

A Study Outline of

REVELATION



Town of Skala, Isle of Patmos

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INTRODUCTION

This relatively brief study outline with questions and comments is designed to be an introduction to the book of Revelation. It is hoped the student will gain a feeling for apocalyptic writings which are found in Revelation. Apocalyptic literature is a type of writing containing symbols and visions. The book of Daniel is a good beginning in the study of apocalyptic literature. The first six chapters of Daniel contain some of the best known Old Testament stories: Daniel and the three Hebrew children in Babylon; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace; Belshazzar and the handwriting on the wall; Daniel in the lions den. Beginning in chapter seven apocalyptic writings are introduced and continue throughout the remainder of the book.

Apocalyptic writings encouraged God's people in times of severe persecution and prepared them for possible future trials. There are three Old Testament apocalyptic books: Ezekiel and Daniel who wrote in the days of Babylonian exile, 605-539 B. C., and Zechariah who prophesied during the Persian era after the return from Babylonian captivity, 520 B. C. to an indefinite date. The only apocalyptic book in the New Testament is Revelation which was written by the apostle John during the first century A. D. In the four gospel accounts, Acts, and the inspired letters, truth is imparted by words to the mind. In apocalyptic writings, words paint a picture. The picture is not the message; rather the interpretation of the picture is the message.

For a better understanding of Revelation, the student is urged to compare various interpretations offered by scholars and to consult different translations of the Bible. This study is prepared from the New King James Version. Each question can be answered from the Biblical text or the comments offered at the end of each lesson

METHODS OF INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION

Various schools of interpretation of Revelation have evolved throughout the Christian era. Five different methods of interpretation are classified below.

- *Futurist*. The book describes events which immediately precede the second coming of Christ.
- *Continuous Historical*. The book foretells events from John's writing to the end of time.
- *Philosophy of History*. The symbols and pictures described represent forces rather than real events and peoples.
- *Preterist*. The book was written and fulfilled in John's day.
- *Historical Background*. The book was written for people in John's day with principles applicable to the end of time.

This outline is based primarily on the Historical Background interpretation with the belief that Revelation was written during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian, A. D. 81-96. The purpose of the book was to give encouragement to Christians at that time to remain faithful regardless of the severity of their persecutions, even to their physical death. However, some of the prophecies are yet to be fulfilled, and the principles of faith, steadfastness, truth and righteousness remain valid for all time.

THE THEME

The theme of the book is the victory of Christ. "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). There pictured is a spiritual war between Good and Evil, between Christ and his saints and Satan and his allies. In the end, Christ and the righteous are victorious, while Satan and his followers are utterly defeated and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented day and night. See Chart No. 3, *The Victory of Christ*.

SYMBOLISM OF NUMBERS¹

In Revelation numbers have a symbolic significance which is consistent with the symbolic language used to describe a picture which in turn must be interpreted for the intended meaning. Thus the numbers do not necessarily have a numerical value, but rather suggest a concept or spiritual truth. For this study, consider the following numbers and their symbolic significance:

- *One*—represents unity;
- *Two*—represents strength as two witnesses, or disciples sent out two by two;
- *Three*—a Divine number as in the Godhead;
- *Four*—a world number as the four corners of the earth;
- *Six*—a human number, incomplete or imperfect, less than seven;
- *Seven*—a complete or perfect number as seven days in a week;
- *Ten*—represents complete power as ten horns or diadems;
- *Twelve*—a religious number as twelve tribes or twelve apostles.

DIVISION OF THE BOOK²

I. The Struggle On Earth: The Church Persecuted By the World. The Church Is Avenged, Protected, and Victorious, Chapters 1-11

- (1) Christ in the midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands, 1-3.
- (2) The Book with Seven Seals, 4-7.
- (3) The Seven Trumpets of Judgment, 8-11.

II. The Deeper Spiritual Background: The Christ (and the Church) Persecuted By the Dragon (Satan) and His Helpers. Christ and His Church Are Victorious, Chapters 12-22:

