Caligula, FDR, Hitler, one or another of the Popes, Henry Kissinger,

etc. Consider the following quote from F.F. Bruce's *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls*; "In our own day we have seen how earnest Bible students thought they recognized in Hitler or Stalin the embodiment of the Antichrist foretold in the New Testament. In the early nineteen-thirties a gentleman in England, who edited a short-lived periodical to give currency to his highly individual interpretations of the Bible, published copies of letters which he had written to Mussolini and Einstein, informing them that they were respectively the Beast and the False Prophet . . . (Einstein sent him a brief and courteous reply – which was duly published – to the effect that if the biblical writers could have foreseen the interpretations which would one day be put upon their words, they might have thought twice before setting pen to paper!) And throughout the Christian era there have been serious people who believed, generation after generation, that their own days were the days of fulfilment, when history was to be wound up." Today some point to computers, or one particular super-computer, or even the practice of Sunday worship. With the help of Daniel's prophecy we know that Antichrist will be a man, but nobody knows who. And it's very likely that fullest understanding is only for that last day. Just as many of the prophecies of Christ could not be fully

grasped until the time of His first coming. Besides, what difference does it really make if you get it right? What changes as to our mission?

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## **``Ponder Points**

Consider some parallels between Ahab and Antichrist;

- Elijah stood in Ahab's way, as God's two witnesses for a time will be found in the way of Antichrist in his day (Rev. 11).
- Elijah found safety in flight to the wilderness, as the remnant of Israel will do in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the tribulation (Rev. 12; I Ki. 17).
- Elijah was supernaturally fed there, as Israel will be.
- He found refuge in the bordering country of Phoenecia, as Israel will find in Ammon, Moab, & Edom (Dan. 11:41).
- The time of Ahab's drought equals the days of Antichrist's dominance, 3½ years (Lk. 4:25).
- Elijah, like God's two witnesses, was untouchable in the days of his ministry, and then was caught up to heaven at the last, with the wicked never getting God's man.

- The real power of corrupting influence resides in the one behind the man on the throne (Jezebel, Satan, false prophet).
- Though in both situations it appears that all is lost, the remnant is still in evidence (I Ki. 19:10 & 18).
- The Lord allowed a lying spirit freedom to deceive through Ahab's lying "prophets", even as He will allow the "False Prophet" power to give life to the beast's image (I Ki. 22:19-23; Rev. 13:14-15).
- Antichrist, as Ahab, will make God's servants out to be the cause of earth's troubles in those days of God's relentless judgments upon earth (I Ki. 18:17). And thus he will become great in the world's eyes when at last ridding the world of them.
- Antichrist's purpose will be homogeneous, worldwide worship, as in Nebuchadnezzar's day (Dan. 3).
- Elijah came before Ahab's fall, even as he will come before Antichrist's (Mal. 4:5).

God seems to foreshadow various aspects of Jesus Christ in the lives of the godly, even as He foreshadows aspects of Antichrist in ungodly men,

such as Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, Ahab, etc.

.....

Consider the steps of Satan's downward fall;

- From his exalted place as Lucifer, the light-bearer, that covering cherub created in a position of honour, beauty, and purity (Ez. 28).
- Cast down through his sin of pride, becoming Satan, the Serpent, the Dragon, the Devil, the father of lies (Isa. 14:12-14; Lk. 10:18).
- With Christ's death and resurrection Satan's head was bruised, his doom assured (Col. 2:15).
- Cast from access to heaven altogether at the tribulation midpoint (Rev. 12).
- Bound at Christ's return 3½ years later and cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-2).
- Cast eternally into the lake of fire after his release and deceiving of the nations at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:10).

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It is the dream of many in our world today to see all religions of the earth united. Indeed there are great endeavours and strides being made in this very direction constantly;

- The charismatic movement leads to union around similar experiences, with a lessened interest in sound teaching.
- Catholics and Protestants are uniting, fostered by ecumenical evangelism.
- Main-line denominations and Promise-keepers and such causes tend to open their doors to every diversion and perversion.

The overwhelming mood of our times is toward inclusiveness and against exclusiveness. And those refusing to join this trend are increasingly viewed as oddball and anti-society and even a threat to safety. This dream of religious unity will finally come to realization in those last days, only to be found a religion that is utterly Satanic and blasphemous! Let the world and worldly church do as they please. May we ever be found separated unto God, rather than a great united mass of “mixed multitude”!



## **Class 13 – Revelation 14**

In the last couple of chapters we've met some important players in God's vision of things to come. In chap. 12 we met Israel, Satan, and Christ, as Satan's enraged programme against God's people ascends at the last. In chap. 13 we were introduced to Satan's earthly instruments;

- Beast no. 1 – Antichrist.
- Beast no. 2 – False Prophet, Antichrist's chief public relations officer and minister of worship.

The activities of these two combine to display a Satanic world economic and religious system during the days of the coming tribulation period, Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> seven of years determined upon Israel and Jerusalem. Now in chap. 14 we're given a glimpse of Christ's ultimate triumph, preparing the way for the lead up to the grand climax beginning in chap. 15. Chap. 14 is a series of stunning pronouncements and visions assuring Christ's victory and the judgment of the wicked. As we examine the contents of this chapter think of the immeasurable encouragement its message will bring to believers in the tribulation period. Imagine the powerful warning to the unsaved still in God's

*Rev 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*

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camp in that day, but considering surrender to Antichrist's domain. Here is Jesus standing in composed triumph and those who are His standing with Him.

## **Chapter 14**

### **14:1-5** – The Saviour and the Sealed

Vs. 1 – John saw the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, standing on the temple mount at Jerusalem, with the 144,000 we met in chap. 7, the 12,000 sealed servants of God from each tribe of Israel. Now we discover that the seal in their foreheads consisted of the Father's name. Even this seal Satan will counterfeit in the mark featuring so prominently in the verses just prior. The obvious question arising out of chapter 13 will be whether *all* will be forced to succumb to Antichrist's demands. As a discouraged Elijah in Ahab's day, many will be wondering in that coming day if they're the only one left, while keeping only just ahead of Antichrist's effort to kill them too. The answer given

*Rev 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*

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through faith in this vision of God is NO! In chapter 7 we saw these 144,000 at the beginning of the tribulation. Now this vision seems to anticipate the end when Christ returns victorious, with a hopeful view of events so soon to come to pass at that point. There these sealed servants still are at the time of Christ's return, still intact, yet untouched by Satan's most rabid raging. In fact chap. 7 described the touched and untouched, those delivered *in* life, as Peter's miraculous release from prison (Acts 12), and those delivered *from* life, as James released from the same prison through death into the Lord's presence. Though there will be countless myriads martyred, those whom God seals He keeps safely through the most vehement of Satanic onslaughts this world will ever see. And these will not be the only saved survivors, as revealed in the judgment of the sheep in Matt. 25. Here these stand with Jesus, triumphant, untouched, singing still. Even so we who are believers in Jesus Christ are sealed as well "*with that Holy Spirit of promise*" (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). And the message here is obvious. What God *seals* He *keeps*, even through the worst possible threat

*Rev 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

*Rev 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

*Rev 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

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this old earth can muster! *“Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy”* (Jude 24).

Vs. 2-3 – The song of the sealed. The scene and song here are reminiscent of chap. 5. Always there’s singing before God’s throne. It is ever a place for joy and worship in song. Even the Lord Himself will join in song to *“joy over thee with singing”* with all before Him in that day (Zeph. 3:17).

Vs. 4-5 – The service of the sealed.

*“These . . . were not defiled with women . . . virgins”* – Now one might get the impression here that to be married, and thus not a virgin, is to be defiled. But

we must balance this with the Lord's assurance that *"marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled"* (Heb. 13:4). The main point is that these will be unstained by moral impurity. Perhaps the thought of I Cor. 7:32-33 carries as well. Being unmarried they will not be encumbered with the cares that married life invariably brings, that their lives might be given wholly to the Lord. Those will be critical days. And these men will give up the pleasures of married life for the Lord's sake and work and ministry to others.

*"These were redeemed from among men"* – They will be purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Compare Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:18-19; Rom. 3.

*"The firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb"* – The firstfruits were brought at the beginning of the harvest, as a token of thanks and in recognition that all came from God and belongs to Him. It's a similar concept to giving the tithe to the Lord. These men will represent the beginning of the great harvest of souls out of the tribulation, as we saw in chap. 7. In fact it seems these will be largely responsible for bringing in the tribulation harvest, because of the record of their sealing associated with the innumerable multitude saved out of all nations in chap. 7, and because of their further

*Rev 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,*  
*Rev 14:7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

---

record here connected with the preaching of “*the everlasting gospel*”.

“*No guile . . . without fault*” – There will be no conscious, intentional lie in the mouth of any of these. Now recall that we’ve just come from a shocking description of Satan’s worldwide reign through the combination of Antichrist, his image, and the False Prophet. A reign characterized by the conscious, very intentional effort to deceive (13:13-14), with “*all . . . lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness*” (II Thess. 2:9-10). In a coming day characterized by unsurpassed lying and Satanic deception, such that “*if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect*” (Matt. 24:24), these ones will speak with true tongues. As Levi of old (Mal. 2:5-7). And God will use them to reach those willing to receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. Thus the all too common view that we might need to stretch the truth upon

occasion in order to be most effective in the Lord's ministry is itself a lie.

### **14:6-13** – Series of Announcements

There now follows in John's vision a series of three angelic announcements.

Vs. 6-7 – The everlasting gospel. Things to note here;

- The three-fold *command* of the gospel;
  - o “*Fear God*” – Allowing nothing that offends Him.
  - o “*Give glory to Him*” – No thought of personal glory.
  - o “*Worship Him*” – It's all about *His* worth.
- Note how the contemplation of creation stirs worship.
- God's grace to plead with rejecting men right to the end.
- God uses an angelic messenger, a supernatural means, that every faithless rejecter of His truth might be utterly without excuse. Not only do the heavens declare the

*Rev 14:8 And there followed another angel, saying,  
Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because  
she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath  
of her fornication.*

---

glory of God through His creation, but an angel now declares the same from heaven.

Vs. 8 – Babylon is fallen. This word is in anticipation of Babylon’s destruction described in detail in chap. 18. The repetition here (“*is fallen, is fallen*”) is for emphasis. To what does this fallen “*Babylon*” refer?

- Political Rome or the revived empire of Rome, thus a reference to Antichrist’s kingdom?
- A future empire centred at the actual ancient site of Babylon?
- Spiritual Babylon residing in Roman Catholicism?
- The spiritual system of idolatry originating in Babylon and incorporated into every false religion of earth?

Hard to say. The fall anticipated here takes place at the end of the tribulation (chap. 17-18), just before



*Rev 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,*

*Rev 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*

*Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

*Rev 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

*Rev 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

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Christ's return.

Vs. 9-12 – Unmixed Wrath. There follows immediately a third angel bringing a most fearful pronouncement of doom upon all worshippers of the beast, proclaiming with a loud voice as if to underscore the certainty of it. If any have worshipped the beast or his image, this displayed by the receiving of his mark in that day, then they will surely drink of the wrath of God as of unmixed wine (undiluted, full strength). This is an image of

God's wrath not in the least tempered by His mercy or grace. The result is described in graphic detail;

- The agony of hell – Torment “*with fire and brimstone*”. The same is said of the perishing man Christ described in Luke 16, “*in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments*” (vs. 23). In describing his experience to Abraham this man used another word in vs. 24, also translated “torment”, which particularly expresses the intense pain and anguish involved. Abraham did not diminish the intensity of this, but agreed that “*thou art tormented*” (vs. 25). And when hopefully requesting a messenger of warning to his yet living brothers in vs. 28, the man titled his eternal dwelling place “*this place of torment*”. Torment is its very name and primary feature! Compare the phrase so common in Matthew's gospel, “*gnashing of teeth*”, describing the reaction to extreme pain in hell's torment. There can be no fair questioning of the actual, unimaginable agony of hell.
- The eternality of hell – “*For ever and ever*” in vs. 11 is literally “into the ages of the ages”. Hell's torments are no momentary thing. No sudden and complete annihilation out of existence and sensibility. No Catholic

purgatory, coming at last to a hoped for end. Compare Christ's repeated reference to that place of torment "*where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*" (Mk. 9:43-49).

- The constancy of hell – While the redeemed find "*rest from their labours*" (vs. 13), those who perish will never again know even a moment's rest. Only unrelenting, continual pain and anguish of soul. No hope, no help, no horizon. No end, no annihilation. A one-way track of horror, hatred, heartache, and hurt extending into the vast and ageless expanse of eternity!
- The reality of hell – Liberal scholars ("*fools and slow of heart to believe*") are quick to mock a literal belief in hell. They attempt to explain such views away with their pseudo-intellectual double-speak. With broad brush of deceit they think to whitewash over such dark and difficult assurances from God. None can deny that such warnings as this are very difficult. But let's not be so foolish as such blind leaders of the blind who deny the obvious reading. For if the clear biblical doctrine of the eternal destruction of hell falls, with the same fall heaven comes down to a mere myth. But worse, so falls the

trustworthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He spoke more about hell than all the other N.T. contributors combined (check your concordance). Jesus used the particular Greek word *gehenna*, translated “*hell*”, 10 of the 11 times it’s found in the Bible. Almost every time it’s used He who is truth voiced it in warning.

There can be no question that the doctrine of a *real hell* is clearly taught in the Bible! Hell and the nature of it is as real as heaven, for heaven and hell are not spoken of in any differing fashion in God’s Word. The answer with such difficult doctrines is not to deny, but to move forward dealing with reality *as reality*, allowing such truth to lead our hearts to the right and proper response. To attempt to bring temporary comfort to our hearts by explaining away God’s truth is to play the fool. As the foolish family, united in their stubbornness and quite determined to enjoy their planned picnic on the deserted beach, refusing to believe the confirmed report of a massive tidal wave even now approaching the coast, their faces resolutely turned away from the horizon lest the sight of that impending disaster, like a hideous monster rising out of the sea, should spoil their momentary pleasure. How strange such blindness! To simply

deny the promise of approaching realities, lest they spoil the present. Turning the eyes away, lest the heart see and understand and consider being convinced of God's truth. Oh flee from the wrath to come my unsaved friend! Flee to the only Saviour of mankind, who has promised to receive in grace "*whosoever cometh to Me*". "No, but *I* will not be *driven* to salvation by such scare tactics of dooms-day preaching", says Proud-heart. Consider how grand the "**I**" in such a statement. And who are you, oh great one, but a vessel? Of wrath perhaps? "*Fitted to destruction*"? (Rom. 9:22). And where will your imagined greatness be in that day of God's vengeance? What a hugely dangerous thing to trifle with proud denial, and with false religions, which dishonour Jesus Christ and contradict God's words! For here we find the ultimate end of all such follies.

### **14:14-20** – Two Reapers

This again is a rather unpleasant portion. We begin to understand through our study of Revelation why so many preachers avoid this book. Perhaps it's not so much as we might think, because they don't understand it. Perhaps it's more because they *do* understand it, and don't prefer the bitter aspects of its message. We find now in the remaining verses of chap. 14 two rounds of reapers and criers.

*Rev 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*

*Rev 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*

*Rev 14:16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.*

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Vs. 14-16 – Reaper no. 1. Here is a preview of the Lord Jesus Christ come to the final harvest, the day of which those men of earth spoke in Rev. 6, when *“the great day of His wrath is come”*. We know that this one *“upon the cloud”* is Jesus, because every other mention of clouds in Revelation seems to suggest Christ’s presence or coming (1:7; 10:1; 11:12). And we’re told that this One is *“like unto the Son of Man”*, and *“having on His head a golden crown”*, showing His right to rule. Compare 19:12. The Lord appears now with *“a sharp sickle”* in His hand. How often we see Jesus Christ wielding a sharp implement in this book. It’s *“a sharp two-edged sword”* in 1:16, 2:12 & 16, and 19:15. In all cases *sharp*, expressing the swift, effective, thorough, penetrating discernment and judgment of God. The scene here describes the time of final harvest at Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

*Rev 14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

*Rev 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.*

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Vs. 15 – Another angel then appears from the heavenly temple bringing command from the throne to slash with that sickle and harvest the earth. And in vs. 16 we find that Jesus does so. The terms used in this first round speak of a grain harvest, while the second round depicts a harvest of grapes. This first perhaps pictures the harvest of the saved of earth, after Christ's parable of wheat and tares. Jesus Himself will be the Harvester, yet through the work of His angels (Matt. 13:30, 39).

Vs. 17-20 – Reaper no. 2. John then saw another angel come out of the heavenly temple, again carrying a sharp sickle.

Vs. 18 – Then another crier, coming from the heavenly altar. This one carried the same command as the first, to slash with the sickle and harvest, this time gathering the clusters of the ripe grapes of earth.

*Rev 14:19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

*Rev 14:20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

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Vs. 19 – This done, the clusters of earth were then cast into “*the great winepress of the wrath of God*”. It’s clearly a scene of judgment. Similar terminology is used in 19:15ff, describing the vast destruction of earth-dwellers at Christ’s return, when again “*He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*”.

Vs. 20 – Look now to this incredibly graphic description of the treading of that great winepress of God’s wrath. It will take place outside the city, answering to where Jesus was driven out and crucified. The volume of output of blood is given, as nearly a 1½ metre deep flow for over 300 kilometres (Durban to Newcastle or nearly to the Swazi border). Pictured here is the destruction of human life on an unprecedented scale of those gathered against the Lord at His return. The spilled blood of a great mass of crushed humanity described as if the juice of grapes from a press. No width of the flow is



given. Perhaps filling the Kidron Valley and beyond. The scene is so hard to imagine, so opposed to our human sensitivities, yet this is not the only place where God warns in His Word of such a moment of coming judgment. Compare;

- Rev. 19:11-16 – Birds of earth called to the great supper of God, to feast upon the carcasses of Antichrist’s defeated host.
- Ps. 2 – God’s Son appointed as King, smashing the unrepentant of earth as potter’s vessels.
- Isa. 63 – Same image of Christ returning to “*the day of vengeance*”, His garments sprinkled and stained from treading the winepress “*in mine anger*”.
- Isa. 34:1-8 – The end time image of “*the sword of the LORD . . . filled with blood*” as the Lord delivers “*all nations, and . . . their armies*” to the slaughter.
- Matt. 24:27-28 – With Christ’s return the birds of prey gather upon the carcasses.
- Ezek. 39:17-20 – Beasts and birds invited to the Lord’s great sacrifice.
- Joel 3 – All nations gathered for war to “*the valley of decision*” in “*the day of the LORD*”,

with the same image of the sickle used to harvest, and the wine vat full of wickedness.

- Zech. 14.

When Jesus returns to Israel's salvation, to rescue her from the oppression of the beast through the armies of earth gathered around her, it will first be a return to the unsurpassed carnage of Armageddon. That will be God's "*day of vengeance*", while today is His day of grace. It's a day that comes quickly (Zeph. 1:14-18), when the Lord's patience with the nations will have come to an end.

Consider God's patience. When Christ rode the donkey into Jerusalem it was another example of God's incredible grace and patience. He had offered and offered and He was offering again. Christ had repeatedly proven Himself. Fulfilled prophecies supported His claims. And there in His entering was His final offer of salvation if they would have it/Him. They responded with finality in putting Him to death, putting Him out of their misery! Yet even with that, when the believers were later empowered with the Holy Spirit in Acts 1, where did they begin their ministry? In "*Jerusalem, and in all Judea*"! Even after their Messiah's murder and resurrection God's efforts through the apostles were

first to Israel. Paul went first to the Jewish synagogues and then to the Gentiles. Behold how He loves them! See how He strove with them and for them! See how long-suffering is our God for people, *“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”*. But alas, Israel would not have Him. And so at last they were crushed and dispersed around the world. See how the Lord now follows the same pattern of patience with all unbelievers of earth. Yet He shall not always strive with men. His voice echoes even from the first chapters of the Bible, *“My Spirit shall not always strive with man”*. There comes an end! There comes a too-late, a time when you really don’t want to be there! He will not allow rebellious man to continue always in his unbelief. Believe Him for His promises. Believe Him in His warnings. Seek Him while He may be found!

*“Before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD’s anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’s anger”* (Zeph. 2:2-3).

“And I saw another sign in heaven,  
great and marvellous,  
seven angels  
having the seven last plagues;  
for in them is filled up  
the wrath of God”

(Revelation 15:1)

## **Class 14 – Revelation 15-16**

Do you remember how this blessed book began with a promise of blessing to the readers, hearers, and keepers of it (1:3)? We've seen much of cursing, wrath, and woes, particularly in more recent portions; with breath-taking judgments poured out on earth, terrifying Satanic rule to come, and startlingly clear warning of the eternal, unrelenting agony of hell for Christ rejecters. We're left a bit dazed. The shock of such scenes is enough to drive many to a cowardly escape to figurative interpretation, even as a drunkard escapes from the pain of reality to his alcohol-induced delirium. But our integrity won't let us do that. Yet one might well ask, where is that promised blessing in all of this? In answer, consider how such vivid warnings tend to drive a soul to the open arms of the waiting, willing Saviour, that blessed place of eternal salvation freely given to all who believe. Compare the same in Joel 2:30-32. *"Many shall see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord"*.

Another way that promised blessing comes to us through this book of Revelation is in the descriptive detail of heaven found within these pages like no where else in the Bible. The surpassing beauties. The songs of joyful praise. The splendour of God's

*Rev 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.*  
*Rev 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.*

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presence. And just look at this scene before us in the opening verses of chapter 15!

## **Chapter 15**

Vs. 1 – This chapter is primarily a lining up for the final round of bowl judgments to be poured out in chapter 16, “*the seven last plagues*” in which are “*filled up the wrath of God*”.

Vs. 2 – The Glassy Sea. John saw the redeemed standing upon “*a sea of glass mingled with fire*”. This must surely be the same sea stretched before God’s throne in chap. 4, described there as “*like unto crystal*”. It’s a crystalline pavement resembling a smooth, shimmering expanse of water. It’s a stately picture of settled, unruffled peace, and vast in proportions. This is no lake, pond, pool, or puddle, but “*a sea*”! Clear as rock crystal, yet sparkling as if mingled with fire. This is no dull

*Rev 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.*

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inactive pavement, but flashing, moving, vibrant. Ezekiel described his vision of the same “*as the colour of the terrible crystal*” (Ezek. 1:22). We’re only talking about the floor folks! How beautiful the prospect! What a blessed window of grace in a day so characterized by judgment. Compare Nahum 1:6 and context. We who are safe in Christ will be there one day and will see it! We know that in that day our eyes will be on Christ, for He will be our supreme point of focus and worship. Yet don’t miss the astounding beauty of the place! The Lord in His grace has given this to us as well in preview. Why? For the believer, it fills us with hopeful anticipation, like kids at Christmas time. For the unbeliever, the Lord seeks to draw their hearts to refuge in Christ. Again, perhaps one would say in his pride, “I will not be *driven* to heaven through terror of hell’s inferno!” Well, then allow the Lord to *draw* your heart to Him, through a vision of the delights He longs to give to you. Let His goodness lead you to repentance as it’s meant to do.

*Rev 15:4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*  
*Rev 15:5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:*

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Vs. 3 – The Glad Song. The redeemed there with “*the harps of God*” are singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Seems whenever we see the company of the redeemed in the Lord’s presence there’s a song of praise on their lips. How much do you love singing the Lord’s songs? These appear particularly to be the martyred dead, put to death by Antichrist’s domain (13:7), having “*gotten the victory*” through their refusal to bow to that servant of Satan. They have come through the darkest day the earth has ever seen, the very worst furnace of trial ever known to man. And now they have found their home, with their hearts full of joy and praise and song. And so shall it ever be for them!

Vs. 3-4 – The Great Sovereign. All the theme of their song is the “*Lord God Almighty*”, whose works are great and marvellous, whose ways are just and true, who is King over all, holy above all. This name, “*Almighty*”, so common to the book of



*Rev 15:6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.*

*Rev 15:7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.*

*Rev 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.*

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Revelation (9 of the 10 times found in the N.T.), speaks of He who is the All-Powerful One, and thus so easily victorious over the best Satan has to offer. Even in their death these who belong to the Almighty come off victorious still. Even as did their Lord Jesus Christ.

Vs. 4 – Note the searching question asked before the unbelieving world. It’s literally “who should not possibly fear You, Lord?” This is taken from Jer. 10:7, where worship of the Lord is contrasted with the folly of idols.

Vs. 5-8 – Preparations for “*the seven last plagues*”.

## **Chapter 16** – “*The Seven Last Plagues*”

One of the key words of this book of Revelation is

*Rev 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*  
*Rev 16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.*

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“*wrath*” (16 times). Chapter 15 warned that the last round of judgments presented in this chapter are “*full of the wrath of God*” (15:1, 7). Even so here in vs. 1 the same is affirmed. These are indeed “*the vials of the wrath of God upon earth*”, the fullest expression of “*the fierceness of His wrath*” (vs. 19).

John heard a “*great voice*” out of the heavenly temple sending the 7 angels to their work. It’s an indication of things to come, for this is a chapter of great things. Over 80 times the Greek word mega (great) is found in this book, with 11 of those occurrences in this chapter alone. The judgments poured out here are greater, more severe, more intense than all we’ve seen before, and coming now in a rapid-fire fashion. These 7 bowl judgments are God’s dealing with a Christ-rejecting, blasphemous world brought to a climax.

## **16:2** – Bowl 1 – Grievous Sores

*Rev 16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.*

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With the 1<sup>st</sup> angel pouring out his bowl there will come terrible sores upon every worshipper of the beast, particularly distressing, ulcerated, septic sores. It will be God's answer to Satan's merciless handling of righteous Job, with "*sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown*". So God now marks those wearing Satan's mark. Compare the 6<sup>th</sup> plague upon Egypt (Ex. 9:9-11).

### **16:3** – Bowl 2 – Sea to Blood

The 2<sup>nd</sup> emptied bowl turns the sea "*as the blood of a dead man*", resulting in death to every living thing in the sea. We have no reason to read this as other than actual blood as of one dead. And all the oceans of earth are involved this time rather than only a portion as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet judgment (8:8). He who created blood has no problem turning salt water to blood. Whatever the difference between warm blood flowing through the veins of one living and "*the blood of a dead man*" might be, this feature certainly adds a loathsome aspect. Can you imagine the scene? Every single one of the multiplied billions of sea creatures dead and

floating on a sea of blood! Due to the weight of that worldwide blanket of rotting flesh the sea is flat and still, as dead as its creatures and unaffected by the winds. There are no sea scavengers to consume the mess. All remains to simply decay. Can you imagine the sight of it, the smell of it, the overwhelming, nauseating, heart-sickening impression upon all of the senses?! All of the extraordinary creatures of the sea *gone*, extinct in one shocking stroke! All of the glorious efforts of man related to the sea and the creatures of it, the great expeditions and explorations and film productions and campaigns, all come now to nothing! As mankind looks out over that unbelievable, stinking, sun-baked carnage stretching to the horizon from every shore of earth the stunning question perhaps at last begins to form in the heart of some, *“What have we done?!”* Our insides may wrench a bit with the imagery implied here, but why would the Lord record these things if He didn’t mean for us to *“look upon it and receive instruction”*? If anything, it may help the reader get his priorities right, or his head out of the sand. Compare the 1<sup>st</sup> plague God brought upon Egypt, with the Nile turned to blood, the fish dead, and the river stinking (Ex. 7:21). There it was one river in one country in one corner of one continent. But in that coming day all of the majestic seas of

*Rev 16:4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.*

*Rev 16:5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.*

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of earth will be involved!

### **16:4-7** – Bowl 3 – All Water to Blood

With the 3<sup>rd</sup> bowl *all* water of earth will be turned to blood, and man is left with only blood to drink. Hideous but fair, is the point made by the heavenly cheerleaders in vs. 5-7. For those so thirsty for the blood of God's saints upon earth, in fact *drunken* with it in that day (17:6), God will give only blood for their thirst. Their punishment fits their crime. The unsaved of all time are seen as a unit here, and repaid in kind for the shed blood of martyrs, from that of righteous Abel to the last murdered saint of the tribulation period.

As we ponder the putrefying mess made of the earth's waters, contrast now that beautiful crystal sea upon which God's saints stand (15:2), and the "*living fountains of waters*" evermore theirs in His presence (7:17), and the "*pure river of water of life, clear as crystal*" flowing from the throne in the new

*Rev 16:6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.*

*Rev 16:7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

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Jerusalem (22:1). We see visually how God is able and willing both to *curse* those rejecting Him, and to *care* for those who receive! Look well at what becomes of Satan's followers. Choose carefully who will be your master my friend.

*"The angel of the waters"* – Apparently this is an angel with some responsibility over the waters of earth? Intriguing the variety of ministries we find assigned to angels in this book. Compare the angels with power to *"hurt the earth and the sea"* in 7:1-2.

Vs. 7 – When the angel proclaims the Lord true in His judgments he means that He's good for His words. The Lord does all He says He will do. A man is a fool to doubt Him! When the Lord is proclaimed righteous in His judgments it means He is fair. His judgments take in all *"the secret things of men"* (Rom. 2), penetrating even to *"the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb. 4:12). A man only

fools himself who thinks he might in any way fool God. Every soul will receive exactly what he truly deserves.

Though some things are not clear in this book of prophecy, consider how obvious the following;

- That the Lord is full of wrath over the sin and rebellion of man is evident. These bowls are *full* of the wrath of Almighty God.
- That the Lord has perfect ability to execute His judgment is clear. “Not yet” does not mean never. Revelation’s record brings the rumble of distant thunder to our hearing. Though the sun may still be shining, dark clouds gather in the distance and are on their way.
- That it is only because of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed. A man avoids falling to judgment at any and every moment purely because of God’s patient grace. Only in Jesus Christ is there “*therefore now no condemnation*”.

### **16:8-9** – Bowl 4 – Scorching Sun

The target of the 4<sup>th</sup> angel’s bowl is the sun, resulting in an increase in the sun’s intensity, such

*Rev 16:8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.*

*Rev 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*

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that people will be scorched by its “*great heat*”.

Vs. 9 – Men will know well enough the source of this to know where to direct their blasphemous hatred. As with Pharaoh in Egypt, God’s judgments only serve to increase the hardness of some. Is it true that any man would certainly repent if only he could see the power and righteous judgment of God? The obvious answer here is *no*. Such evident displays of divine discipline can actually become the very means to greater hardening!

### **16:10-11** – Bowl 5 – Painful Darkness

The 5<sup>th</sup> bowl will be directed at the seat of Antichrist’s domain, resulting in darkness and intense pain. Compare the 9<sup>th</sup> plague upon Egypt (Ex. 10:21-23).

Vs. 11 – Still the response is blasphemy rather than repentance. The word “repent” is found a dozen



*Rev 16:10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,*  
*Rev 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*  
*Rev 16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*

---

times in this book, but this is the last we see of it. Repentance is a theme permeating the whole of God's message to man. The O.T. ends on a note of man's turning. The same features so prominently in the preaching of Jesus and the apostles. And now the last time the word "repent" is ever used in the Bible it is only to record man's failure to do it! The Lord is good to be so patient with mankind, but there comes an end of His patience at last.

### **16:12-16** – Bowl 6 – Armageddon

Everybody knows about Armageddon, or thinks they do. It certainly has been a choice theme for the film industry over the years. With the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl poured out the Euphrates River, the eastern border of the land God gave to Abraham (Gen. 15:16), will be dried up, opening the way for the kings of the east. We saw a glimpse of this earlier in the 6<sup>th</sup>

*Rev 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*  
*Rev 16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

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trumpet judgment, where numbers were given (9:13-21). A massive 200 million strong mounted force is seen there, a vast confederacy of oriental kings and their armies, coming to the final world war of “*the times of the Gentiles*”. Countries to the east of Palestine contain about ½ of the world’s population, with bitterest hatred for the beleaguered Jewish nation so common over that way already.

Vs. 13-14 – John saw three frog-like demons come out of the mouth of the unholy trinity. Some folks attempt to identify these beings with individuals, but we’re told they are demon spirits, and with power to work miracles. These will be sent out by the unholy trinity in that day to convince and gather the nations of earth to the final showdown. Compare again the lying spirit sent to Ahab’s “prophets” (I Ki. 22). Compare in Antichrist’s final military movements in Dan. 11:40-45 the troubling “*tidings out of the east*” (vs. 44). This final battle

*Rev 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

*Rev 16:16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*

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seems to take place on many fronts;

- South of the Dead Sea in Bozrah of Edom (Isa. 63).
- Jerusalem (Zech. 14).
- The Valley of Jezreel and the Plain of Esdraelon near Mount Megiddo south of Galilee. The name “Armageddon” means Mount Megiddo (Rev. 16:16).

This supernatural worldwide work of gathering the nations of earth to Israel to battle will usher in the event described in chap. 14 in the grapes of earth harvested and trampled in the winepress of God’s wrath. Satan, through his unholy host, will be thinking to work his own purposes against God and His people in that day, yet he will actually be accomplishing God’s great purpose of gathering the harvest of the nations for their sudden, complete destruction at Christ’s return. It’s the Lord Himself doing the calling to this last great confrontation in

Joel 3. The Lord's purpose in this event is obvious. He will be gathering the rejecting world of men for the slaughter. But what will be Satan's purpose here? He will be seeking to bring all the power of earth together "*against the LORD, and against His Anointed [Messiah]*" (see Ps. 2). He will have brought the whole world under one man, "the beast". We might think this worldwide union would bring peace, yet Daniel chap. 11 describes Antichrist in his very active final days. He's on the move, running from one battlefield to another, apparently putting down rebellion as the world rises to war. The details of this 6<sup>th</sup> bowl judgment now give the behind-the-scenes story. Satan himself through his demons will stir this, as Antichrist's kingdom begins to break up. The whole of it will be toward Satan's grand purpose to bring all the armies of earth together in anticipation of Christ's return. Satan will be busy mustering all he has to muster, the combined armies of earth. And this with the foolish, futile notion that a combined human/demonic host could actually defeat Christ or hinder His coming and kingdom! And as the nations of earth gather against Israel their combined rage will turn in unison against Christ as the sign of His return shall blaze like lightning across the sky (Matt. 24:27). In only a moment all will be put to silence, as with the slash of a sickle!

*Rev 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.*

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Satan, the very worst of commanders, will use his followers like expendable pawns. A good military commander will ever use greatest care with the lives of his men. Yet see how Satan handles his troops, caring absolutely nothing for them. As worthless cannon fodder, he drives them by fear and pours them out like water. Look well at what becomes of Satan's followers. Again, choose your master carefully. The Lord loses not one of His own in the end, while Satan spends all toward his selfish, hopeless ends.

### **16:17-21** – Bowl 7 – Earthquake & Hail

We come now to the final judgment poured out upon the earth before Christ's return. The 7<sup>th</sup> bowl is poured into the air and God's voice immediately rings out from the heavenly temple in a clear, booming proclamation, "*It is done!*" The consummation of all things has come. The fullness of God's wrath poured out. The plots of Satan through his minions have come to nothing. Jesus in a similar way pronounced at the moment of His death, "*It is finished*", fixing man's opportunity for

*Rev 16:18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*

*Rev 16:19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.*

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eternal blessing. Here the same words now fix the end of opportunity! There, it was the completion of the way of grace for those who receive. Here, it will be the completion of the wrath of God upon those who refuse.

Vs. 18 – As with the 7<sup>th</sup> seal judgment (8:5) and 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet (11:19), so again here there are voices and thunders and lightnings and an earthquake. But here the earth is rocked like never before (double mega). As John Walvoord puts it, “the earth literally convulses as the times of the Gentiles come to an end”. Like a dog shaking itself free of parasites. Compare Heb. 12:25-29; Haggai 2:6-7; Isa. 13:9-13; Joel 3:16.

Vs. 19-20 – The shocking results of the shaking;

- Every city of the world outside of Israel is reduced to rubble. Every impressive, stately

*Rev 16:20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

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metropolis squashed in a moment. Every monument of man's ingenuity flattened. We can well imagine, the run-away fires, all amenities cut off, looting, anarchy, exposure, destruction and loss of life on an awesome scale.