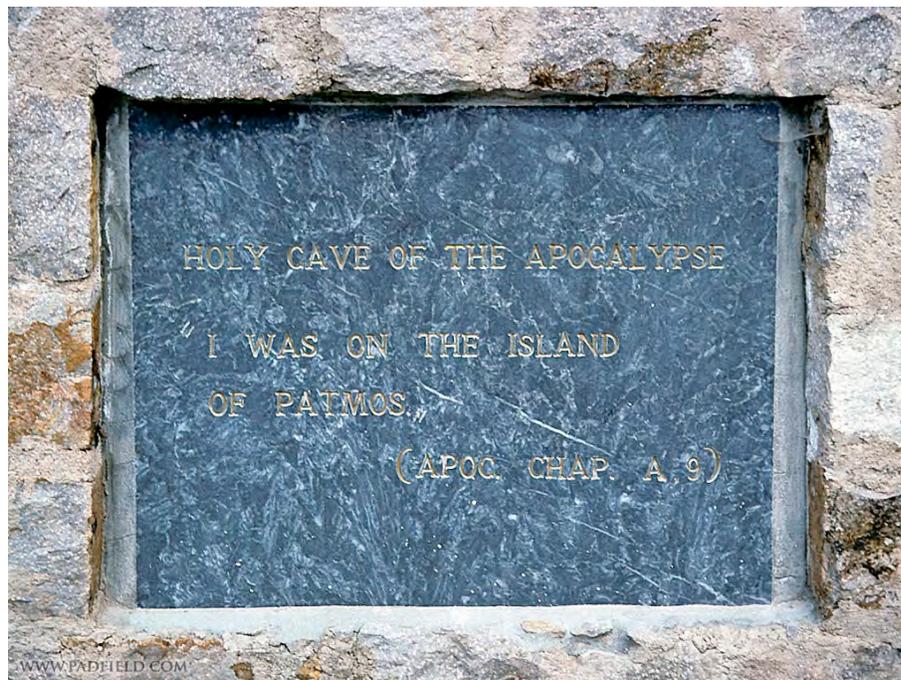
- (4) The Woman and the Man-Child Persecuted by the Dragon and His Helpers (the Beasts and the Harlot), 12-14.
- (5) The Seven Bowls of Wrath, 15, 16.
- (6) The Fall of the Great Harlot and of the Beasts, 17-19;
- (7) The Judgment upon the Dragon (Satan) followed by the New Heaven and Earth, New Jerusalem, 20-22.

¹ For a detailed discussion of the numbers used in Revelation, see Homer Hailey, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 41-48.

² The following outline of the book is from W. Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), p. 30.

PREFACE AND CONCLUSION

The book of Revelation is the only book in the New Testament that begins by specifically stating its source, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him...and signified it by His angel to His servant John” (Rev. 1:1). The book ends with confirmations of authenticity by God, Christ and John. “And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place” (Rev. 22:6); “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star” (Rev. 22:16); “Now I, John, saw and heard these things” (Rev. 22:8). Thus the book of Revelation has been given to His servants from God the Father through His Son, Jesus, and revealed to John for our encouragement and edification. “Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book” (Rev. 22:7).



Sign at the Cave of the Apocalypse
Isle of Patmos

I. STRUGGLE ON EARTH – THE CHURCH PERSECUTED

Section 1 – CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE LAMPSTANDS

Chapter 1 – THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

- A. The Revelation of _____ given by _____ and
signified by his angel to his servant _____, who bore witness to the
word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ; for the time is near. (Rev. 1:1-3)
- B. The book was written to the _____. (Rev. 1:4)

Note. The symbolic number *seven*, indicating completeness or fullness, appears fifty-four times in Revelation. Asia in the New Testament refers to the Roman province comprising one-third of the western end of the Asia Minor peninsula.

- C. How many congregations were in Asia? (cf. Acts 20:6 -7; Col. 1:1-2; 4:12-15)

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. less than six | 3. seven |
| 2. six | 4. more than seven |

- D. Which of the following phrases describe Christ? (Rev. 1:5-6)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. faithful witness | 4. him who loved us |
| 2. firstborn from the dead | 5. washed us from our sins in his blood |
| 3. ruler over the kings of the earth | 6. made us kings and priests |

- E. Describe his coming. (Rev. 1:7)

- F. I am the _____ and _____. (Rev. 1:8; cf. 1:11; 21:5-8; 22:13)

Note. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, signifying Divine completeness and perfection. It is unclear whether the speaker here is God or Christ (cf. 21:6); at the close of the book Christ claims this title of Deity (22:13). The expression is omitted (1:11) in the ASV, NASB, and NIV.

- G. John wrote the book while on the island of _____. (Rev. 1:9-11)

Note. Patmos is a small rocky island about ten miles long and six miles wide lying about seventy miles southwest of Ephesus in the Aegean Sea. The Romans banished criminals to this island, forcing them to work at hard labor in the mines and quarries of the island. Early Christian writers say John was exiled to the island for eighteen months during the reign of the Emperor Domitian (A. D. 81-96).