- Every island vanished into the crusted ocean of blood and gore. The term is literally "fled away", ultimately joined in flight by the earth and the heavens from the face of Him who sits on the great white throne (20:11).
- Every mountain flattened like the walls of Jericho.

Compare the great earthquake with the breaking of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal in chap. 6, where *"every mountain and island were moved out of their places"*. It was a warning of what was to come. There moved, here removed! And there the people of earth fled to *"the rocks of the mountains"* for refuge *"from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb"* (6:16). But where shall they hide now, with every island, city, and mountain no more?! All

*Rev 16:21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*

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will be levelled, naked, and exposed in anticipation of God's righteous sentencing. As the faithful words of Amos to Israel, ***"Prepare to meet thy God"***.

Vs. 21 – *"Great hail out of heaven"* – To the greatest earthquake is added the greatest hailstorm of all time. Again, this will affect the entire earth. And again, the word mega or great is used twice in the description of it! Everything is on a colossal scale now (*"exceeding great"*!). Every stone of this amazing hailstorm is about 1 talent in weight, or 55-60 kgs. Heavier than a bag of Portland cement (about weight of your wife when you married her?). Obviously such hailstones would destroy everything left standing, killing and injuring many.

Now the grave danger at such a point as this is to respond as scoffers have always responded throughout history, as Lot's children scoffed at warning of the imminent doom that took them (Gen. 19:14). God's message has always been the scoffer's joke. And throughout history there have



always been lying preachers and prophets full of happy assurances that all will be just fine, confirming mockers in their laughter. Such false “Christians” are the worst danger to an inquiring soul. Compare the reaction recorded here in vs. 21. Now for the third time in this last series of judgments we’re told of the blasphemous response of unrepentant man. When immediate, complete repentance should be the only response of little man, in the hardness of their hearts they will actually shake their clenched fists toward heaven. Like tiny ants squeaking their reproach at one dumping a bucket of gravel on them. Why can these not see what they are before their awesome Creator turned Tormentor? Man is in no position to utter reproach or to resist! When the Lord stands up in judgment, nothing stands before Him!

Is it not the same when little man demands his own way against God’s will? When I choose the pleasures of sin over the pleasure of God, isn’t this also a shake of the fist or at least a thumbing of the nose. Or when, like Cain, one demands to please the Lord his own way, rather than carefully, earnestly searching out the Lord’s prescribed way to come to Him and please Him. There can be no denying that the Lord consistently points to only *one way* of salvation for man. Jesus said, “*I am the*

*way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (Jn. 14:6).*

*“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).*

*“And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet (Jesus), shall be destroyed” (Acts 3:22-23).*

## **Class 15 – Revelation 17**

As we come to this pivotal point in our study of this blessed book of Revelation the judgments of God have fallen in successive waves, the armies of earth are preparing for their final move, and all is poised in readiness for the return of Jesus Christ to earth. And now again we have a pause in the progression of events, a close-up of one aspect of the judgments that have fallen. The destruction of “Babylon” now comes into the spotlight of intense consideration. The extensive coverage of it clearly marks this as a matter of greatest importance to God. Two chapters or nearly 10% of the book are devoted to a description of Babylon’s fall. We’ve seen hints of the same before this in 14:8 & 16:19.

Babylon is mentioned nearly 300 times in the Bible. Most times it refers to a political power, centred in that city once situated between the rivers in modern day Iraq. Oftentimes Babylon speaks of a satanic religious system of false worship opposing the true worship of God. Both of these lines are now brought together for annihilation in chapters 17 & 18, the false religious system here in chap. 17 and the commercial system in chap. 18.

*Rev 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:*

*Rev 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*

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## **Chapter 17**

### **17:1-6** – Vision of the Great Whore

Vs. 1 – John is now invited to witness “*the judgment of the great whore*”. The angel’s descriptive imagery of her is rich with meaning. That she “*sitteth upon many waters*” is later explained (vs. 15) in the same way we’ve seen this symbol of waters used before (Dan. 7:3, 17). The waters represent the nations and people of earth. The position of this woman speaks of her corrupting influence over all people of earth. Clearly the picture of “Babylon” here is beyond just a city, but extends to the far-reaching effects of a universal system.

Vs. 2 – She’s further described as one with whom the kings and inhabitants of earth have “*committed fornication*” or sexual immorality (19:2). They have even “*been made drunk with the wine of her*

*Rev 17:3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*

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*fornication*”, describing the mad, unreasoning nature of their illicit involvement with her. Compare the same notion in a right sense of a man with his wife in Prov. 5:19, “*be thou ravished (intoxicated) always with her love*”.

Vs. 3 – John was taken in spirit to the wilderness where he himself saw this woman of whom the angel spoke. And the first point of notice was her position, again seated, now upon a “*scarlet coloured beast*”. All this woman does is *sit*, upon the people of earth (vs. 1), upon this beast, and upon the mountains (vs. 9). The description given of this beast leaves no doubt that it is the same we saw in chap. 13;

- He’s called the same, “*beast*” (13:1).
- “*Full of names of blasphemy*” (13:5-6). He is the fullness or epitome of one blasphemous.
- “*Seven heads*”.
- “*Ten horns*” (13:1).

*Rev 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:*

*Rev 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

*Rev 17:6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*

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Yet his scarlet colour ties him to the “*great red dragon*” (Satan) of chap. 12. Associations are obvious. Clearly this “*beast*” again refers to Antichrist, that great world ruler to come, the “*little horn*” of Daniel’s prophecy, that one empowered and enthroned by Satan himself (13:2).

Vs. 4-6 – More on the whore;

- Her adorning (vs. 4);
  - Clothed in “*purple and scarlet*”. Ornate beauty like royalty or ritualistic religion.
  - “*Decked with gold*”. Literally gilded with it (marg.).
  - Precious stones and pearls.

- It is an image of incredible wealth. Such outward frills could only show a desire to draw attention to man, displaying the absence of true spiritual values. The truth is highlighted that as true piety and purity decline, showy pomp increases proportionally. Mark it well; where there is ostentation there is spiritual prostitution. And thus displayed as well is the errant view that material possessions, things ornate, or earthly splendour are equivalent to God's blessing. Compare the situation in Laodicea (3:17). Note the sharp contrast with the simple godly adornment encouraged by God (I Tim. 1:9-10; I Pet. 3:1-6). Compare in Jesus One who could not have been more right in His earthly walk with God the Father, yet who was born in a stable among the poorest of people with the simplest of means and with nowhere even to lay His head. Compare Moses who qualified for God's leadership only after he gave up prestige, privilege, and possessions in Egypt (Heb. 11:24-26).

- Her cup (vs. 4);

- Golden. Only the finest for this one.
  - “*Full of abominations*”. A vile brew of things utterly detestable. This was the Jewish term for idols and idolatry.
  - “*Full of . . . filthiness of her fornication*”. Sexual immorality is often used by God to express the unfaithfulness of spiritual departure from Him to involvement with some other “god”. This one drinks of the fullness of apostasy.
- Her name (vs. 5);
- There is “MYSTERY” about her. Babylon is infamous as that nidus of false, mystery religion. From the first mention of man’s revolt against God at Babel in Gen. 11 Babylon became a picture of man apart from God, united in cooperation toward self-advancement or exaltation. Compare the description of her sorceries and witchcraft in Isa. 47:9-15. The centre for this school of false, pagan religion later shifted to Pergamos in Asia Minor and then on to Rome, resulting in many of their pagan rites infiltrating more ritualistic



churches. Her name expresses her as the very “MOTHER” or fountainhead of spiritual infidelity upon earth. Babylon is indeed the source of all false religion. All idolatry is traceable back to what developed there. This was then dispersed throughout the earth with the dispersion from Babel through the confusion of the languages. Thus Babylon becomes a symbol in Scripture of departure from faithfulness to God’s true worship to the blasphemy and spiritual pollution of idolatry in all of its various forms. Babylon describes the great system of counterfeit religion, with countless cultic pockets around the globe, each offering its phoney gods, all wearing the same mark of rebellion from the true God of the Bible. This is mostly seen in the form of obvious pagan religion, but is evident as well (and far more dangerous) in outward forms of Christianity falsely so called (paganised “Christianity”), with the same basic tenets of ancient Babylonian religion onboard. It encompasses *“the mystery of iniquity”* Paul spoke of as already and always at

work in the world (I Thess. 2:7). Lawlessness and all things anti-Christian are working toward its final break-out to open, unbridled manifestation in the last days. Often selling itself to man by its very intriguing obscurity, carrying a subtle, secretive, seductive air.

- Her condition (vs. 6);
  - o “*Drunken with the blood of the saints, and . . . martyrs of Jesus*”. She has the same heart as the beast she rides. As Antichrist, even so Satan’s worldwide, multi-faceted false religious system will be as she always has been, the great persecutor of God’s true religion on earth. One writer mentioned that “Sir Robert Anderson, of Scotland Yard fame, estimated that Rome [Catholicism] was guilty of the death of 50,000,000 Christians”.

In 19:1-3 heaven rings with alleluias over God’s judgment of “*the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication*”, and over the avenging of “*the blood of His servants at her hand*”.

*Rev 17:7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.*

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Now don't miss the relation of the woman to the beast. She's a separate entity from the beast, religious and political powers distinct from each other. And she is carried by him, riding him, casting the beast in a supportive, seemingly subservient role to the whore. Compare vs. 18, "*which reigneth over*". But as we shall soon see, her apparent dominance is only that, *apparent*.

Vs. 6 – John "*wondered with great admiration*" as he beheld this woman. The splendours and spurious spiritualities of man can indeed be an impressive thing to behold, even as the intrigues of sin hold the power to stir such desperate interest in men. But when the meaning and motive of it is explained by God's messenger it's understood for the worthless, glittering tinsel it really is.

### **17:7-18** – Interpretations

Vs. 8-14 – The beast interpreted.

Vs. 8 – "*The beast . . . was, and is not*" – Likely

*Rev 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*

*Rev 17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.*

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referring to the same we saw in chap. 13 (vs. 3, 12, 14). There will be some utterly astounding display in Antichrist, he appearing to rise from death, setting all the unsaved world to wonder and worship.

His rise “*out of the bottomless pit*”, that dwelling place of Satan and his unholy host, displays the beast’s intimate association and source of power in Satan. He will share his end with Satan in “*perdition*” as well (20:10).

Vs. 9-11 – “*The seven heads*” of the beast.

Vs. 9 – Again it’s a challenge to the wise here to sharpen the senses in seeking an understanding (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9, 18). Clarity of insight in God’s prophecies is kept on a higher shelf.

*Rev 17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.*

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We're told that the 7 heads represent "*seven mountains*" or "*seven kings*". As well, a mountain is used as a prophetic figure of Christ's coming kingdom in Dan. 2:35, 44. Compare Ps. 30:7; Jer. 51:25. The "*four kings*" of Dan. 7:17 become kingdoms upon earth in 7:23. Not only individual kings, but empires personified as kings. These seven seem to represent a charting of the course of earthly empires through the centuries, yet as always, only those relating to God's people Israel. Of the five fallen, Daniel gives us three, Greece, Medo-Persia, and Babylon. As to the two prior to this there is uncertainty, perhaps Assyria and Egypt. All but Greece held Israel captive out of their land for a time. The "*one is*" must be Rome at the time of John's writing, that power that put him on Patmos. And thus the one "*not yet come*" is the world empire of the tribulation period, centred in the area of the old Roman Empire, that final earthly kingdom so strongly implied in Daniel's prophesy. This last will be Antichrist's brief domain. And we have repeatedly been assured of how short a space he will continue.

*Rev 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*

*Rev 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.*

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That on these “*mountains*” or kingdoms of earth “*the woman sitteth*” again displays the pervading influence of false religion over all the kingdoms of earth since man was scattered from Babel. These are not “the seven hills of Rome”, with the christianised paganism of Roman Catholicism nested there as some tend to interpret here. These are representative nations or kingdoms dominating over God’s chosen people through the ages.

Remember from our study of Daniel the two aspects of the 4<sup>th</sup> (Roman) Empire Daniel described in Dan. 2 & 7;

- Dan. 2:34-35 – Legs of iron, turning to feet of iron and clay.
- Dan. 7:7-8 – From focus on the ten-horned “*beast, dreadful and terrible*”, to focus on “*another little horn*” rising to prominence.

These changes in that 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom speak of the old

*Rev 17:13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.*

*Rev 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

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empire of Rome turning to the final revived form in the last days, with the parenthetic era of the current church age not mentioned in Daniel's prophecy.

Vs. 11 – There's a sense in which the beast or Antichrist, though out of the 7<sup>th</sup> empire of Rome, is the 8<sup>th</sup>, for he will become a world empire unto himself in the closing days of "*the times of the Gentiles*".

Vs. 12-14 – "*The ten horns*" of the beast. Trace the concept of ten;

- Toes at the end of Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. 2:33, 40-43).
- Horns at the end of the final world empire (Dan. 7:7-8). Interpreted there as kings (vs. 24), within which the final human king or "*little horn*" will rise to power.
- Horns on the dragon (Rev. 12:3).

*Rev 17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*

*Rev 17:16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.*

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- Horns on the beast (Rev. 13:1).

That the final world empire will be expressed in some confederation of ten nations is a point of great prominence in God's prophecy. Further detail is given here concerning the composition of that final world government. So a careful comparison of Daniel with this portion suggests that there will be a ten-nation confederacy localized in the area of the old Roman Empire out of which the final world ruler will arise. These kings will have one mind, joining in alliance "*with the beast*", even submitting to him (vs. 13). They will be Antichrist's peers, reigning at the same time (vs. 12). The *extent* of their reign will be brief ("*one hour*"), for their united power will be conquered with the beast by Christ in His return (vs. 14). Again, these kings and their involvement with the Antichrist are so significant that Daniel also described their rise centuries before.



*Rev 17:17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*

*Rev 17:18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*

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Vs. 14 – It has ever been a question of sides or allegiance, of “*they that are with*” the Lord as opposed to those aligning themselves with Satan. There are only ever two kinds of people, two camps of allegiance upon earth.

Vs. 15 – The waters interpreted. Antichrist’s domain will be over all the unsaved people of all nations (13:7-8).

Vs. 16-18 – The whore’s fall. We see now a surprising turn of events. These kings associated with Antichrist in the end, agreeing to “*give their kingdom unto the beast*”, will do Antichrist’s will in bringing an end to the great spiritual harlot (but in fact it’s God’s will they fulfil, vs. 17). So apostate religion rides the beast, his close associate in world rule, only to be swallowed up by him at the last! Why? Because that will be the point when the beast doesn’t need her anymore! A thief needs his accomplices in robbing a bank. But after the job is done he has no further need or wish for an

accomplice to share the takings? As the beast at last rises to world power at the middle of the tribulation period he shares his glory with nobody! He turns like a praying mantis to devour her mate. Having fulfilled her corrupting influence, she's of no use to him anymore. Led to believe she's leading things, as some great repository of spiritual wisdom, dispenser of God's grace and blessings, she's actually the one led by the nose as the sacrificial lamb to the slaughter.

N.B. how the wicked of the world think. Here is a practical reason why God commands His children to come out from among them and be separate (II Cor. 6). Though the unsaved may speak in such a caring and convincing way, their true desire is often to corrupt that which is pure, to use us for their own selfish purposes. Though you be gentle as a dove, oh be wise as a serpent as well my friend. The unsaved of earth are lightning rods beckoning God's searing stroke, and saints have often gotten burned when living too close. King Jehoshaphat was nearly killed through his too close of an association with wicked Ahab. We must be ever so careful about our associations with the world and the worldly church. Even that which appears a gracious gift from the wicked can be a means of destruction. See here how the beast graciously

offers to carry the harlot, acts the servant to her. But a joy ride to her own slaughter it will be! Even so the harlot of Proverbs “lovingly” offers her bed to the simple man. But he “*knoweth not that it is for his life*” (7:23). Even so King Ahab out of the kindness of his heart offered his wicked daughter, Athaliah, in marriage to Jehoshaphat’s son. But it was a marriage of confederacy with a wicked king and nation. She was like the gracious gift of the thistle seed, bound to breed after her kind. Like the wasp’s implantation of her eggs in the unsuspecting caterpillar, only to hatch out and eat the hapless host. It was only that Ahab (Satan) might gain access and inroads into Jehoshaphat’s righteous kingdom, and corrupt it.

How very opposite the wicked are from our gracious God, who rejoices in giving that He might give the more (Eph. 2). He doesn’t give because He needs to. He’s the Almighty One. He needs nothing. He gives because He wants to. The wicked one on the other hand is gracious only because he *has* to be, only *as far* as he has to be, not because he *wants* to be. It’s a necessity born out of his *not* being almighty. It’s simply that he needs others to accomplish his ends. Wickedness takes, uses, uses up, while God gives that He might give the more. Wickedness rejoices in the using, while God rejoices in blessing. The

wicked are not committed to the best for others and see others only in their value or use to them, only as cannon fodder to be spent for their ends. Wickedness could not care less for the well-being of others, while God could not care more. It sacrifices the other for himself, while God sacrifices Himself for the other. Praise God for the difference! *Praise God I'm His!* And we become like Him when we spend our lives for others. The righteous spend for the sake of others. But oh the treachery in the heart of the wicked, who spend others for their own sake! As Ahab with his expendable friend Jehoshaphat (I Ki. 22). Perhaps there's a certain amusing irony to see the wicked prey on each other as here in Rev. 17. Though the world system of false religion ("mystery Babylon") gives every appearance of dominance early in the tribulation period, this will only be appearance, for she will only be used by the beast. Though he appears to be her vehicle, she is actually his means to supreme power and worship, and then she will be discarded as the beast rises, with all worship directed toward him. The great religious system of Nimrod at last and forever buried. And in its place, the forced worship of Antichrist (Dan. 11:36-38; Rev. 13:8)

We might ask why it's so hard to do right. One answer is because otherwise there would be no real

personal cost in our sacrifice for the good of others. It was likely a hard thing for Boaz to not take advantage of Ruth in her midnight visit to his bed. But it was an opportunity to show his genuine care for her, by sacrificing what he might wish to do for her honour. He lived what his great-grandson would one day write, “*neither will I offer . . . unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing*” (II Sam. 24:24).