H. The book was written to the congregations located at: (Rev. 1:10-11)

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. Colosse | 6. Philadelphia |
| 2. Ephesus | 7. Sardis |
| 3. Laodicea | 8. Smyrna |
| 4. Miletus | 9. Thyatira |
| 5. Pergamos | 10. Troas |

I. John saw how many golden lampstands? (Rev. 1:12)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. four | 3. ten |
| 2. seven | 4. twelve |

J. Describe the One in the midst of the seven lampstands. (Rev. 1:13-15)

K. How many stars were in the right hand of the speaker? (Rev. 1:16)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. four | 3. ten |
| 2. seven | 4. twelve |

L. Out of his mouth went a sharp _____, and his countenance was like the _____. (Rev. 1:16)

Note. This two-edged sword, *rhomphaia*, was of Thracian origin and was longer and heavier than the *machaira*, the short sword carried by the Roman soldiers. The word occurs twice in judgment against the church (2:12, 16), twice in judgment against the world (19:15, 21), and once with regard to slaughtered saints (6:8). “In this passage before us the ‘two-edged sword’ out of His mouth indicates the Lord’s readiness to judge and do battle, to declare and wage war.”¹

M. What was John told to do? (Rev. 1:17-19)

N. The seven stars represent: (Rev. 1:20)

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. churches | 3. world powers |
| 2. angels | 4. apostles |

O. The seven lampstands represent: (Rev. 1:20)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. twelve tribes of Israel | 3. seven churches |
| 2. four world powers | 4. ten angels |

¹ Hailey, p. 111.

Chapters 2; 3 – THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CITIES AND THE CHURCHES

- A. *Ephesus* (Rev. 2:1-7). As a wealthy and prosperous seaport at the mouth of the Cayster River, Ephesus was the largest city of the Roman province of Asia with a population of perhaps 300,000. The city had a large theater which held about 24,500. Other important buildings were the agora or marketplace, library, baths, gymnasium and burial monuments. It was the center of the mother goddess worship of Artemis (Greek) or Diana (Roman) and the site of the great temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The area is now desolate—silt from the river has filled the harbor, and the ruins of the city lie in a swamp some five to seven miles inland—the lampstand was removed. Paul visited this city at the end of his second journey and spent three years here during his third journey (Acts 18:19-21; 19; 20:17, 31).
- B. *Smyrna* (Rev. 2:8-11). Noted for its beauty, this city had a superb natural harbor making it a commercial center. As early as 195 B. C. Smyrna allied herself to Rome, building a shrine for pagan Roman worship. The city was given the honor of erecting a temple to the Emperor Tiberius in A. D. 23, thus becoming a center for the cult of emperor worship. Smyrna claimed to be the first city in Asia—first in beauty, first in literature and first in loyalty to Rome. The church at Smyrna may have been founded by Paul during his third journey (cf. Acts 19:10). Polycarp, a pupil of John, was martyred here, burned at the stake in A. D. 155.
- C. *Pergamos, Pergamum* (Rev. 2:12-17). The kingdom of Pergamum was bequeathed to Rome in 133 B. C. and organized into the Roman Province of Asia. The city remained the political capital of the province for more than two centuries. A library of 200,000 volumes was the largest outside of Alexandria, Egypt. Parchment, *pergamena*, was developed here when papyrus from Egypt was no longer available, partly due to shortages and partly due perhaps to the rivalry between the two cities over their respective libraries. Pergamos was the religious center of the province with temples to the patron deities of Zeus, Dionysus, Athena and Asklepios, the latter the god of medicine and healing which was worshiped under the emblem of a serpent. A temple to Roma and Augustus was erected in 29 B. C. as the first temple in the empire dedicated to the imperial cult. Later a second temple to Trajan and a third to Severus were built. Nowhere was it more difficult for the faithful than Pergamos where Christianity and Caesar worship confronted one another.
- D. *Thyatira* (Rev. 2:18-29). Under Roman control from 190 B. C., Thyatira was a wealthy city, a thriving trade and manufacturing center noted for its purple dye and dyed garments. The purple or crimson dye was obtained from the madder root manufactured locally and was much cheaper than the Phoenician *murex* dye. In Philippi, Lydia, a seller of purple from Thyatira, was Paul's first convert in Europe (Acts 16:11-15). Trade guilds were numerous with workers

in wool, linen, leather, and bronze, potters, bakers, dyers, and slavers. Membership in these trade guilds or unions, necessary for social and financial success, required pagan worship, feasts involving food sacrificed to idols, and sexual immorality. The origin of the church here is unknown (cf. Acts 19:10).