Vs. 18 – “*The woman . . . is that great city*” – The city is now tied to the religious system, leading to the focus of the next chapter.

“Babylon the great  
is fallen, is fallen,  
and is become  
the habitation of devils,  
and the hold of every foul spirit,  
and a cage of every  
unclean and hateful bird”

(Revelation 18:2)

## Class 16 – Revelation 18

In chap. 17 we saw the red beast associated with “*the great whore*”, Antichrist carrying and then killing last days religion. Again, harlotry or prostitution is often a biblical symbol of spiritual departure from the true religion of God (Ezek. 16; Hosea; Jer. 3). The coming Antichrist will carry the combined false religions of earth, sourced in Babylon, during that final coming era of tribulation before Christ’s return. The two powers, both political and religious, will be in alliance, but only for a time. For when the harlot of apostate religion is no longer convenient or useful to the beast he will turn and devour her, as we saw in Rev. 17:16-17. He will use her as he will use Israel. Chapter 18 continues the theme of Babylon’s destruction, though difficult questions are stirred by this portion. While it seems clear that chap. 17 describes the fall of Babylon as a religious entity, what aspect of Babylon’s fall does this chapter describe? While we find similarities here with chap. 17, there are important differences as well, which seem to separate the events of these twin chapters;

- The events of this new chapter are “*after these things*” (vs. 1).
- This chapter is now introduced by “*another*

*angel*".

- Though the kings of earth willingly kill "*Mystery Babylon*" in 17:16, they mourn Babylon's end in 18:9.
- The great focus in this chapter on the merchants of earth enriched by her (vs. 3, 11-19) speaks more of a commercial entity.
- Though the harlot of chap. 17 is associated with political power she is not that power itself, which power seems to be the focus in this chapter.

Again, Babylon in the Bible seems to refer to both a universal false religious system and a world political power or empire. Key men in Babylon's development were;

- Nimrod – Founder of the city, kingdom, false religion, and rebellion for which the city is known (Gen. 10-11). The first mention of a "*kingdom*" of men in the Bible was centred at Babylon.
- Nebuchadnezzar – Who led the empire to the pinnacle of its power and pride.

Yet to Babylon are traceable all of the gods of the nations around Israel and of the whole earth;



- Baal & Ashtoreth of the Phoenicians.
- Molech of the Ammonites.
- Dagan of the Philistines.
- The Egyptian, Greek, & Roman gods and goddesses.
- Ancient Persian Zoroastrianism, with all of its many nefarious off-shoots.

And beyond these ancient religions more modern forms have arisen as well, such as;

- Meditative trances of Reiki healing.
- Yoga and T.M. of eastern mysticism.
- Native American mysticism, the spirit of the eagle, and ancestor worship.
- The same worship of ancestral spirits among native Africans.
- The fairies and phantoms of the Celtic Druids.
- The supposed powers of the planets through the intrigues of astrology.
- The mother/child cult of Roman Catholicism, after the ancient Semiramis, the famous Queen of Heaven of the Babylonian cult.

- Lakshmi, “the mother of the universe”, of Hindu Diwali fame was dropped from the same pagan mould.

On and on we could go, listing the godless religions of earth in all of their enchanting, mystical, ethereal, colourful attractiveness. All finding their source in “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (17:5).

From her beginning Babylon was all about *rebellion*, from her founding father Nimrod, whose name means “rebel”, right through to her final leader in the greatest rebel of all time in Antichrist. Compare the arrogant attitude of Kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar of Babylon as well, in contrast to that of Darius and Cyrus of the Medo-Persians. From the beginning Babylon was all about man’s elevation of himself, the evil principle at the heart of every false religion. It’s man building a “tower”, working his own way to heaven. Man with the stated purpose, “*let us make us a name*” (Gen. 11:4). Man making a name for himself, making his own way to deity, with no recognition of God as God and man as dependent. For from of old men “*did not like to retain God in their knowledge*”. Natural man will always attempt to get along without his Creator.

Ironically they did indeed make a name for themselves there, a name of *folly*! For Babel means “confusion”. Later generations attempted to upgrade the city’s image by insisting the name means Gate (bab) of God (El), but God has recorded the true meaning for all time in Gen. 11:9. Indeed all who would lift themselves up in pride against the Lord will come to a fool’s end in shame and ruin. It’s the lesson Babylon’s greatest king learned well in Dan. 4. Only a fool fights against the Most High.

From the beginning Babylon was mankind uniting to strengthen himself, thinking their combined strength and unity could thwart God’s purpose to scatter the people of earth. It was God’s purpose that through man’s separation He might separate out a people for Himself, a special nation through whom He would bring Messiah into the world. Babylon’s rebellious unity was Satan’s effort to deny God this vehicle of Messiah’s delivery into the world. Man united under a mighty human rebel will make the same blunder again at Armageddon, thinking their combined force can hinder Messiah’s coming and kingdom.

From the beginning Babylon was all about great man and small God. Remember God’s prophecy of earthly kingdoms in that great image of

*Rev 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.*

*Rev 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

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Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan. 2, where Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon were the head of gold. But the king in the next chapter said no, the whole image will be gold. So arrogantly he would proclaim himself the sum and total of human kingdoms, in defiance of God's words. The "*mystery of iniquity*" (II Thess. 2:7) from Satan's first temptation has always asserted that man can ascend and "*be as gods*". Whereas the "*mystery of godliness*" (I Tim. 3:16) affirms that God must descend to become a man, implying that we are little and lost and helpless and undone, needing God's rescue. The first originates in man on earth (or lower), seeking to rise to God. The second originates in heaven, seeing that God must come down to man.

And so it was to Babylon that God took His people Israel in captivity. To the source of the idolatry they were so determined to pursue in their rejection of Him. To the source of the rebellion so much in the

*Rev 18:3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

*Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

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heart of even His own people.

## **Chapter 18**

### **18:1-8** – Babylon’s Fall

Vs. 2 – “*Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen*” – How common such a cry is echoed in God’s Book, in greatest anticipation of the event here recorded. Again the doubling for emphasis. We find the same *words* in Isa. 21:9 & Rev. 14:8. We find the same *theme* in Isa. 13:19; 14:4ff; Jer. 50 & 51. Note the common promise of Babylon *forever uninhabited* in Isa. 13:20-22; Jer. 50:3, 13, 39; 51:29, 43, 62. Compare Isa. 34:11-15 for the same combination of demon and bird inhabitants.

Vs. 4 – Heavenly call to separation. Compare Jer. 50:4-9; 51:6; II Cor. 6:17. As Lot was called out of Sodom, so the Lord calls His people out of Babylon,

*Rev 18:5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and  
God hath remembered her iniquities.*

*Rev 18:6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and  
double unto her double according to her works: in  
the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.*

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to avoid partaking of her sins as an accomplice in her evil, and to avoid her plagues, suffering with her for their too close association. Christians who go down to the world, as Samson's dallying with Delilah, are sure to be stripped of their spiritual power, and thus left without strength to lift the world up. Untouchable was Samson with the Spirit, a laughing stock without Him.

Vs. 5 – *“Her sins have reached unto heaven”* – Strike any familiar chords? The word translated *“reached”* here is literally “piled” or “welded together”, as if bricks piled and mortared together one upon another. The allusion to the original purpose at Babel is obvious, to build *“a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven”* (Gen. 11:4). They finally made it! Not with actual bricks, but with the treasuring up of their sins. Until the Lord at last “remembers” their iniquities to bring them up for review. Not that He ever forgets, but it's action time at this point! Though the Lord delays His judgment for a time, permitting the build up of sin, yet still His

*Rev 18:7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.*

*Rev 18:8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*

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judgment is inescapable outside of refuge in Jesus Christ (Rom. 2:5).

Vs. 7 – The very image of ease and brimming with confidence. But it’s only wishful thinking, for she will come to *“torment and sorrow”* by the same measure with which she has lived in comfort and self-exaltation. Compare Isa. 47:7-9.

Vs. 8 – *“In one day”* – Sudden destruction. Compare in I Thess. 5:3, assured confidence before *“sudden destruction cometh”*. How characteristic this is of Babylon’s history;

- There came a day under Nimrod when the city was broken up by the confusion of their language (Gen. 11).
- There came a moment when Nebuchadnezzar was suddenly humbled, *“while the word was in the king’s mouth”* (Dan. 4:31). Fortunately

he lifted his “*eyes unto heaven*” at last and was restored to his senses and rule.

- There came a day when Belshazzar was so arrogantly abusing the Lord, and “*in that night*” the ancient power of Babylon was crushed (Dan. 5).

Even so the proud fool, thoughtless of God, says “*many years*” I have of “*much goods laid up*” (Lk. 12:16-20). But alas, “*this night*” his soul is required of him. Material possessions are not wrong in themselves. But when they minister to our pride and become our hope and cause us to forget God, our love of them becomes the root of all evil. Compare Prov. 29:1;

- “*Often reproved*” – And ignoring these reproofs.
- “*Suddenly destroyed*” – When at last Babylon’s judgment comes, it comes with greatest emphasis on greatest suddenness (18:8, 10, 17, 19).
- “*Without remedy*” – Count how many times the phrase “*no more*” in vs. 21-23. Note all coming to stunning silence in vs. 22-23.

Consider how the Lord has spoken and will not



*Rev 18:9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,*

*Rev 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.*

*Rev 18:11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:*

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forget. This “*great Babylon*” will most certainly come up “*in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath*” (16:19). Of the unrepentant wicked the Lord keeps careful track. And they will indeed drink to the dregs the cup “*of the fierceness of His wrath*”. Yet in contrast there is blessed forgiveness and forgetfulness for those who believe in Jesus Christ.

### **18:9-20** – Those Mourning Babylon’s Fall

Vs. 9-10 – “*The kings of the earth*” mourn.

Vs. 11-16 – “*The merchants of the earth*” mourn.

Vs. 11 – Note that their mourning is not for the city or people involved, but only that “*no man buyeth their merchandise any more*”. Only that their means of wealth is gone. Their concern is purely selfish.

*Rev 18:12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,*

*Rev 18:13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.*

*Rev 18:14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.*

*Rev 18:15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,*

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It's the difference of serving self through the lives of others, rather than serving others through our lives.

Vs. 14 – Note their dashed hopes only in the material things of earth and their complete disregard for the God who gave it all. It's a picture of man stripped of every earthly prop, revealing the root rot of a dependence running no deeper than mere outward treasures and pleasures. Such shallow-rooted trees blow over in big storms. Compare vs. 19.

Vs. 17-19 – “*All the company in ships*” mourn.

*Rev 18:16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!*

*Rev 18:17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,*

*Rev 18:18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!*

*Rev 18:19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.*

*Rev 18:20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.*

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## **18:20-24** – The Finality of Her Fall.

Vs. 20 – “*God hath avenged you on her*” – Heaven’s martyrs can at last rejoice in justice done on the enemy of God and saints.

Vs. 21 – “*A great millstone*” – A picture of finality! Like a great weight forever removed from earth. Compare the like symbolism of Jer. 51:61-64.

Vs. 23 – Consider how the same absence of any candle or lamp is said of the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21 as well, but there for very different reasons than here.

*Rev 18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.*

*Rev 18:22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;*

*Rev 18:23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.*

*Rev 18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

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Consider the contrast in no more the happy sounds of bride and bridegroom here, while the “*blessed*” gathering to the Lord of His redeemed is all about “*the Marriage Supper of the Lamb*”, which is coming right up in the next chapter (19:9). We’re bidden to “*be glad and rejoice*” (19:7).

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## **Ponder Points**

Do we have reference here to a literal city? Or is this rather some concept of a universal political/commercial entity? Is this speaking of the entire succession of human empires, all combining to form

the impressive statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream? That statue was the image of a man, the ultimate of human exaltation, yet it described the summation of God-rejecting human empires crushed upon Christ's return (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 21:44). Yet note that several times the word "city" is used in this portion (17:18; 18:10 & 18). And God's prophecy speaks of Babylon as forever uninhabited by people, only by demons and birds, as if an actual location. And very tangible terms of material wealth are used in describing the end of its commerce in vs. 12-15. Actual sounds and sights and events are to be "*no more*" in vs. 22-23. All seems to suggest an actual location, together with the larger image of a universal system of human rule. Could this refer to an actual rebuilt Babylon between the rivers?

Consider the history of Babylon, the city;

- Begun by Nimrod, "*the beginning of his kingdom was Babel*" (Gen. 10). "Babel" in Hebrew is "Babylon" in Greek.
- Rose to the height of its power under Nebuchadnezzar, beginning "*the times of the Gentiles*", during which times Israel and Jerusalem have been under Gentile sway.
- Fell to the Medo-Persian Empire in 539 B.C.
- Her famous wall was partially destroyed in

514 B.C. while crushing a revolt there. Still inhabited 25 years after defeat.

- Wall and temples were destroyed in 478 B.C.
- The city was completely razed by Alexander of Greece in 330 B.C., though still partially inhabited following this two centuries later.
- With time the ruins became the hide-out of outlaws, bringing the need for further demolitions to discourage this.
- Was nearly uninhabited by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.
- Finally its location was nearly forgotten altogether.

Babylon continued in some measure for centuries after its initial downfall, only gradually becoming completely uninhabited. The demise of the original city can be described more by slow fade than sudden fall. Yet God's prophecies describe her sudden, catastrophic, permanent destruction, associated with final judgments, the city site never to be inhabited again. *"At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved . . . Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed . . . for every purpose shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant"* (Jer.

50:46; 51:8 & 29).

It doesn't seem that this sudden fall has happened yet. Are we to look for an actual rebuilt city on the old site and then a final fall? It would seem so, because the nature of the way God fulfils His prophecies leads to such a conclusion. I'm expecting to see the city rebuilt, even as we look for a temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. And further, look for the Euphrates to perhaps be made navigable by ocean-going ships, thus making Babylon accessible to "*all the company in ships, and sailors*". Will global warming provide this? Perhaps transforming the Euphrates from river to harbour? Look for moral decadence to slowly suck most of the western nations down the tubes, apart from the coming ten-nation confederacy around old Rome. Consider how the Arab nations still hold the jugular vein of oil in their hand. Islam united would put old Babylon right at the centre of it, which could so quickly and easily become a most powerful commercial centre, with all the world flowing to it. Impossible? Patience my brother. Just wait a bit.

“And I saw heaven opened,  
and behold a white horse;  
and He that sat upon him  
was called Faithful and True,  
and in righteousness  
He doth judge and make war”

(Revelation 19:11)



## Class 17 – Revelation 19

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*Rev 19:1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:*

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We have been wading through the accounts of God's judgments, and the going has indeed been long and heavy. But from the opening of this chapter the change is distinct. From here on out it's mostly all rejoicing and victory. The judgments upon earth have ended, leaving a smoking, stinking mess, with all eyes now on heaven in trembling anticipation of what's to come, of He who is to come.

### **Chapter 19** – Christ's Coming

#### **19:1-6** – Alleluia Chorus

Vs. 1 – “*After these things*” – After the complete and final fall of Babylon in all of its forms, both religious and political. And after the completion of God's judgments poured out upon earth. It was then that John heard a great noise of a mighty multitude in heaven shouting “*Alleluia*”! (hālāl = praise, and jā or yā a shortened form of Jehovah, meaning in

*Rev 19:2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*

*Rev 19:3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.*

*Rev 19:4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.*

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Hebrew, “praise the Lord”). Four times we find this happy word in the first six verses here. In fact four times the word is found in all of the N.T., and all of them right here in celebration of God’s judgments completed and Christ’s appearance imminent. The heavenly celebration begins and ends with *alleluia!* (vs. 1 & 6). If ever there is a time in all of earth’s history fit for praise it will be at this point.

Vs. 1-3 – Note that the basis of God glorified and honoured is the righteous nature of His severe judgments upon men. The cry of God’s martyrs (6:10) will finally be answered at that point.

Vs. 4 – The 24 elders and 4 beasts join in the happy praise. As we’ve seen before, when the shouting of glory begins the jubilation ascends as others join in, rising here to greatest crescendo! Even as the Psalms rise in alleluias out the end of the book,

*Rev 19:5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying,  
Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear  
him, both small and great.*

*Rev 19:6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great  
multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as  
the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for  
the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

---

ascending finally to “*let every thing that hath breath  
praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD [Heb.  
halleluiah]*”.

Vs. 5-6 – Another voice from the throne calls all to join in praise of God. And in response the heavenly multitude speak again. Now the overwhelming power of their combined voice is beyond John’s ability to describe in a simple word. It’s like a vast throng of people speaking in unison he says, and yet at the same time it’s like the thunderous roaring of a massive force of water, and still yet it’s like a rolling boom of continuous thunder. All contributing to a symphony of momentous power and volume and combined exuberance of this joint expression of praise to God. While the unredeemed below are united in rage, imagining “*a vain thing against the LORD*”, the redeemed above are united in praise, shouting “*alleluia*” to the Lord. Both throngs are where they want to be.

*Rev 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

*Rev 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

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After the pattern of Jehoshaphat (II Chron. 20:21), the singing begins even before the battle. The outcome is as good as history through the sure promise of God.

### **19:7-10** – “*Marriage Supper of the Lamb*”

Vs. 7-8 – The great heavenly multitude now announce the marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus Christ is the Groom and the church is described in the N.T. as the bride of Christ (II Cor. 11:2). She’s called “*His wife*” here. Thus it appears the marriage union has already taken place, with the wedding supper or feast now announced. The Lord will come for the church after the pattern of a traditional Jewish marriage, involving three phases;

- Betrothal – The legal union of the couple. A picture of the fixed, forever relation of believers with Christ from the moment of their salvation, but without the togetherness. In this present age God is completing the

*Rev 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

---

bride as souls are saved and added to the church.

- Procession – On the wedding night the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride to receive her to himself and lead her to his father's house. This pictures the Rapture, when Jesus comes to receive the church.
- Wedding feast – Usually at the house of the groom's father. This perhaps begins with Christ's return to His Millennial kingdom.

Vs. 9 – *“And he said unto me . . .”* – We're not told who speaks here, though as we see in vs. 10 it's obviously not God. This seems to be an angel, perhaps the same one instructing John to write elsewhere in this book (14:13). This one proclaims the blessedness of those given entrance to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Every true believer in Jesus Christ will be there. How very potent God's warnings of exclusion from that happy place. Compare;

*Rev 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

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- Matt. 22:1-14 – Christ’s parable of a king’s wedding feast for his son. “*Cast him [the one unprepared] into outer darkness*” where there is “*weeping and gnashing of teeth*”.
- Matt. 25:1-13 – Five foolish virgins excluded. “*They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut*”!

Vs. 10 – John is perhaps so overwhelmed with the nature of the revelations that he fell at this messenger’s feet in worship. And the angel immediately reacted with “*See thou do it not*”. Literally something like “Beware! No!” Compare 22:8-9. Now remember when John fell in a similar way before Jesus Christ in chap. 1 (vs. 17). John was not forbidden there as here. Why? Because Jesus, as God, accepts the worship of men. Indeed when God “*bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him’ . . . But unto the Son He saith, ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*” (Heb. 1:6, 8).

*Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*

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Consider the believer's growing blessedness;

- One is blessed to find salvation in Christ.
- It's a blessed life to live for Christ.
- Yet still it's "*far better*" to die "*and to be with Christ*" (Phil. 1:23).
- And then, when all believers are at last brought into fullest fellowship in the Father's house it's all *alleluias!!*

### **19:11-16** – Christ's Return

Vs. 11 – At last it was given to John to see that crowning event of all events. He saw heaven opened and Christ returning to earth upon a white horse, the fulfilment of *reams* of divine prophesies. Here are a few among hundreds we could list;

Ps. 2:6-9; 24:7-10; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6; Dan. 2:44-45; 7:13-14; Zech. 12:9-10; 14:1-9; Matt. 24:29-31; 25:31; Lk. 21:25-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:10-11; I Thess. 2:19, 3:13, 5:23; II Thess. 1:7-10,

2:8; Jude 14-15; Rev. 1:7, 2:25, 3:3, 16:15, 22:7, 12, 20

Many portions express His *glory* in His coming;

- Matt. 16:27 – “*For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father*”.
- Matt. 24:30 – “*The Son of Man coming . . . with power and great glory*”.
- Matt. 25:31 – “*The Son of Man shall come in His glory*”.

Some portions confirm Christ’s *personal identity*;

- Acts 1:10-11 – “*This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go*”.
- I Thess. 4:16 – “*The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven*”.

His physical *visibility* in His coming is expressed;

- Matt. 24:30 – “*Then shall all the tribes of the earth . . . see the Son of man coming in the clouds*”.
- Rev. 1:7 – “*Every eye shall see Him*”.

Here is the great event of God’s entire programme for man, as literal and actual as Christ’s first



*Rev 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*

*Rev 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.*

*Rev 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

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coming. *This is really going to happen folks!!*  
Question – Can anyone fairly claim to believe the Bible and at the same time disbelieve Christ’s actual, literal, physical, visible 2<sup>nd</sup> coming?

Vs. 11 – “*A white horse*” – This perhaps after the Roman practice of military generals returning victorious from battle. Such victors would enter the city of Rome on a white horse, a sign of triumph. But Jesus comes to the great final battle on a white charger, for His victory is a foregone conclusion! It’s already recorded in the Book.

Note the *names* of Christ in His coming;

- “*Faithful and true*” (vs. 11) – Expressing His character.
- “*The Word of God*” (vs. 13) – Expressing His function.

*Rev 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

*Rev 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

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- “*King of kings and Lord of lords*” (vs. 16) – Expressing His pre-eminence. “*Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords*” (I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14).

Note the *expressive pictures* of Christ;

- He comes as the righteous “*Judge to make war*” (vs. 11). In contrast to His first coming to seek and to save the lost, not breaking even a bruised reed.
- He comes with “*eyes . . . as a flame of fire*” (vs. 12). Again, as in 1:14, expressing penetrating awareness and piercing judgment. As the refiner’s fire (Mal. 3) consuming all dross.
- He comes crowned with many crowns (vs. 12). His supreme, unquestioned right to reign.
- He comes with His “*vesture dipped in blood*”

(vs. 13). If His blood, then His sacrifice for the redeemed is suggested. More likely it will be the blood of His enemies, expressing His consuming judgment in His return. Compare that blood-spattered image of Him in Isa. 63, striding from His wine-press work in Bozrah.

- He comes with His following “*armies . . . clothed in fine linen, white and clean*” (vs. 14). Christ’s bride, the church, is described in similar terms in vs. 8.
- He comes with a sword “*out of His mouth*” (vs. 15). Compare 1:16, 2:12 & 16. This to “*smite the nations*”, all gathered at Armageddon. With the sword of His word He who spoke creation into existence only needs to speak and the armies of earth melt away in a moment.
- This is the One who will rule or shepherd the earth with a “*rod of iron*” (2:27; Ps. 2:9).
- He comes to tread “*the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*” (vs. 15). This again is the same image we saw in 14:19:20.

So the Lord will at last return in victory and blessing, yet in terrible judgment. Every move of

God always involves His love and joy in blessing, as well as His judgment. The same Flood that destroyed the corrupt world of Noah's day also lifted Noah and family, transporting them to a renewed world, purged of the influences of wicked mankind. Our Lord in fact returns to two suppers, the supper of blessing in *"the marriage supper of the Lamb"* and the supper of cursing in *"the supper of the great God"*, or *"the great supper of God"*. He comes *"to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe"* (II Thess. 1:10), yet He comes with sickle in hand to fill the winepress of the fierceness of His almighty wrath, *"in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (II Thess. 1:8). All we who have found life in Him *"were but dead men before my lord the king; yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table"* (II Sam. 19:28). And what of you my friend? Where will your soul be in that great day?

### **19:17-21** – Earthly Opponents Crushed

The Lord returns to the great final war, which will already be raging around Palestine, and house-to-house in the city of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2). The armies of earth will have been drawn together by the combined influence of Satan, Antichrist, the False Prophet, and demons (16:12-16). Yet all

*Rev 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;*

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those gathered in opposition to the Lord will come to their end in a moment upon Christ's return.

Vs. 17 – An angel calls all birds of prey to gather upon the carrion resulting from the destruction of the armies of earth. This call to God's "*supper*" has a bit of a sardonic flavour, reminiscent of the Lord's derision in Ps. 2 as He looks upon little man so given to his aggressive rage "*against the LORD, and against His Anointed*". Previews of this supper are well-rooted in God's ancient prophecies as well (Ezek. 39:17-20; Zeph. 1:7; Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37).

This "supper" marks a point of such supreme sadness. It has been the Lord's grace throughout the ages to willingly invite fallen man into communion with Himself. The experience of Saul's grandson Mephibosheth illustrates this (II Sam. 9:7ff). Being a son of Jonathan who was dead, Mephibosheth was a likely heir to the throne of Israel. But David was the Lord's appointed and

anointed king. Under normal circumstances this would mean threat upon Mephibosheth's life, he being a danger to David's rule. This is why Mephibosheth was in hiding, until revealed by Saul's old servant Ziba. But the surprise was that David was not looking to curse Saul's house but to bless. Instead of the expected death, David gave Mephibosheth the joy and honour of ever after eating with David at his own table. Mephibosheth becomes a picture of us. Instead of the eternal death we are so worthy of at the King's hand, we have been granted the grace of a place of honour and privilege, eating always at my King's own table. From goner to grace! From utterly "undone" to utterly uncondemned! Compare Ps. 23 "*Thou* [even the LORD Himself] *hast prepared a table before me*". With the words of the Shulamite in Song of Solomon we marvel that that King of kings Himself "*brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love*"!! I, as God's own child, will eat at His table because He *wants* me, even *me*! Yet, as with Mephibosheth, my boon really comes of my relation to the one the Father loves, rather than a product of my own lovability. That the most lordly of all would love the most lowly of all! That the most holy would love the most unholy! That *He* would be knocking at *my* door (3:20)! *Oh the unspeakable grace of God!!*

BUT the great and stunning wonder and sadness of it is that *not all who are bidden will come!* As those in Christ's parable (Lk. 14:16-24), some who were invited to the feast were so foolishly distracted by their things. And so God sets another table! Even now through the scope of God's prophecy we can see that table being spread as well. From of old comes the Lord's warning of His ultimate judgment upon rejecters in scattering their remains upon the land as animal dung (Deut. 28:26; Jer. 7:32-34; 15:1-4; 16:4; 19:7; 25:30-33; 34:17-20; Ezek. 39:17-20). Quite common indeed is God's prophetic threat that He would "*give your bodies for meat to the birds and the beasts*". This the Lord did in a measure with wicked King Ahab (I Ki. 22:37-38), and more completely with Jezebel, the evil force behind the king (II Ki. 9:30-37). This is what Jesus meant as well when in the context of His return He said "*for wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles [or vultures] be gathered together*" (Matt. 24:28). Oh my, doesn't that play havoc with our humanitarian sensitivities! God turns proud man to manure! Could anybody wish this upon son or daughter, father or mother, relative or friend? Do you sense urgency arising in your heart toward the unsaved? Do you see the pleading, persuasive tone such a vision might add to your witness? "*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision*"

*Rev 19:18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.*

*Rev 19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.*

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(Joel 3:14).

Vs. 18 – Notice how God is status-blind. From kings to slaves to horses, all consumed together at the Great Supper of God. His judgment will be the great equalizer (6:15-17). There will be no escaping of the lofty generals in their air-conditioned offices of the outcome of their foolish decisions while the soldiers on the ground are consumed. No unfair punishment of pawns, while the big boys behind it all go free. In vs. 18 the armies are dealt with. In vs. 20-21 the kings, False Prophet, Antichrist, and all others are handled appropriately as well. And then finally in 20:1-3 Satan himself is cast to the bottomless pit.

Vs. 19-20 – This is indeed “*the battle of that great day of God Almighty*” mentioned in 16:14. Dan. 11 seems to indicate that this battle comes together in its original impetus as nation against nation, in-



*Rev 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

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fighting that will develop between various segments of the beast's final world empire. But then, as Christ appears in power and glory, these gathered armies will know the reason for their presence there, will forget their differences, and will join in united rage against Christ their common enemy. The verb "*gathered together*" is passive. John saw them all "having been led together", pointing to Satan's purpose and push behind this whole confab. Though many and varied will be the reasons in the hearts of the men involved, Satan's single, subtle purpose behind all is stated here, "*to make war against Him that sat on the horse*".

N.B. what's oddly missing in this greatest battle of all earthly battles. We see nothing of the usual account of the clash, marshalling and movements of troop, the shifting tides of the progression of battle. Why? Because there will be no progression of battle! The account turns quite simply from *confrontation* to *clean-up*, from vs. 19 to vs. 20. It

*Rev 19:21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

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will be over as quickly as Jesus appears! Beast and False Prophet are “*cast alive into the lake of fire*”, not even passing through death. Appropriately these two appear to be the first inhabitants of this fearful place of final judgment. The unsaved dead of all ages are presently in hell’s torments (Lk. 16). But the lake of fire appears to be a different place, separate also from the bottomless pit, as we see in this context. Jesus suggests in Matt. 25:41 that this place was prepared especially for “*the devil and his angels*”. At the final judgment all the lost will be eternally condemned to this fiery lake (20:11-15). And note in 20:10 that when Satan at last joins them after 1000 years, “*the beast and the false prophet are*” still there. Thus they will not have been annihilated.

Vs. 21 – “*The remnant*” or the rest, the entire army of the wicked, will be together removed, the entire force completely snuffed out, not prevailing in any slightest way against the Lord. It will be the total defeat of man at the very height of his Satan-

infused power.

Let it be known to all that this same inspired Bible of God, that speaks so extensively of the wonderful grace of our loving God, of salvation available to all, and of a Saviour who so graciously died in the place of sinners, this same inspired Bible speaks with equal clarity of the certainty of judgment upon all who reject or ignore God's grace. This same word of God declares so plainly that those who spurn the God of mercy will know His judgment without mercy. The same event of greatest hope for the saved, the return of Jesus Christ to earth, is that event of greatest terror for the unsaved! How foolish those who rest on portions of God's Word speaking of God's love to the neglect of portions dealing with His righteous judgment. Both aspects are equally inspired and divinely interwoven together. They must be taken together if we would know the true God of the Bible. This present church age is the age of grace, an age of suspended judgment. The tribulation period to come, while continuing to reveal God's grace, will be as notable for His judgment and wrath as this day is for His grace and patience. In that day all mankind will no longer question God's resolve to bring every evil work into judgment, to bring His wrath upon those who spurn His grace. His grace is matchless. His

good gifts are incomparable in blessedness. Yet His righteous judgments are matchless in their horror as well, incomparable in their most supreme dreadfulness! How happy to be in Christ, leaning on the everlasting arms. How blessed to be in His hand, to know He's *for* me and thus who can be against me? How fearful to fall into those same hands of the living God, *outside of Christ*, to know in that moment that none can shield from God's searing righteous wrath (Heb. 10:31).

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## Ponder Points

Consider things “white” in Revelation (the word “white” found 18 times);

1:14 – Christ's **hair** white like wool, as snow

2:17 – White **stone** to overcomers at Pergamos

3:4 – “A *few*” worthy at Sardis to walk with Christ “*in white*” (**clothes**)

3:5 – Sardis overcomers **clothed** in white

3:18 – Laodiceans bidden to buy white **clothes**

4:4 – 24 elders **clothed** in white

6:11 – White **robes** given to martyrs under altar

7:9, 13 – Countless throng “*arrayed in white robes*”

7:14 – Made **robes** “*white in the blood of the Lamb*”

14:14 – Christ the Reaper on white **cloud**

15:6 – Angels with bowls **clothed** in “*pure and white linen*”

19:8 – Bride given to “*be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white . . . the righteousness of saints*” (**clothes**)

19:11, 14 – Christ and host on white **horses**

20:11 – Great white **throne**

Hair, stone, robes, cloud, horses, throne

.....

Those *clothed* in white;

- Those worthy at Sardis (3:4)
- Overcomers at Sardis (3:5)
- 24 elders (4:4)
- Martyrs under the altar (6:11)
- Innumerable multitude (7:13-14)
- Angels with bowl judgments (15:6)
- Bride of Christ (19:8)

“And whosoever  
was not found written  
in the book of life  
was cast into  
the lake of fire”

(Revelation 20:15)

## Class 18 – Revelation 20

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*Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*

*Rev 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,*

*Rev 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

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In chap. 19 we saw Christ's return to the earth, where His first order of business will be the battle of Armageddon. In this chapter we see His earthly kingdom established.

### Chapter 20

#### 20:1-3 – Satan Bound

Notice how this chapter begins with the word “*and*”. How significant this insignificant word becomes in this context. This little word “*and*” is found 34 times in 19:11-21, and another 34 in chap. 20. The Lord is obviously expressing progression or sequence through these many connecting words.

It's the way we would relate a running consecutive narrative, such as;

"I rode my bike to the shop *and* I ran over a snake *and* it flipped around *and* bit my tire *and* I got a puncture *and* that's why I forgot to buy bread!"

Each event naturally follows the previous. Have a good look at the verse beginnings in chapters 19-20. Most verses begin with "*and*". We simply have no valid reason to believe that the events of chap. 20 should not logically follow the events of chap. 19. The simplicity of normal language usage makes it clear. Can there be any doubt that we're resisting the clear and simple words of God to see it otherwise? Upon His return to the earth the Lord will deal appropriately with that great world leader, Antichrist, his False Prophet, and the kings of the earth and their armies. *And* then Satan himself, the one behind much of the mess to which Christ will return, will be completely removed from all earthly influence for 1000 years (it's implied that the demons will also be included). "*And*" then following the obvious order of events related here, Jesus Christ will reign for "*a thousand years*". So of course Satan is not currently bound as some insist (I Pet. 5:8). This only takes place after Jesus returns to Armageddon. Seems to me it's quite simple to understand, unless a man is determined



to make it otherwise. It is this simple approach to reading the Bible, and more particularly this portion, that makes us “premillennial”, believing that Christ will return “pre” or before His “millennial” or 1000-year reign. Compare other portions, expressing the same idea of Christ’s return followed by His kingdom;

- In Ps. 2 the sequence is the same; the angry nations are gathered in rage against the Lord, followed by the Lord troubling them in His angry response, followed by His King/Son set up on Zion and inheriting the earth.
- In Dan. 2:44-45 the Rock (Christ) from heaven comes and crushes the kingdoms of earth and then fills the earth with the “mountain” of Christ’s kingdom.
- Dan. 7 describes the “*Son of Man*” given “*dominion, and glory, and a kingdom*” involving “*all people, nations, and languages*”, and this after man’s rule is “*destroyed, and given to the burning flame*”.
- Zech. 14:1-9 shows Christ’s return to Armageddon, followed by clear description of the bright changes when “*the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day.*”

*Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

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## **20:4-6** – 1000-Year Reign

John now contrasts those who will be resurrected before His kingdom with those who will not be. It appears all who are resurrected at that point will have some part in ruling.

Vs. 4 – John saw thrones and individuals seated on them, individuals to whom responsibility to judge was given. He further clarifies that these are those who stood for Christ on earth, and thus were beheaded during the tribulation. The Greek word used here for how these will be killed is an interesting technical point. *Pelekus* in the Greek means “axe”. A “pelican” gets its name from its axe-shaped bill. The word used here is the verb form, *pelekidzo*, to axe or to cut off the head with an axe. A glimpse into the nasty execution methods of Antichrist’s regime.

These having been killed in this way during the

*Rev 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

*Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

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great tribulation are not the only ones who will be resurrected in that day, nor are they the only ones who will reign during Christ's Millennial Kingdom. But the Lord separates them out for personal promise and encouragement. Why? Because part of the purpose of this book is to stir to courage those who will actually see those indescribable days fulfilled . . . *on them!* And so the Lord graciously writes to strengthen them with hope. He never neglects to encourage those who dare to stand true for Him. Would you remain true to Christ if you knew it would mean the axe? If it would mean the same for the children of your love as well? And that you might have to watch them be so handled? How easy it will be in that day to rationalize one's way out of this by some devious reasoning.

The promise is here that these courageous souls will be made alive (raised) and will reign with Christ 1000 years, with others who will be raised to reign

at that time as vs. 6 indicates. All the redeemed who have died, both before and during the tribulation period, will be involved in this “*first resurrection*” and will not experience the “*second death*”. And again, these all will be involved in ministering and ruling in some measure with Christ in His kingdom.