- E. *Sardis* (Rev. 3:1-6). One of the oldest cities of Asia Minor, Sardis was the capital of ancient Lydia. Built on a rock hill rising fifteen hundred feet from the plain below, Sardis was a citadel inaccessible on three sides with the fourth side easily defended. The kings ruling the city were noted for their wealth and luxury but also for their propensity for weakness. Pride and arrogance were the qualities of its citizens. Croesus, the last ruler of Lydia and legendary as the wealthiest king in history, was defeated by Cyrus the Persian in 549 B. C. The city fell again in 218 B. C. to Antiochus the Great, ruler of the Seleucids. Thus the fortress city of Sardis was twice surprised as “a thief in the night.” An earthquake destroyed the city in A. D. 17 and was rebuilt with the help of Tiberias who contributed from the national treasury and remitted taxes for five years. There were altars and shrines to pagan deities, but most impressive was the temple of the nature goddess Cybele whose worship was similar to that of Diana of Ephesus. Sardis with other cities of the province competed for permission to build a second temple for emperor worship, but the honor was given to Smyrna. Christians in Sardis dwelt in a complacent city with a past but no future, a pagan city steeped in immorality for eight centuries.
- F. *Philadelphia* (Rev. 3:7-13). The name Philadelphia means “brother loving” or “brother lover.” The city was founded by Attalus II Philadelphus, king of Pergamos (159-138 B. C.), who named the city out of his devotion to his brother and predecessor Eumenes II. Founded for the purpose of spreading Greek culture and language, from its beginning it was a missionary city for the promotion of Hellenism. Philadelphia was a center of the wine industry, and the Greek god of vine and wine, Dionysus, was the chief pagan cult. The city was often called “Little Athens” because of its many temples and festivals to pagan deities. Also destroyed by the earthquake in A. D. 17, Philadelphia, like Sardis, was rebuilt with the help of Tiberias. Opposition to the church came from wealthy Jews who had a large and beautiful synagogue.
- G. *Laodicea* (Rev. 3:14-22). Founded by Antiochus II, a Seleucid king (261-246 B. C.), and named for his wife Laodice, the city was wealthy and a center of Hellenic culture. In the vicinity were temples of ancient deities and a famous school of medicine which developed an eye medicine known as Phrygian powder. A special breed of sheep in the area produced raven-black wool which was manufactured into highly prized garments. As a noted banking center together with its trade, the city was one of the wealthiest of its day. In A. D. 60. Laodicea was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake, but its wealthy citizens rejected aid from Rome, rebuilding the city with their own resources. Due to its affluence the city was an attractive retirement center for the wealthy resulting in their lukewarm attitude toward social issues. Today Laodicea lies in a heap of ruins. This city had no extremes, and this characteristic was reflected in the attitude of the church.

II. GENERAL SURVEY OF THE CHURCHES

- A. List two churches about which nothing negative is said. (Rev. 2:8-9; 3:7-8)
- B. Name one church about which nothing good is said. (Rev. 3:14-16)
- C. Which church compromised with the teachings of Balaam? What was the doctrine of Balaam? (Rev. 2:12, 14)
- D. Which church compromised with the teachings of the “woman Jezebel”? What influence did she have? (Rev. 2:18, 20)
- E. Which church had a name that lived, but was dead? (Rev. 3:1)
- F. Which church had left its “first love”? (Rev. 2:1, 4)
- G. List two churches who had to contend with a “synagogue of Satan.” (Rev. 2:8-9; 3:7, 9)
- H. What is each church encouraged to do to receive its reward? (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21)
- I. Which church could be described as the “poor rich church”? (Rev. 3:14, 17)
- J. Which church could be described as the “rich poor church”? (Rev. 2:8-9)
- K. Name the three common phrases used in the letters to all churches.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- L. At what church was the martyr Antipas “killed among you”? (Rev. 2:12-13)
- M. At what church was the martyr Polycarp a member according to tradition?

N. Who has “eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass”? (Rev. 2:18)

O. The name of what church means “brotherly love”? (Rev. 3:7)

P. The threats to the spiritual life of the churches of Asia were:

1. paganism and emperor worship
2. Jewish harassment
3. materialism and compromise promoted by the Nicolaitans, Balaam, Jezebel
4. loss of zeal or love
5. indifference, lukewarmness

III. SPECIFIC ISSUES IN EACH CHURCH

Note. Each letter is addressed to the angel of the church. Many interpretations have been offered regarding the identity of the angels of the churches. Angel (*angelos*) is a “messenger sent whether by God or by man or by Satan” (Vine). John sees a spiritual vision comprised of seven lampstands representing the seven churches and seven stars in the right hand of Christ representing the angels of the seven churches (1:12-16, 20). One explanation proposes that the angel represents the inward spiritual character of the church while the lampstand or church as the light-bearer to the world provides the outward spiritual light (Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:14-15). As the Revelation of Jesus Christ is sent and signified by his angel unto John (1:1), it follows that the message to each church is revealed by Christ, the author, and addressed to the angel of each church who in turn signifies the message to John—“the angels are addressed; the churches are to hear.”¹

A. *Ephesus*

1. The commendation to this church includes its works of _____, _____, not bearing those who are _____, testing false _____, hating the deeds of the _____. (Rev. 2:2-3, 6)

Note. Very little is known of the origin and doctrine of the Nicolaitans, but some believe they were a Gnostic sect. They seem to be equated with those holding the teachings of Baalam and Jezebel (2:14, 20) who represented immorality and compromise with idolatry.

¹ Hailey, p. 116.

2. What is the criticism of this church? (Rev. 2:4-5)
3. What will be the reward for those who repent? (Rev. 2:7; cf. 22:2)

B. *Smyrna*. Notice the introduction, "These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life" (2:8). Jesus introduces himself as the first and last to the church in the city that claimed to be first.