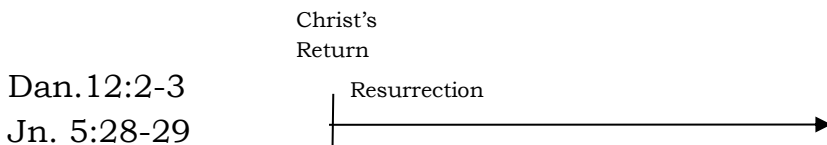
Now this will not be the “*first resurrection*” in the sense of the first *ever*, for of course *Christ* has already been raised from death. And then the *church saints* will be raised in the Rapture before the tribulation. And then the *two witnesses* in chap. 11 will be resurrected to life. The term here expresses the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection to life before Christ’s kingdom, as opposed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection to the 2<sup>nd</sup> death after Christ’s kingdom (vs. 12-13). All the redeemed of all time will be raised before Christ’s kingdom to enter into the joy and splendour of it, while the souls of the unsaved dead remain in the torments of hell until after the 1000 year reign (vs. 5). They will then be resurrected and assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> death or lake of fire at the last.

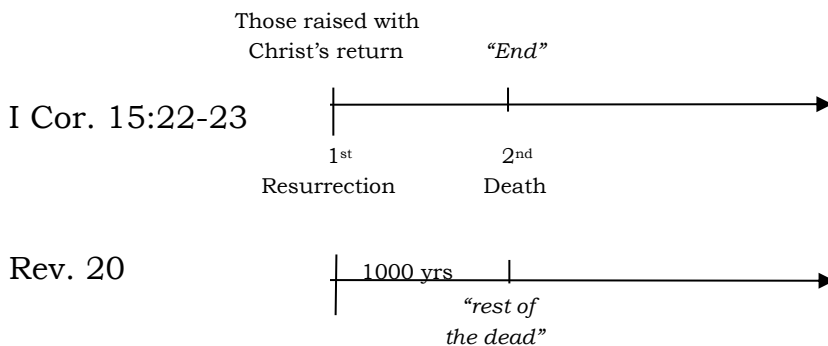
Folks go wrong on this matter of the resurrection at portions such as Jn. 5:28-29 & Dan. 12:2-3. Such portions seem to indicate that there will be only one general resurrection all together of saved and lost to

blessing and condemnation. It's never stated in these portions that both saved and lost are raised at the same time. And Rev. 20 now brings the needed clarity, that there is in fact a millennium between the resurrections of blessed and condemned. In the same way O.T. prophecies seem to imply Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> coming and His kingdom fulfilled at the same time, thus the earnest expectation of the disciples (Acts 1:6). But the unrevealed mystery was that this current church age was to be slotted in between Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> coming and His return to His kingdom. Compare the resurrection stages in I Cor. 15:22-23;

- Christ the firstfruits.
- Then *"those that are His at His coming"*. The 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection.
- Then *"the end"*. The 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection to 2<sup>nd</sup> death.

Thus increasingly greater detail is given;





Woe to the one born once, but dying twice! Blessed the one born twice, but dying once! The first death is momentary, perhaps even painless. The second death is only eternal, continual torments!

Now six times the time element of "*a thousand years*" is found in this portion, in every verse from vs. 2 to vs. 7. This is the only place in the Bible where the actual length of Christ's earthly kingdom is given. The belief arising from a normal reading of this portion, that 1000 years simply means 1000 years, is sometimes called "chiliasm", from Latin and Greek "chiliad" (kil ē' ad), meaning 1000.

### **20:7-10** – Satan Released

Satan's release (with his demon host) at the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth will bring about God's final lesson on the nature of sin. The millennial era will be without Satan's influence

*Rev 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired,  
Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,  
Rev 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which  
are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and  
Magog, to gather them together to battle: the  
number of whom is as the sand of the sea.  
Rev 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth,  
and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the  
beloved city: and fire came down from God out of  
heaven, and devoured them.  
Rev 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast  
into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast  
and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented  
day and night for ever and ever.*

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upon earth, and with near perfect environment and swiftest justice on every budding of evil. There will be very little evil influence from outside of a man. Thus the only real source of evil will be in man himself, arising from his own sin nature. And yet with Satan's release, great will be the ground-swell of a following after Him from among those born within the millennial era. This unsaved multitude, though having lived in outward submission to Christ's righteous rule, will yet be without the transformation of regeneration within. And therefore Satan's release will draw them out to the expression of what and whose they really are. The Lord by this means will prove some things;

- That the environment and the evil one are not

ultimately to blame for a man's choice for evil. Even under the most favourable circumstances and outward influences unsaved man falls in with evil when given opportunity. The "*desperately wicked*" nature of the human heart will be on display through this final rebellion.

- That environment, no matter how perfect, cannot change a soul who will not be changed, who will not choose to love righteousness and hate iniquity. Man must experience the core transformation which only regeneration can provide. Clear will be the lesson then, that without God's gracious work in a soul, man in sin is incurably wicked and without hope. Indeed, "*ye must be born again*"! The Lord is right after all. The true salvation or regeneration of a soul is worlds apart from mere outward religious conformity.
- Satan's inveterate wickedness, impossible to reform.
- That God's eternal judgment upon the wicked is just.

It appears these choosing to follow Satan will quickly come together into an organized army.



Details of how this transpires and human personalities involved are not given. The shocking factor is the *vast number* (“*as the sand of the sea*”) choosing Satan for their Master after having known Christ’s perfect rule. Against Satan’s army, again surrounding Jerusalem, the Lord will make quick and final work in their fiery destruction. And Satan will finally and forever be cast to eternal torment in the lake of fire.

Sin will come to its final end at this point as well. “*To make an end of sins . . . and to bring in everlasting righteousness*” was the way the angel described God’s great purpose to Daniel (Dan. 9:24). Every enemy will at last be put under the feet of Jesus, “*the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*” (II Cor. 15:26).

The “*Gog and Magog*” mentioned in vs. 8 must not lead us to associate this battle with the one described in Ezek. 38-39. The circumstances there differ from here. Gog and Magog properly refer to areas north of the Black and Caspian Seas. Satan’s followers from this area will join a great human host from all the earth.

## **20:11-15** – Great White Throne

Coming now to the end of the Millennial Kingdom,

*Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*  
*Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

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we're confronted with the final judgment of man.

Vs. 11 – John sees a great white throne and One sitting upon it. This One is of such surpassing majesty that earth and heaven flee from before Him (21:1). And with earth and heaven will flee away man's every trite, belittling, foolish view of God. All will then understand Him as He really is, and every vestige of man's tendency to represent the Lord and His things in cute little ways will be no more. 'Tis an easy thing to hide in this day, but nobody will hide anything in that day from He who sees all. Indeed there will be no place to hide, no earth at all.

Vs. 12 – The purpose of this great white throne judgment is to judge the dead. John sees this vast sea of humanity standing before the throne. We know from the context that these are the *unsaved* dead, those not raised in the first resurrection prior to the Millennium. The redeemed were raised there,

church saints before the tribulation and all other saints at Christ's return to earth. Again, *all* dead believers will be raised before Christ's earthly kingdom. And all who are not raised in that 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection will be raised in this 2<sup>nd</sup>, to be assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> death. Either it's the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection or the 2<sup>nd</sup> death for man. Thus the fact that these dead have not been raised before this is evidence that these are the unsaved with no eternal life. How solemn the scene before this throne! Consider some things in the hearts of every one of these before the throne;

- *Fear* before the righteous Creator.
- Clear awareness of the *rightness* of their being there.
- Seething *rage* at that One seated as Judge before them. Hatred of His holiness. Eyes wide with fear, yet narrowed with rage.
- Every pretence stripped away, all feigned ignorance or interest cast aside. No need for such charades anymore.

Not even the firmness of the fleeing earth will be under their feet then. Though they wish for opportunity to destroy their righteous Judge, all will be fully aware of the proven futility of all such

efforts. They've had their day and made their attempt under Satan's leadership, and all such efforts have come to this!

*"Small and great"* John saw standing there, coming from all walks of life, from every degree of human greatness. And *"standing"*, John says. Not sitting or waiting idly, but standing, on the very verge of their *final, eternal sentence!* *How ominous in its threat!*

Their judgment will be based on the things recorded *"in the books"*. And the books are now open before the Judge of all. One of those books is *"the book of life"*, which we've before considered. This is the roll or record of those who are saved, having obtained eternal life. These will be found before this throne because their names *are not found in this book!* The book of life will confirm the fact that all who are there *should* be there. Is your name in that book? By God's grace mine is. Not because of the kind of person I am, but because of the kind of Saviour I've embraced.

Then there are books of works (vs. 12). Clearly these are God's record of the deeds of men. Compare His judgment of the sheep and goats based on their deeds in Matt. 25:31-46. If a soul

*Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

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refuses to find refuge in Christ, refusing to believe upon Him and the adequacy of His work on Calvary, then that one must be judged by his own unrighteous works. And by these he must certainly be condemned, for all have fallen short. *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness”* (Rom. 4:5). Nobody is saved by works, though all are judged by their works. All who are saved are saved by grace alone through faith alone. But our works are obviously important to God. For they are recorded by Him and are brought up in every scene of judgment, whether of saved or unsaved (II Cor. 15:10-11). His record of our works has to do with degrees of reward in heaven, and probably with degrees of punishment in hell as well. Thus men will be judged according to their works as recorded by God in His books of works. And at which resurrection this takes place, either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>, depends on whether one’s name is in the other book, the book of life.

Vs. 13 – The resurrection of the unsaved dead is

described here. As in the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection so in this resurrection, physical bodies are raised and joined with souls. The resurrection of the dead from the sea confirms that *all* the dead will be raised, regardless of the condition of their bodies. God has no problem reconstituting disintegrated bodies, even though consumed and scattered by scavenger activity. There are those who frown upon cremation, and highlight burial as the only appropriate way to deal with dead believers. But perhaps we need not worry about making too much work for God at the resurrection. Burial does not succeed in keeping all body materials in one place either.

Though we're not specifically told, the indication is that there are no saved at this final resurrection and judgment. There is nothing said about reward, only punishment here. This will incorporate all the unsaved dead of all ages, including those punished with death during the Millennium, and at the end of it in Satan's final revolt.

*"Every man"* – Though dealt with as a group, the Lord deals with every man individually, both in rewards and punishments. He never loses sight of the individual.

*Rev 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

*Rev 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

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Vs. 14-15 – *“Death and hell were cast . . .”* – In other words, all the dead reserved in Hades are here cast into the lake of fire. And so both the wicked and the righteous will finally, permanently be assigned to their respective eternal destinies.

Again, what is the basis of this judgment? Their name is *“not found written in the book of life”*! Greatest emphasis here on these books (5 times), in this day when God-rejecting man will finally be brought to book. And do these come to such a fearful, final state because God wished it to be so? No, He’s *“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (II Pet. 3:9). His offer of grace is available to all. Man will receive God’s righteous judgment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> death because he spurned God’s gracious gift of eternal life. And this out of arrogance, and love of sin, and hatred of God’s righteousness. And all who go to their grave unrepentant will *“have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”* (21:8).

“*Whosoever*” – It makes no difference who, whether small or great, for the Lord is no respecter of persons. The “*whosoever believeth*” (Jn. 3:16) and “*whoever shall call*” (Rom. 10:13) of God’s grace, holds for God’s judgment as well.

Again, this lake is not a place of annihilation, but of eternal torments. The only real difficulty folks have with the clarity of Bible teaching on this score is in just *accepting* or *believing* what God said. Folks have few struggles or alternative interpretations with the doctrine of heaven, because it’s an easy one to believe and proclaim. God’s righteousness is unchanging and His justice inflexible, demanding judgment when His grace is rejected.

Oh warn the lost with all clarity and earnestness believer! Tell them of both the goodness and severity of God, with repetitive urgency, with sacrifice to self, at all cost, before it’s too late! Endure the shame and scorning and laughing sure to be poured on you. Never was it any different for God’s prophets of old.

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## **Ponder Points**

Consider some other beliefs concerning Rev. 20 and the millennium;



## **Postmillennial Belief**

- Christ will return at the end (post) of 1000 years.
- Somewhat literal in that this view tends to see the 1000 years as something of an actual 1000-year period.
- This era is anticipated as a golden age when the gospel will at last arise to final triumph, extending to the ends of the earth in influence toward the end of this present age.
- This final glorious era on earth will at last usher in Christ's return.
- It's a rather optimistic perspective that Christ will be made to arise, through the preaching of the gospel, to reign spiritually on earth through the work of His church and spread of the gospel.
- This view was popular at the turn of the last century, took a nasty knock during the world war decades, but has been regaining popularity in more recent years.
- Modern reconstructionism is just refried postmillennialism.

## Answers to Postmillennialism

- II Thess. 2 relates a decidedly *pessimistic* perspective of apostasy, followed by Antichrist, followed by Christ's return.
- Rev. 19-20 show Christ's return followed in sequence by His 1000-year kingdom, not *visa versa*.
- The events of Rev. 20 do not appear any more spiritual or less physical and tangible than those of Rev. 19.
- Dan. 2 & 7 describe the actual, earthly, political kingdoms of men suddenly replaced by Christ's.
- There is not the slightest hint in Daniel that the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom is any different in tangible, political nature than the 1<sup>st</sup> four.

## **Amillennial Belief**

- Deny any actual, specific 1000-year period of Christ reigning.
- The 1000 years of Rev. 20 is understood in a non-literal sense, as referring simply to an unspecified, long period of time.
- This view sees Christ's reign only as a

spiritual one in the hearts of believers.

- Amillennialist Abraham Kuyper states that “in Revelation the idea ‘thousand’ is never taken literally”.
  - Though the term “thousand” does not stand on its own anywhere else in Rev., where is the clear indication that “thousand” is not to be read literally when combined with numbers? 144,000 from Israel (chap. 7)? 12,000 from each tribe? 7000 killed by earthquake in Jerusalem (chap. 11)?
  - And why would we feel led to read “*a thousand two hundred and threescore days*” (1260 days) as something other than 42 months = 3½ years?

### Answers to Amillennialism

- The six-count mention of 1000 years in Rev. 20 could scarcely be more underscored, and thus quite conclusive.
- Do we have sufficient reason to read this otherwise?

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Question – How long will Christ reign?

Answer – Forever.

- “*And of His kingdom there shall be no end*” (Isa. 9:7)
- “*And it shall stand forever*” (Dan. 2:44)
- Many other Bible portions express the same

Question – Does Jesus reign for 1000 years or forever?

Do you see how one might be led to see 1000 years as other than literal? What appears to be an eternal reign in all other kingdom prophecies is limited to 1000 years only here in Rev. 20. So what’s the answer? “*A thousand years*” or forever?

Answer – Yes! Both!

While other prophecies relate the forever nature of the Lord’s reign after the destruction of human kingdoms, I Cor. 15:22-23 separates Christ’s return from “*the end*”, and Rev. 20 then specifies the time from Christ’s return to “*the end*” as “*a thousand years*”. This period of Christ’s reign on earth will be but the prelude to the Lord’s eternal reign in the new heavens and earth. The reason for the 1000-year aspect of Christ’s reign is to allow for some important things that must happen;

- He will subdue all enemies (I Cor. 15:25).

- He will at last swallow up death, man's greatest enemy (I Cor. 15:26, 54; Rev. 20:14; 21:4; Isa. 25:8-9).
- He will fulfil His prophetic promises to the nation of Israel.
- He will display the depth of sin through Satan's release at the end.
- He will show man's desperate need of God's regenerating work.

Only when the Lord Jesus Christ has finished His earth works through His kingdom will His earthly reign be complete. And then what? Is the rule of earth handed back over to proud human domain? *Never again!* Christ will co-rule with the Father ever after, when the kingdom aspects of His reign are complete. *“And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all”* (I Cor. 15:28).

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Have you noticed how little the Lord has to say about the *nature* of Christ's earthly kingdom here in Rev. 20? We find here little more than the fact of it, the length of it, and who's involved. Why? Because the nature of Christ's kingdom is so fully described

in the rest of the Bible. Dwight Pentecost once stated, “A larger body of prophetic Scripture is devoted to the subject of the millennium, developing its character and conditions, than any other one subject”. How does the Bible describe that coming kingdom of Jesus Christ?

- It will be a kingdom of *peace*. No war, insecurity, crime, killing, or disunity. All united in peace under Christ’s firm rule (Isa. 2:4; 9:7; 11:6-9; 65:25; 66:12; Ezek. 28:26; 34:25; Micah 4:3).
- It will be a kingdom of *joy*. The fullness of joy in Christ’s presence (Isa. 12:3; 25:8-9; 29:19; 35:10; 51:11; 61:7, 10; Jer. 31:12-14).
- It will be a kingdom of *glory*. Jesus Christ will be fully manifested in His glory. Christ’s transfiguration was a glimpse of “*the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*”, when “*His face did shine as the sun*” and His clothes were “*white and glistening*” “*as light*” “*so as no fuller on earth can white them*” (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:3; Lk. 9:29; Ps. 24:7-10; Isa. 24:23; 35:2; 40:5; 60:1ff).
- It will be a kingdom of *righteousness / holiness* (Isa. 11:4-5; Zech. 14:20-21).
- *Full knowledge* of the Lord will pervade. This

through the indwelling Spirit in believers (Isa. 2:3; 11:9; 29:24; 59:21; Hab. 2:14).

- The *curse will be removed*. The earth will receive again the abundantly fruitful productivity it lost through man's sin (Isa. 30:23-25; 35:1-2, 7; Ezek. 36:35; Hos. 2:21-22; Amos 9:13).
- All *sickness and deformity will be removed*, for the Master Healer who so displayed Himself in His first coming will be on the throne. Apparently no death as well, except perhaps as judgment upon wilful, unrepentant sin (Isa. 29:18; 35:5-6; Jer. 30:17).
- It will be a world of *happy labour*, not of idleness. Folks will be prosperously involved in administration, agriculture, manufacturing, etc., with sword and spear beaten to ploughshare and pruning hook for labour (Isa. 65:21-22 Amos 9:13).
- Earth's *population will greatly increase*. It seems those who die and thus are raised with glorified bodies will not be involved in reproduction, but not so those living and entering the Millennial Kingdom with their natural bodies. These are the sheep judged worthy to "*inherit the kingdom prepared for*

*you from the foundation of the world”* (Matt. 25:31-40). These will bring children into the world during that golden age without a single hindrance to population growth. But these children will be born in the kingdom with only a single birth, having just as much need to be born again as folks in our current age. Though all who enter the kingdom at the outset will be saved, yet all born in the kingdom will arrive unsaved, and in need of new birth. But saved or no, all will have to live in outward conformity to Christ’s righteous kingdom rule. Perfect though their environment be, and convincing though their external lifestyle may be, yet still innumerable will be the rebellious host of unsaved arising after Satan upon His release against the gracious and glorious King of kings.



# Class 19 – Revelation 21

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*Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

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## Chapter 21

### 21:1-8 – All Things New

As we enter into this 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of Revelation the key word confronting us is “*new*” – new heaven, earth, and Jerusalem, indeed “*all things new*” (vs. 5).

Vs. 1 – “*A new heaven and a new earth*” – Introduced here is a truly incredible event, taking place after the final, comprehensive judgment of all the wicked at the Great White Throne. Our present atmosphere and earth will pass away, “*the elements*” melted “*with fervent heat*” (II Pet. 3:10), to be replaced by “*all things new*”. This is no renovation of the old, but a re-creation.

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## On the Side

How far does this term “*heaven*” go, this that will pass away and be replaced? Does it include the entire universe? Sun, moon, stars, and galaxies? Seems so. There will be no sun and moon in the new heavens (vs. 23; Isa. 60:19-20), and no night (vs. 25; 22:5), and thus no need of stars from the perspective of the new earth. Would this not then imply that there are no other worlds to be preserved, no ET’s, no UFO’s in the sense of alien intelligence? It appears that only the world we know is the one in the centre of the Lord’s focus.

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This new creation of heaven and earth should be no surprise to us. God spoke of this change long ago, in fact using these very words “*new heavens*” and “*new earth*”. Isaiah came out the end of his book of prophecy speaking of it (Isa. 65:17-18; 66:22). Compare Ps. 102:25-26; Isa. 34:4; Matt. 24:35; II Pet. 3:13; Heb. 1:10-12. It’s interesting how little we really have in the Bible about the characteristics of the new heaven and earth. Not much more than the few features given here. What do we know more, of landmarks, colours, or shapes? Of vegetation we know only of the tree of life (22:2-3).

*Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

*Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

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Will vegetation be green on that earth? Will the new earth be round? Rotating? How sharp the contrast of this general lack of information on the new heaven and earth with the detailed descriptions of the “*new Jerusalem*”, that glorious city, with glorious foundations, “*whose Builder and Maker is God*”.

“*And there was no more sea*” – The vast majority of our present earth is covered by the oceans (70%?), but the re-created earth will have no seas.

Vs. 2 – Upon his first sight of “*the holy city, new Jerusalem*” John compared it to the freshness and beauty of a bride dressed and prepared for her wedding. He’ll speak much more of this city. But following this initial glimpse his attention was drawn by “*a great voice out of heaven*”.

Vs. 3 – This is the last of some 20 times a great or

loud voice is mentioned in Revelation, this one making the greatest of announcements. Compare Isa. 25:8ff; Rev. 7:17.

*“Tabernacle”* – Speaks of a dwelling place. Note the emphasis on *“with”* here. Praise God for the import of that precious little word. It will characterize that day when we will more closely and tangibly be *“His people”*, and He our God. Can we even begin to grasp how utterly profound these words? Oh for a mind clear and attentive to fully understand the whole of it, and a tongue adequate to the task of explaining it! Throughout man’s pilgrimage on this earth it’s God who has sought out man’s communion and fellowship. And this while man has largely rejected or ignored God’s overtures, after making himself the offending party through his sin. God has always been the aggressor in pursuing us. He has been the One sacrificing to make the way. And though God has sought man’s presence throughout the ages, of necessity this has always been from a distance, always veiled or shielded. In the old economy the tabernacle and temple were the place set apart for God’s dwelling among men. A set-apart tent or building. A set-apart priesthood ministering there. Only those men, and only when they were properly sanctified, and only once a year could they enter the most holy place. Always

through veil and cloud of incense. God's points of contact with common man were all brass, describing a basic brazenness in His attitude toward man. God's most tangible presence was when Jesus walked the earth, as Emmanuel or "God with us". So that Jesus could say, "*he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father*" (Jn. 14:9). Yet even in Jesus God's glory was veiled, for Jesus "*took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*" (Phil. 1:7). There was only one glimpse of Him in His glory, and that only for an isolated few on the Mt. of Transfiguration. Now in this current age there's a sense in which God's presence has come even closer to man through the Spirit's permanent indwelling presence within every believer. Yet still there is a measure of the intangible, untouchable, invisible. Why? Why always the distance, the veils and clouds, the untouchables and intangibles in God's dealing with man? Because of sin my friend! And suddenly I am overwhelmed with the unspeakable tragedy of sin! For it is by his sin that man lost God's closeness from the first in Gen. 3. Yet how equally overwhelming is God's grace! So vile to Him was man's sin that He must cringed away, yet still He sought us, loved us, sacrificed for us! The centuries were required to undo what we have done. Yet it has always been God's purpose to undo it, for those

*Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

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who would have Him. And here now finally, with “*all things new*”, sin, sinners, and Satan *are no more!* Wickedness, the wicked, and the wicked one will be eternally put away. And God through His work of grace will at last be free to dwell “*with men*” untarnished by our sin! Here is the grand fruition of His purpose of the ages! No tabernacles, but His very presence among men. Tangible, touchable, visible. A new and profound intimacy with God like never before. Though I have done to Him, against Him, yet still this is where He patiently labours in His grace throughout the ages to bring me! *How unutterably good He is!!* No wonder there’s so little focus on the new geography then folks! *Who cares!?* God’s dwelling will be “*with men*”!! Nothing else will matter. Like the simple epitaph on the simple grave-marker in the simple little country graveyard I once saw. Two words engraved there, quietly speaking such incredible volumes. “With Him”. That’s all. *That’s everything!*

Vs. 4 – No more tears, death, sorrow, crying, or

*Rev 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*

*Rev 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

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pain. Five words stricken from heavenly vocabulary in that day. While vs. 3 is what *shall* be, vs. 4 is what shall *not* be. We will know God's personal tender care in His very presence in that coming day. And in His presence is fullness of joy, and at His right hand an eternity of pleasures. Our pleasures then will not be in the sensual or material so much. Our pleasure will be in His pleasure and presence, and in service under His smile. As the Lord's words to Abraham in Gen. 15:1, "***I*** am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward". So it will be. Unfortunately the response of many of us is that of Abraham's there, "Lord, what will you give me, seeing I go childless (moneyless, wifeless, hubbyless, houseless, etc.).

And why would God purpose this for man? Why would He pursue us, want our presence, wish to delight in us there? Because of our worth? No! Only because of His gracious goodness. Because

*Rev 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things;  
and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

*Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the  
abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers,  
and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have  
their part in the lake which burneth with fire and  
brimstone: which is the second death.*

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it's God! That's who He is. Because it's His nature to say, *"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely"* (Hos. 14:4). *"Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us that we should be called the sons of God"* (I Jn. 3).

Vs. 7-8 – *"He that overcometh"* – Again, an overcomer is not one who makes his life pleasing enough to God to earn salvation. Rather an overcomer is a true believer (I Jn. 5:4-5), one who has overcome sin's condemnation and power through faith in Jesus Christ. We are more than conquerors only *"through Him that loved us"* (Rom. 8:37). Vs. 8 presents the contrast in those characterized by sin rather than by a hatred and forsaking of it, those who have never found deliverance from sin's power in Christ and through the indwelling Spirit. All such will have met their eternal end at the Great White Throne Judgment. Note the same contrast in vs. 27. Works are never



*Rev 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

*Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

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the ground of eternal salvation, though they are an *evidence* of salvation, or lack of it. One truly saved may fall into sin, but he can no more freely practice sin than a butterfly would comfortably transport himself by crawling. Portions such as I Jn. 3:6-10 show the distinct leaning in the saved soul, and make it clear that true believers do not/cannot just continue in sin without both their conscience and their Father dealing with them. “Christians” who continue to have no regard for things sacred to God are likely living a lie. Compare I Cor. 6:9-11.

### **21:9-27** – The New Jerusalem

Now begins the greatest abundance of detail on the beauty of that city where God will dwell with men.

Vs. 9-10 – Again it was one of the angels who poured out one of the 7 last plagues who now came and called John to see “*the bride, the Lamb’s wife*”.

*Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God: and her light was  
like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper  
stone, clear as crystal;*

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As he was called in 17:1 to see *“the great whore”*, which *“is that great city”* of Babylon, so now John is called away to view *“the Lamb’s wife”* which is *“that great city, the holy Jerusalem”*. That this New Jerusalem is described as the Lamb’s bride seems to indicate that this city will especially be the dwelling place of the church. It was to the early leaders of the church that Jesus said, *“I go to prepare a place for you”*, and this is that place. From the lofty vantage point of a high mountain John was able to see it in all of its splendour, *“descending out of heaven from God”*. Compare the same movement in vs. 2. Here is the city Abraham looked for, an actual, literal city, prophetically seen now by John. And what John saw so far excelled any earthly experience of beauty it’s as if his vocabulary just couldn’t even cope. Under inspiration of God John attempts to describe a sight beyond comparison for earthly magnificence.

Vs. 11 – *“Having the glory of God”* – It will be ablaze with brilliant light, as Christ on the Mt. of Transfiguration. The impression of the whole is as

*Rev 21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:*

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a great dazzling jewel, as jasper, but crystal. It's the same precious stone John had the impression of when he saw the One sitting on that heavenly throne in chap. 4 (vs. 3). He says it was "like a jasper stone", yet earthly jasper is not crystal or clear like a diamond. Jasper comes in a variety of colours (blues, greens, brass, etc.). It's a stone very costly to man, yet used liberally in the construction of this city. And of course gold will be put under foot in that place of splendour! Imagine the brilliant light of "the glory of God" (vs. 23) flashing through this indescribably beautiful crystal city!

All illumination there comes from God. The materials of the city merely diffuse the radiance of God's presence there. Even so the believer does not generate the light of Christ, but merely reflects or diffuses the glory and beauty of Christ. May we never blur, block, or blaspheme the beam of His radiance through us.

Vs. 12 – Appropriately vs. 12 now begins a series of

*Rev 21:13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.*

*Rev 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

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things in twelves;

- 12 gates on the walls.
- 12 angelic guards at the gates.
- 12 names of Israel's tribes on the gates.
- 12 foundations of the wall (vs. 14).
- 12 names of apostles in the foundations. How many apostles are there? Don't let modern apostolics mess up your count.
- 12 thousand furlongs the measure of the city (vs. 16).
- 12 x 12 or 144 cubits the wall height (vs. 17).
- 12 gates are 12 pearls (vs. 21).
- 12 fruits of tree of life (22:2).

John begins in vs. 12 to describe individual aspects of the city. The “*great and high*” wall symbolizes the exclusion of all that is unworthy, the inclusion of all

*Rev 21:15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.*

*Rev 21:16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.*

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made worthy, and the protection of all finding entrance. This wall is a reminder that only those who receive God's offer of redemption may enter, and that many will be excluded.

Vs. 13 – The twelve gates facing to the four points of the compass imply freedom of mobility for those dwelling within. This will not be a prison, for the gates will never be shut (vs. 25). God's leadership is secure. He doesn't need to hold His followers captive, as the approach of other religions who force their following through threat of death.

The tribes of Israel are named on the gates and the apostles named in the foundations, implying perhaps a distinction maintained between Israel and the church even then. Yet all true believers of all time will find their eternal home there.

Vs. 15-17 – Measurements. Upon measuring the

*Rev 21:17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.*

*Rev 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*

---

city with the golden reed it was found to be 12,000 furlongs, equally in length, width, and height. A furlong is an old measure equal to a bit more than 200 metres. Thus 12,000 furlongs = about 2,400 kilometres. Thus it will be a city of nearly 6 million square kilometres! This is no dinky dorp, but equalling about half the size of Canada or USA or about 4½ times the size of South Africa. John says the *height* will be 2,400 kms as well. This doesn't refer to the height of the walls, but to the height of the city, of the buildings perhaps. The wall height is given in vs. 17 at 144 cubits or about 65 metres. We're just not told what rises up 2,400 kms high.

Vs. 18-21 – Building materials. The wall is composed of jasper and the buildings of pure gold. Yet again, as the jasper, so the gold is of a transparency “*like unto clear glass*”. Light is such a primary aspect of this city that all materials consist of light-diffusing qualities lest any light be hindered. Nothing opaque. Even the streets will be of the same (vs. 21).

*Rev 21:19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;*  
*Rev 21:20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.*

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Vs. 19-20 – Even the foundations are a thing of beauty. Each of the twelve foundations are given to a different precious stone;

|                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Amethyst – Violet transparent quartz                  |
| Hyacinth – Dark blue verging to black                 |
| Chrysoprase – Translucent golden yellow               |
| Topaz – Greenish yellow                               |
| Beryl – Glassy pale green                             |
| Chrysolite – Golden coloured                          |
| Sardius – Flesh coloured                              |
| Sardonyx – Flesh red and white                        |
| Emerald – Transparent light green                     |
| Chalcedony – Translucent milky or grayish quartz      |
| Sapphire – Clear blue                                 |
| Jasper – Diverse colours (purple, blue, green, brass) |

Precise colours are uncertain. The point is that even the foundations will glisten with the sparkling brightness of God's glory, the brilliant light of the

*Rev 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls;  
every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of  
the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

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city playing upon their multicoloured beauty as well. The Lord didn't have to make it pretty. But in His grace even this He has given to us, with a preview to stir our hope and lift our hearts.

Vs. 21 – Here are those famous gates of pearl, each gate formed of one entire pearl! The gates of entrance are a very prominent feature as one enters. Yet doesn't it seem odd that such a prominent feature of this city would be made of pearl? In all of the description of this magnificent city purity and pure materials with the clarity of crystal are highlighted. Yet pearl is actually never pure. As we know, the formation of pearl is around the *impurity* of a foreign particle or parasite. Pearl comes of the nacreous secretions with which the oyster coats the *problem* of the unwanted bit of dirt thrusting itself in. It's the oyster's way of coping with the entrance of something foreign, offensive, out of place there. The beauty of a pearl represents a problem covered, beautified, even made precious. A pearl is a problem turned precious. Where would be the pearl without the initial bit of dirt?



*Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord  
God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*

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Consider the comparisons and understand how appropriate that these gates be made of pearl. The glistening beauty of God's plan of redemption showcases the radiant splendour of His matchless love. But where would be the opportunity for God to really display His grace without the black backdrop of human sin? Our story with God is like the pearl. It's man's greatest problem turned precious, tragedy turned triumph. God took the mess of man's sin and made it the impetus to display His abounding wisdom and grace. Redemption is God's way of handling the entrance of sin into His pristine creation, so foreign, offensive, and out of place there. How appropriate then that pearl becomes the gate, the point of entry into God's presence and place of blessing! Each of those pearly gates indicates the beauty of God's grace, never displayed so evidently than in His response to sin, never having so full an opportunity for display than when sin entered the world.

Vs. 22-27 – Things present and missing in New Jerusalem.

Vs. 22 – John saw no temple in this glorious city to come, “*for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it*”. All shadows of the old covenant will be dispelled in that place of splendour and light. The writer of Hebrews spoke of the earthly priesthood, temple, and sacrifices as “*the example and shadow of the heavenly things*” (Heb. 8:5). But in that coming day and place all shadows will be gone with the complete removal of sin, seeing no more through a glass darkly, but face to face. No longer will men deal with the Lord through certain sanctified men, at certain sacred times, in certain sanctified ways, with separation of clouds and veils. For all will know the presence of the Lord. No more will be the ordinance of Communion, but drinking new with Jesus in the kingdom of His Father.

Note the things missing in that place;

- Temple (vs. 22).
- Sun and moon it would seem, since there will be no need of them (vs. 23).
- Darkness/night (vs. 25; 22:5). No sleep? A bit of a blow for those who love their slumber. Glorified bodies will need no rest it seems, as the angels. Our lives will ever be full of service and learning, joy and peace.

*Rev 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

*Rev 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.*

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- Candle or lamp (22:5). Signifying every manmade form of light.
- Closed gates (vs. 25).
- Abominations, defilers, and liars (vs. 27).
- Curse (22:3).
- Doubt (22:6).

Vs. 23 – *“The glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the lamp”* – How often we see God compared to light in the Bible. How prominent was this theme in Christ’s revelation of Himself. He is *“the true Light”* (Jn. 1:9), and *“the light of the world”* (Jn. 8:12). All who follow Him *“shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”*. *“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all”* (I Jn. 1:5). So it is God’s purpose for us now, as in that coming day, that we would *“walk in the light, as He is in the light”*, confessing and forsaking our sin.

*Rev 21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.*

*Rev 21:26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.*

*Rev 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

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Vs. 24 – “*The nations*” – This may refer to people groups forming during Christ’s earthly kingdom, and into the eternal state. Or it may refer to “Gentiles” as distinct from Jews. Apparently not all people will actually be living in the city. Again, perhaps this place will be reserved particularly for the church saints to dwell in? The point is that all shall walk in the light of that city, from those in honoured positions of leadership on down.

Vs. 27 – “*There shall in no wise enter*” – The term is strong, meaning “not possibly”. There will be nothing unholy there. No one doing anything detestable or deceitful will be found there. The environment will be perfect, in contrast to the ages of man’s earthly rule ravaged by human sin. And we shall enjoy this perfect situation throughout eternity. Eternal absolute moral purity, peace, and pleasure in the Lord’s presence!

*Breathtaking prospect!*

## Class 20 – Revelation 22

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*Rev 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

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### Chapter 22

#### **22:1-5** – Focus on God’s Presence

It’s all about God and the Lamb in these first few verses; His throne, His servants, His service, His face, His name. It’s a summary sketch of life in that glad day revolving around God.