1. The Lord knows the works, tribulation and poverty of this church and its opposition by blasphemous Jews called the _____.
(Rev. 2:9)
2. How will these saints suffer? (Rev. 2:10)
3. What will be their reward for faithfulness? (Rev. 2:10-11; cf. I Cor. 9:24-25; II Tim. 4:8; James 1:12)

Note. A crown (*stephanos*) was worn by athletic and military victors.

C. *Pergamos*

1. This church is commended for remaining fast and not denying its faith even when the faithful martyr _____ was killed. (Rev. 2:13)

Note. As the political capital of the province, the seat of pagan deities, and the center of emperor worship, Pergamos was the site of Satan's throne.

2. What is the criticism of this church? (Rev. 2:14-15)

Note. Baalam, who was unable to curse the people of God, counseled Balak to send the daughters of Moab to entice the men of Israel to engage in lascivious worship (Num. 22-24; 25:1-3; 31:16).

3. What will be the reward for those who repent? (Rev. 2:16-17)

Note. Hidden manna, an allusion to the manna given to the children of Israel in the wilderness, probably refers to the spiritual food of Jesus (John 6:32-35). The meaning of the white stone is unknown; however, white denotes purity.

D. *Thyatira*

1. This church is commended for its works of _____, _____, _____, and _____. (Rev. 2:19)
2. What condemnation does this church receive? (Rev. 2:20)

Note. Whether Jezebel represents one woman of influence or a segment of the church is unclear. However, the name Jezebel is a reference to the wife of King Ahab who influenced her husband to introduce the worship of Baal into Israel (I Kings 16:29-33). The Jezebel in Thyatira was teaching compromise—fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols.

3. What will be the reward of those who hold fast? (Rev. 2:25-28; cf. 22:16; Ps. 2)

E. *Sardis*. Notice the introduction, “you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead” (3:1). This church was in a city that had a glorious past, but the city was careless and now dead.

1. The works of this church are not perfect, and it is told to:
 - a. be _____, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to _____ (Rev. 3:2)
 - b. remember what they have _____ and _____, and hold _____ and _____. (Rev. 3:3)
2. If the church does not watch, how will the Lord come? (Rev. 3:3)
3. What will be the reward of those who have not defiled their garments? (Rev. 3:4-5)

Note. White denotes spiritual purity (Isa. 1:18; Dan. 12:10); the book of life occurs seven times in the New Testament (Phil. 4:3 and six times in Revelation; cf. Ps. 69:28; Mal 3:16); Christ acknowledges the names of his own (Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8)

F. *Philadelphia*

1. How does Jesus introduce himself to this church? (Rev. 3:7; cf. Isa. 9:6-7)
2. This church is commended for its little _____, keeping _____, and not denying _____. (Rev. 3:8)
3. Those afflicting this church are of the synagogue of Satan, claiming to be Jews but are not. The real Jew is one inwardly, circumcised in the heart, worshiping God in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ (Rom. 2:28-29; Phil 3:3).
 - a. What will become of these Jews? (Rev. 3:9)
 - b. How will the church be rewarded? (Rev. 3:10-12; cf. I Cor. 3:16; II Cor. 6:16)

G. *Laodicea*

1. The criticisms of this church involve its spiritual condition.
 - a. What are its works? What will be the result? (Rev. 3:15-16)
 - b. How does the church pride itself? How is it described? (Rev. 3:17)
2. What does Christ counsel the members to buy from him? (Rev. 3:18)
 - a. _____ to become _____
 - b. _____ to be _____ that the shame of their nakedness may not be revealed
 - c. _____ to anoint their _____ that they may see

Note. Refined gold refers to spiritual riches; white garments representing spiritual purity are in contrast to the black wool industry of the city; and the eyesalve alluding to the medicine center will open their spiritually blind eyes.

3. Christ chastens those whom he loves. He seeks admittance into this spiritually indifferent church, and if the members are zealous and repent, he promises what reward? (Rev. 3:19-21)

Section 2 – THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS

Chapter 4 – THE THRONE SCENE

INTRODUCTION. As we study the New Testament, we see that truth is imparted by words directly to the mind. A word defined is action required. In Revelation, however, words describe a picture communicated to the eye which must be interpreted. The picture is not the meaning. The interpretation of the picture is the meaning. In chapter four John sees a vision of the great throne scene in heaven.