Vs. 1 – The angel who was sent to give John a tour of the glorious New Jerusalem then took him to Main Street, the one leading up to “*the throne of God and of the Lamb*”. And there John was shown a “*pure river of water of life*” flowing from the throne, a stream as “*clear as crystal*”. How well that crystal river illustrates what has ever flowed from that blessed throne of God, all things pure, good, and beneficial. “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*” (James 1:17).

We see such a contrast in what flows from the two cities featuring so prominently in the latter chapters of this book. From *Babylon*, the harlot of earth's kings, flows all things depraved and deceiving. From *Jerusalem*, bride of the King of kings, flows all things pure and right and refreshing. Compare Sinai contrasted with Jerusalem in Gal. 4, bondage with liberty.

Did you ever wonder what such pure water would taste like? Rather objectionable I suspect to many a modern tongue. Silence is strange to the ear of one living beside a busy airport. Pure country air smells odd to those accustomed to the stench of the city. Manna from heaven is unexciting to those with a taste for Egypt. God's good gifts are boring to those who through carnal use have developed a taste for things earthly and sensual. Good music is dull to the one whose ears have become attuned to the thumping, chaotic din of the world's "music", so expressive of the restless chaos in their hearts. Appropriate dress is fusty and stupid to the self-centred coward fixed on fashion. God's crystal pure things hold little interest for those given to the carnal things of this earth. They simply have no taste for it!

Vs. 2 – The tree of life will be there as well, growing

*Rev 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

*Rev 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:*

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among men again in a return to Eden. Apparently the river flows down the middle of that main street of gold, with these stately trees growing on either side of the river, producing both fruit and leaves for the benefit of man. How often the believer who is growing in his walk with God is compared to a fruitful tree flourishing beside a river (Ps. 1; Num. 24:5-7; Jer. 17:7-8).

Vs. 3 – *“There shall be no more curse”* – Every curse will be no more, for *sin* will be no more. God’s curse began with sin’s entrance into the world (Gen. 3), and ends with sin’s removal.

As in vs. 1 the Lamb is still on the throne beside God the Father. Some have struggled with this thought in light of I Cor. 15, where we see Christ handing all things over to the Father at the end of His earthly kingdom and submitting Himself to Him (vs. 24-28). There will indeed be a change at the

end of the Millennium in the nature of Christ's rule. He will have completely accomplished His work of redemption at that time, having finally finished God's purposes prophesied by Daniel so long ago (9:24), to finish transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness. Thus having made every enemy of God His footstool during His earthly kingdom (a very prominent biblical theme, Ps. 110:1; 8:6; I Cor. 15:25-27; Heb. 1:13; 2:8; 10:13; Phil. 3:21), having thoroughly sifted the hearts of men separating wheat from chaff to the last kernel, having brought every believing follower to His side in unhindered fellowship and removed every resolute rejecter, He shall at last present the restored race of man to the Father. And from that time, and into eternity, the Son will reign with the Father.

*“His servants shall serve Him”* – So shall the redeemed ever *“serve Him”*, and see His face, and wear His name. It has always been the joy and privilege of those whose hearts are right with God to serve, to spend and be spent for Him. To be a mere doorkeeper in the house of my God is enough if I may look upon His smiling face and hear from Him those words spoken to Daniel, *“O thou greatly beloved”*. It will be enough for us to know without



*Rev 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

*Rev 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

*Rev 22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*

---

the least shade of uncertainty that we are forever right with Him, restored to Him, resting in His love, reserved exclusively for Him. Idleness is never right and good for a man. From the moment of man's creation God has given him work to do, and so throughout eternity ours will be happy labour under His eye and smile.

*“His name shall be in their foreheads”* – As we've seen previously, the Lord's name upon His own speaks of our belonging to Him (2:17; 3:12; 7:3 14:1). Those willing to bear His marks in this life (Gal. 6:17), and unwilling to wear the mark of the evil one (15:2), will wear the Lord's name, marked as His precious possession throughout eternity.

## **22:6-15** – Closing Words of the Angel

Vs. 6 – *“These sayings are faithful and true”* – God's

angel confirms the truth and trustworthiness of all things spoken. The Lord constantly affirms the believability of His communication to man;

- God is confirmed as true, in distinction from all other gods which are false. As the martyrs under the altar cried in 6:10, *“How long O Lord, Holy and true . . .”*
- Jesus Christ is affirmed as true. In writing to the church of Philadelphia, Jesus is titled *“He that is true”* (3:7). He is true in the sense that He is the genuine Messiah, and He is true in the sense of a true Friend we can count on to think and work for our best. In writing to the church at Laodicea Jesus is titled *“the Amen, the faithful and true witness”*. He is fair in His dealings, with unclouded vision. Jesus returns to judgment as the One called *“Faithful and True”* (19:11). A true friend does not flatter when reproof is fair and due. Jesus is true to carry out His threats, and true to return as He promised.
- God’s judgments are proclaimed as true. When the harlot is at last destroyed heaven is shouting *“true and righteous are His judgments”* (19:2).
- God’s Words are repeatedly affirmed as true

and reliable, especially in the context of the incredible promises of His blessing upon His saints. Because those promises are so good, doubt is anticipated. In 19:9 blessing is pronounced upon *“they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”*. Then the Lord follows with *“these are the true sayings of God”*. Believe it and make ready! In 21:5 the promise of God’s eternal presence and of *“all things new”* is followed with the command to *“write: for these words are true and faithful”*. As trustworthy as they are true. God knew how full of doubt is the faithless heart of man. “Write it John, these words can indeed be trusted!”

Even so here. With grand promises of the splendour of that city, where God and the Lamb are the temple, light, and King, where are the crystal river and tree of life, where we will joyfully serve and even reign under God’s smile throughout eternity. Write it John! *“These sayings are faithful and true”*. Believe it!

Now let me ask you a question. What would be the sense in affirming the truth and trustworthiness of things impossible to understand? Many have proclaimed this book of Revelation quite beyond our

ability to comprehend to any large degree. So wherein is the value of such assurance of the *truth* of it if we're not expected to discern the *sense* of it? And how could we ever hope to find the meaning of such solemnly assured promises if we cannot just read and understand them simply? *It's true* He assures us. But true for whom if it's a book of unsolvable mysteries with no available key? Doesn't this assurance of truthfulness imply it understandable? The Lord would challenge us to work it out if understanding is where the struggle lies. But He assumes our understanding and challenges us instead to *believe it!* Believability is *not* assumed, for indeed this *is* where the struggle lies. And if the Lord expects us to understand but suspects some might battle to believe, then obviously the *simple* reading of such startling events is the interpretive approach He expects us to use. Its witness is faithful and true! It means just what it says! Now will you believe it? Will you believe *Him*? Refusal to believe is often expressed by inability to understand. Wilful ignorance! Just as a child's refusal to obey is often expressed as failure to hear or understand. Wilful deafness and density. Sure, there are difficult portions in this book. But on the whole it's quite clear if we read it simply. And blessed is he who *responds* as if he believes it (vs. 7), with an evident serenity in trials,

*Rev 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

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urgency in witness, joy in daily experience, and assurance concerning the future.

Vs. 7 – “*Behold, I come quickly*” – The same assurance is found in the 7<sup>th</sup> verse of this last chapter as we saw in the 7<sup>th</sup> of the first chapter, that Jesus is coming. The book begins and ends on that same central theme. Literally, “I am coming quickly”, as if He’s already on the way. “*Quickly*” expresses the impending, imminent nature of Christ’s coming. It’s a prominent word as we come out the end of God’s prophecy (vs. 6, 12, 20). And from the perspective of eternity how very soon it will be as well. The Apostle Paul in referring to the trials of the Christian life spoke of “*our light affliction, which is but for a moment*”. So brief this life will seem when looking back from the ages of the ages. Even in John’s day these things were viewed with an any-moment expectancy. Compare vs. 10 & 1:3, where we’re told “*the time is at hand*” or near.

Now obviously this imminent nearness doesn’t refer specifically to the new heavens, earth, and

*Rev 22:8 And I John saw these things, and heard them.  
And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to  
worship before the feet of the angel which shewed  
me these things.*

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Jerusalem, for “*all things new*” won’t follow until after Christ’s 1000-year earthly reign (chaps. 21-22 after chap. 20). And Christ’s kingdom will only be established after His return to earth (chap. 20 after chap. 19). And His return will only come after the 7-year tribulation period. And this only after the Rapture of the church. So this whole movement or sequence of events (“*the day of the Lord*”) begins with the Rapture, that next, any-moment event on God’s prophetic calendar, ushering in everything to follow as prophesied. And how very “quickly” these events will pass from prophecy to history!

Consider how this announcement here of blessing upon the keeper of “*the prophecy of this book*” is like that blessing promised as the book began (1:3). Here now the promise is underscored again to draw us in to labour toward both knowing and doing. And consider how the expectation of our keeping “*the sayings of the prophecy of this book*” again implies them quite understandable. How could the Lord expect us to keep what He did not expect us to understand? And again, how could He expect us to

*Rev 22:9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

*Rev 22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*

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understand unless a simple interpretation according to the plain sense is the correct reading. 'Tis all rather plain to the honest seeker.

Vs. 8-9 – John is so overwhelmed by these incredible visions of glory that he again falls before this angel *“to worship”*. And again, as in 19:10, the angel made short, sharp work of stopping him! None lower than God are to be worshipped. Again the reminder that Jesus received such worship, showing Himself to be God the Son.

Vs. 10 – John is now commanded by the angel to not seal *“the sayings of the prophecy of this book”*, due to the shortness of the time. This answers to the angel’s words to Daniel at the end of his prophecy (12:4, 9). There the book was left sealed, for it was not for him to fully understand at that time. Daniel’s prophecy was for a later time. It would need the N.T., and especially this book of Revelation, to unlock the door of its meaning. How frustrating for Daniel to have several pieces of the

*Rev 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

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prophetic picture and be left longing for more. But God only meant for him to provide a portion of His prophetic blueprint, only a few of the puzzle pieces. Even so there is a small part of God's greater plan that He means for you and me to help fulfil. Nothing more, nothing less. What is your contribution to be? Since the writing of John's Revelation, with the fuller picture of prophecy brought by the N.T., we now have only a few pieces of the puzzle still missing. Essentially the whole picture stands revealed before us. No longer is it a sealed book now. "Leave it open John. For My people must fully understand what I hold in store for those who love Me, and for those who hate Me". But alas, instead of the heart of a John, who wept over some portion still sealed, our modern world yawns over the most complete picture of future things ever available to man, and runs after other prophets and prophecies instead! And blind "scholars" insist the prophecy of John's Revelation a purposely baffling enigma, an impenetrable puzzle. Yet the Lord expressly says He left it *unsealed!*



Again, this is a book of *revelation*, not *suppression*, designed for *revealing*, not *concealing* God's truth! Man's problem is not understanding, but accepting what he understands from these pages.

Vs. 11 – This verse does not express God's wish or determination, but His resignation. The angel mentioned the same to Daniel (Dan. 12:10), showing the two responses of men. If God's words of prophecy are rejected, there's nothing else He has to say. We've come to the end of the Book! Will they still choose wickedness? Let them remain so! Will they cling to their filthiness? Let them have it! *"That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken"* (Isa. 28:13). We plead with men and reveal the truth and make it clear, as God has done. But if still rejected, what more can be done for the rejecter? Let him have his way and the fruits of it! We get the impression here of a fixing of their course. As a soul rejects the truth it seems there comes a point where acceptance becomes impossible. The will-not at some point clicks over to cannot! And there remains only the *"certain, fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour"* them. Compare Ezek. 20:39; Rom. 1:24-28. Every chuckling scorn at God's message, every stiff-armed rejection of the Spirit's conviction, every yawning

*Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

*Rev 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

*Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

*Rev 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

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disinterest in the truth, every stubborn refusal of repentance further fixes the way and sets the heart and cools God's earnest efforts to win and sears the conscience to insensibility. *We've come to the end of the Book, the end of words!!* Now what will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot remain!

Vs. 12 – The issuing of rewards (or not) begins with the church at the judgment seat of Christ after the Rapture (II Cor. 5:10). Again this judgment will be “*according to their works*”. Compare I Cor. 3:13-15.

### **22:16-21** – Closing Words of Jesus

Paul's epistles were often actually penned by a secretary as the apostle dictated under inspiration. And then at the end of the letter, Paul would sometimes take up the pen and sign off with a

*Rev 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

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greeting in his own hand, thus confirming his authorship. Compare I Cor. 16:21-24; Gal. 6:11-18; Col. 4:18; II Thess. 3:17-18. As we come now to the conclusion of Christ's message to His churches we seem to find the same here. It's no longer "I, John", but "I, Jesus", as if Jesus Himself has now taken up the pen to write His concluding comments. Confirming His authorship of the whole! He Himself sent the angel to testify these things to the churches through John, in essentially the same statement as in 1:1. So He begins and concludes with the same assurance. "I authored it. Rest assured that these are My words". They are words of the very highest authority!

By identifying Himself as "*the root and offspring of David*" Jesus appeals to the Jewish reader. Jesus is that great descendent from the royal stock of David, the very Messiah for whom they wait.

*"The bright and morning star"* – The "*morning star*" is actually a planet (Venus) visible in the eastern sky before sunrise, the herald of dawn. Jesus will

*Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

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return as the “*sun of righteousness*”, ushering in that eternal day when there shall be no night. We’re still in darkness now, seeing through a glass darkly, though the night is far spent and the day at hand. The day has yet to dawn, but there in the eastern sky the herald of day can be seen, the brilliant Morning Star. For Jesus has come the first time, announced to the wise seers by a star, and we’ve seen His glory. And He has come to us through His written words, bringing “*faithful and true*” promise of His coming again. In Him we see the Morning Star pointing to the approaching dawn.

Vs. 17 – So the Lord Himself now takes up the pen to add His closing comments to all that has gone before in this Book of God. What might He say? What profound thing would He want to finally leave with us? Stern words of condemnation? Tender assurances of our worth, as some might expect? No. Just the familiar invitation to come to Him seen throughout the Bible. Come, take, receive, and that freely!

*“The Spirit”* or Holy Spirit is involved in this invitation, and has been from the start. In Christ’s absence during this age the Spirit has been that other Comforter standing close to the church. He couldn’t stand closer than dwelling within! And the Spirit works mysteriously in the hearts of the unsaved as well, drawing, wooing, convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and coming judgment.

*“The bride”* or church has been involved as well, through the witness of God’s own children on this earth. The church works outwardly as the Spirit works inwardly, proclaiming God’s words. Both combine to bring God’s gracious invitation to all who truly thirst for God among men. What God offers is offered *“freely”*, for none can earn salvation.

Here is God’s last tender invitation to man to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour before it’s too late, before the day dawns and the day of grace is ended. Right to the end the Lord pleads, as with Judas Iscariot, whom Jesus gave opportunity to repent and receive right to the end. Through three years of close association and clear revelation of who He is the offer was there for Judas, until that fateful moment in the upper room. Christ’s very last interaction with Judas there was to *give* him

*Rev 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

*Rev 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

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something as He looked lovingly into his distracted eyes. He handed Judas the piece of bread, describing His desire to give him so much more, *the very Bread of Life*, if Judas would have Him. So that he might never hunger again. But alas, there was no receiving in the heart of Judas. And so finally the command, *“what thou doest do quickly!”* Go do it if you must! And Judas got up and left. And his course was fixed, his judgment was confirmed, and it was not long in coming. And that man abides in the torments of hell to this day! To the end Jesus graciously invites. To the end of the book He pleads. Through the Spirit and the bride He beckons to *“him that is athirst”*. Come – take – receive – freely! If you are not saved and satisfied in Jesus, it is not because God has kept you from the springs of living water my friend!

Vs. 18-19 – We come now to the most solemn

warning in all the Bible against tampering with the words of God. Compare Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:3-6. Compare God's warning and judgment upon King Jehoiakim in Jer. 36. If the promised judgment certainly came upon that wicked king for cutting up and burning God's warning of trouble upon Jerusalem through Jeremiah, how much more certain and searing the doom of those who tamper with prophecies given by the Lord Jesus Himself, signed as it were in His own writing with such solemn warning as we find here. Compare Heb. 2:1-3. There is great warning here to any who would dare to detract from or tamper with the words of Revelation. Great warning to any who would dare add to that which Jesus Himself has signed off (such as the "last testament" of the Koran or the Book of Mormon). Great warning to those refusing to believe that these things will actually come to pass as written. Such wilful doubters may be displaying their evil heart of unbelief. And all who refuse faith in Christ shall surely have their part in *"the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"* (21:8). Even to mess with the simple reading of these truths is to usurp the authority of Jesus Christ. It's ours to listen, receive, and believe, not to arrogantly explain away the obvious meaning. N.B. how it's all about how we've been told;

*Rev 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

*Rev 22:21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

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- *“I Jesus have sent My angel to testify unto you these things”* (vs. 16).
- *“For I testify unto every man”* (vs. 18).
- *“He which testifieth these things”* (vs. 20).
- *“The Spirit and the bride”* are speaking as well (vs. 17).

You cannot say that you’ve not been told! The Lord Jesus Christ Himself jealously guards the words, announcing Himself as the witness of them.

The Lord does not speak of *loss* of salvation here, but of the *display* of salvation or lack of it. He assumes a true believer will not mess with this revelation of Jesus Christ. And He assumes an unbeliever displays himself by so tampering.

Vs. 20-21 – In this final testimony of Jesus and of God’s book, we find again Christ’s assurance of His soon return. In comparing vs. 7 & 12, here the word *“behold”* is replaced by *“surely”*, expressing



absolute affirmation, and then doubly confirmed with “Amen”, meaning “truly”. So the Lord’s final announcement is of His imminent return, and this sandwiched between two words emphasizing the *absolute certainty* of it!

John responds for us all with His “*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*”. “Let it be so!” “We wait for You!” “We look for your coming!” As the bride anxiously awaits the coming of her groom to receive her to himself, longing for the day when at last she will always be with and for that one she loves.

*“It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for Him . . . we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation”* (Isa. 25:9).

*“Blessed are all they that wait for Him”* (Isa. 30:18).

*“The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him”* (Lam. 3:25).