- A. As John looked and beheld in heaven the majestic throne and court of the Ruler of the universe, he was in the _____. (Rev. 4:1-2; cf. 1:10)
- B. The One on the throne was like a _____. (Rev. 4:3)
- C. Around the throne was a _____ with the appearance of an emerald. (Rev. 4:3)
- D. Describe the twenty-four elders around the throne. (Rev. 4:4)
- E. What proceeded from the throne? (Rev. 4:5)
- F. The seven lamps of fire are the _____. (Rev. 4:5)
- G. Describe the sea before the throne.
1. Rev. 4:6
 2. Rev. 15:2
 3. Rev. 21:1
- H. Describe the four living creatures around the throne:
1. full of eyes _____ (Rev. 4:6)
 2. the first was like a _____; the second was like a _____;
the third had a face like a _____; the fourth was like a _____
(Rev. 4:7)
 3. each had _____ and were full of _____ around and within (Rev. 4:8)

4. they do not rest day or night praising _____ (Rev. 4:8)
- I. When the living creatures praise God, what do the twenty-four elders do? (Rev. 4:9-11)

CONCLUSION. A door in heaven opens and John sees a vision of the magnificent majesty of the throne and Ruler of the universe.

- 4:1-2 John was in the Spirit, that is, under the control of the Spirit (cf. 1:10; Ezek. 3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:24).
- 4:3 John sees One sitting on the throne but sees no form (cf. Ex. 24:9-10). God is a Spirit and cannot be described. When the glory of God passed by Moses at Mount Horeb, Moses saw the back side (Ex. 33:20-23). When the Lord passed by Elijah at Mount Horeb, there was a great wind, an earthquake, and fire; the Lord was not in them, but after the fire a still small voice spoke to Elijah (I Kings 19:11-13). What is pictured to John is the radiance of God in stones like gems. The jasper stone, described as “clear as crystal” (21:10-11), may represent holiness and righteousness, while the sardius stone, a red stone, symbolizes justice and judgment (cf. Ps. 89:14; 97:2). Around the throne a rainbow like an emerald suggests the mercy of God and his covenant with Noah (cf. Gen. 9:12-17).
- 4:4 The twenty-four elders around the throne may represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, the redeemed of both the Old and New Covenants (cf. Eph. 2:11-18; Heb. 9:15). Their garments of white represent holiness and the golden crowns are the *stephanos*, victory crowns.
- 4:5 Thunders, lightnings and voices proceeding from the throne show the majesty and power of God (Ex. 19:16-19). The seven lamps represent the complete and perfect work of the Holy Spirit as the revealer of the word who instructs, illuminates and gives comfort (Acts 9:31).
- 4:6-8 The sea before the throne indicates a separation of the Creator and the created. The latter must approach the former through fire (15:2), but when the present world has passed and the faithful are in direct fellowship with God, the sea is no more (21:1; cf. I John 3:2). The four living creatures are probably the highest order of heavenly beings who serve God’s will. The eyes of the four living creatures see in every direction, and the four forms suggest the noblest, strongest, wisest and swiftest in nature to carry out God’s will. Their unceasing praise of God, “Holy, holy, holy,” indicates the absolute holiness of God.
- 4:9-11 The glory, honor and thanks given by the four living creatures to God sitting on the throne prompts the twenty-four elders to worship the eternal God, the power and Creator of the universe.

Chapter 5 – THE LAMB

INTRODUCTION. In chapter five the throne scene continues revealing the Lamb who is the Redeemer.

- A. Who sat on the throne? (Rev. 5:1; cf. Ps. 11:4; Isa. 66:1)
1. Christ
 2. God
 3. twenty-four elders
 4. four living creatures
- B. The scroll John saw was “written inside and on the back” and sealed with _____ . (Rev. 5:1)
- C. What question did a strong angel ask? What was the response? (Rev. 5:2-4)
- D. Who is the “Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” who has prevailed (overcome, ASV) to open the scroll and loose the seals? (Rev. 5:5; 22:16; cf. Gen. 49:8-10; Isa. 11:1-5)
1. Solomon
 2. Jesse
 3. Christ
- E. Who is the Lamb? (Rev. 5:6; cf. Isa. 53:7; John 1:29; Acts 8:32-35; I Pet. 1:17-19)
- F. The Lamb had seven _____ and seven _____ which are the seven _____ of God sent out into all the earth. (Rev. 5:6)
- G. What did the Lamb do? (Rev. 5:7)
- H. Who fell down before the Lamb? What did each have? (Rev. 5:8)

I. The new song they sang declared the following about the Lamb. (Rev. 5:9-10)

1. He is _____ to take the scroll and open its _____;
2. He was _____ and _____ us by his blood;
3. From every tribe, tongue, people and nation, he made us _____ and _____ to our God, and we shall _____ on the earth.

J. Daniel had a vision of One like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days and receiving a kingdom. John's vision of a kingdom of people redeemed by Christ was a fulfillment of Daniel's vision and prophecy (Rev. 5:10; Dan. 7:13-14).

1. Daniel prophesied that the God of heaven would set up a _____. (Dan 2:44)
2. This kingdom is an _____ kingdom. (Dan. 7:13-14)
3. Jesus taught his disciples to _____ for the kingdom to come. (Matt. 6:9-10)
4. Jesus said the kingdom would come with _____. (Mark 9:1)
5. Jesus told his disciples the power would come with the _____ which was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 1:8; 2)
6. The Father has conveyed us into the kingdom of his Son who is the head of the body, the _____. (Col. 1:13-18)

K. The "priests" refer to: (Rev. 5:10; cf. I Pet. 2:5, 9-10)

1. the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church
2. heavenly beings
3. believers

L. If Christians are priests now, they must also be in the kingdom and reign upon the earth now. (Rev. 5:10; cf. Rom. 5:17)

True

False

M. How many angels were round the throne, living creatures, and elders? (Rev. 5:11; cf. Dan. 7:9-10; Heb. 12:22-24)

1. a specific number
2. an innumerable company

N. The host of angels describes the Lamb as worthy to receive _____,
_____, _____, _____,
_____ (seven qualities indicating perfection and
completeness). (Rev. 5:12)

O. Fourfold praise by every creature is then given to: (Rev. 5:13)

1. God
2. Christ
3. every created thing

P. The four living creatures said, _____, and the twenty-four elders fell
down and worshiped him who lives _____. (Rev. 5:14)

CONCLUSION. Chapter four presents a picture of the throne of God and the One sitting on the throne, the Creator. Chapter five introduces the Lamb, the Redeemer who was slain and is exalted. These two chapters teach one main lesson, “The Lord reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved!” (Ps. 99:1).

5:1-4 The description of the scroll, “written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals,” indicates fullness and completeness, securely sealed for protection. The scroll is a symbol, but what does it symbolize? Note the following brief comments from several sources.

- “The evidence indicates that the book symbolizes God’s eternal purpose for man’s salvation, the grand scheme of redemption. This plan was formulated in the mind of God and was a mystery—something unknown or hidden—until revealed. God purposed or planned that this salvation which existed as a mystery should be brought forth and made known in the fullness of time (Eph. 1:9-10).”¹
- “It [the scroll] represents God’s eternal Plan, his decree which is all-comprehensive. It symbolizes God’s purpose with respect to the *entire* universe *throughout* history, and concerning *all* creatures in *all* ages and unto all eternity.”²
- “The book contains the will of God for the immediate future. In it is written the terrors which lie ahead for the saints and the ungodly. In it is written the hurt, fear, and pressure to be experienced by the children of God. In it too, is the record of complete triumph. The triumph of the Church over her vicious oppressor—Satan in Rome!”³

¹ Hailey, p. 179.

² Hendriksen, p. 108.

³ Jim McGuigan, *The Book of Revelation* (Lubbock: International Biblical Resources, 1976), p. 89.

- “The purpose of the scroll is seemingly to show how the current problems of the church fit in with the redemptive purpose of God and what the outcome of that persecution will be. The book shows God’s judgment on the world, but also his redemptive purposes.”⁴
 - “The book contained the judgments of the living God as represented in the seven seals of trumpets, and the seven vials of wrath. These judgments are essential in order to bring the earth under the control of the Lord of the universe.”⁵
 - “The book appears to hold the destiny of men faced by the visitations of God’s just wrath upon their sins.”⁶
- 5:5 “The Lion of the tribe of Judah” refers to the blessing Jacob gave to Judah, his fourth son, shortly before his death (Gen. 49:8-10). “This long-expected descendant of Judah, who would possess the strength of the lion, bear the scepter of rule over the peoples, and speak peace or bring rest to men, had now come.”⁷ Christ as the “Root of David” fulfills God’s promise to David that of his seed he will establish the “throne of his kingdom forever” (II Sam. 7:12-13; cf. Isa. 11:1-2; Rom. 1:1-4)
- 5:6 Instead of a Lion, John sees a Lamb standing as though it had been slain, Christ the Redeemer. A lion symbolizes strength and a lamb represents goodness. Horns are symbolic of power, thus seven horns indicate complete power (cf. Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22-23). The seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God symbolize perfect knowledge (cf. Col. 2:1-3). In chapter four these seven Spirits are before the throne (4:5); here they are sent out into all the earth revealing the truth (cf. John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:13).
- 5:7 “Only Christ can open the book and carry forward God’s judgments on wicked men. The destiny of men is in the nail-pierced hands of the Lamb who was slain.”⁸ “This was not something done while John watched, but rather it had taken place at His ascension, when the Savior sat down on the right hand of God and was given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), ‘angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him (I Peter 3:21f.)’⁹
- 5:8 In the vision the harps symbolize praise. The golden bowls of incense identified as the prayers of saints are connected to worship in the Old Testament (cf. Ps. 141:2; Luke 1:8-10).
- 5:9-14 The vision closes with all creation singing praises and offering homage to God and the triumphant Lamb (cf. Ps. 148).

⁴ J. W. Roberts, *The Revelation to John (The Apocalypse)*, (Austin: Sweet Publishing Co., 1974), p. 58.

⁵ James Strauss, *The Seer, The Saviour, The Saved*, rev. ed. (Joplin: College Press, 1979), p. 99.

⁶ Ray Summers, *Worthy is the Lamb* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1951), p. 134.

⁷ Hailey, p. 176.

⁸ Summers, p. 136.

⁹ Hailey, p. 179.

Chapter 6 – THE FIRST SIX SEALS

INTRODUCTION. The visions John sees in the first five chapters prepare for the revelations to follow. Beginning with chapter six the Lamb commences opening the seals of the scroll revealing God’s eternal plan. The contents of the scroll are disclosed in symbols. Persons, places, events and periods of time are all symbolic. Remember, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” that was signified to John concerned “things which must shortly take place” (1:1).

A. When the Lamb opened one of the seals, John heard one of the living creatures saying with a voice like thunder _____ . (Rev.6:1)

B. *The first seal*

1. John saw a white horse and the one who sat on it had a _____, a _____, and he went out _____ . (Rev. 6:2)

2. The color white is generally associated with: (Rev. 1:14; 4:4; 19:11, 14; 20:11)

- a. holiness
- b. heavenliness
- c. purity
- d. righteousness

3. A bow is a symbol of _____ and _____. (Gen. 27:3; I Chron. 5:18)

4. The crown, the *stephanos*, is the same victory crown promised to the faithful in _____ and worn by the _____. (Rev. 2:8, 10; 4:4)

5. The rider and conqueror on the white horse may be identified as the one who “overcame” and who “prevailed.” (Rev. 3:21; 5:5; 17:14; cf. John 16:33)

True

False

6. Later John saw a rider on a white horse; his name is called _____, a name referring to _____. (Rev. 19:11-13; John 1:1, 14)

C. *The second seal*

1. When the seal was opened, a red horse came forth, and the one who sat on it had power to take _____ from the earth, that people should _____ one another; there was given to him a _____.
(Rev. 6:3-4)
2. The color red is symbolic of: (II Kings 3:21-23)
 - a. war
 - b. bloodshed
 - c. slaughter
3. The red horse represents religious _____. (Matt. 5:10-12; 10:16-39)
4. In the letters to the seven churches, what “outside” problem did the churches face? (Rev. 2:8-10, 12-13; 3:7-9)
5. The sword, the *machaira*, is the word used by Jesus when he said, “Do not think that I came to bring _____ on earth. I did not come to bring _____ but a sword.” (Matt. 10:34)

D. *The third seal*

1. The opened third seal revealed a black horse and a rider with _____ in his hand. (Rev. 6:5)
2. The color black represents: (Isa. 50:3; Jer. 4:27-28)
 - a. grief
 - b. mourning
 - c. absence of light
3. A voice said, “A quart of _____ for a denarius, and three quarts of _____ for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine,” indicating famine. (Rev. 6:6; cf. Ezek. 4:16-17)

E. *The fourth seal*

1. The pale horse was ridden by _____, and _____ followed with him. (Rev. 6:7-8)
2. Power was given to them over a fourth of the earth to kill: (Rev. 6:8; cf. Ezek. 5:16-17; 14:21)
 - a. with _____
 - b. with _____
 - c. with _____
 - d. by the _____

F. Match the four seals (four horses) with the correct description:

- | | |
|----------|------------------------------|
| 1. white | judgments |
| 2. red | victorious Christ |
| 3. black | persecution of the saints |
| 4. pale | discrimination and suffering |

G. *The fifth seal*

1. Under the altar were the _____ of those who had been slain for the word of God. (Rev. 6:9)
2. They cried, "How long, O Lord...until You _____ and _____ our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10)
3. A white _____ was given to each of them, and they were told to _____ a little while longer until the number of their fellow servants and brethren, who would be killed, was completed. (Rev. 6:11)

H. *The sixth seal*

1. When the seal was opened, there was a great _____ and the sun became _____ and the moon became like _____. (Rev. 6:12)
2. The _____ fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its late figs when shaken by a mighty wind, the _____ receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every _____ and _____ was moved out of its place. (Rev. 6:13-14)

3. Who was affected by the sixth seal? (Rev. 6:15)

4. What did they say to the mountains and rocks? (Rev. 6:16-17)

I. This is a judgment in time against a nation or kingdom, not the final judgment, for there will not be time to find a place to hide when the Lord comes again. Final judgment is described as:

1. I Cor. 15:52

2. II Peter 3:10

CONCLUSION. “As the seals were opened horsemen went forth on their missions; from beneath an altar souls were heard to cry out for an avenging of the sacrifice which they had made; in response to their cry came judgment.”¹

6:1-2 One of the living creatures issues a thunderous call and a rider on a white horse appears. White denotes holiness, heavenliness, purity and righteousness. The rider on the white horse symbolizes a spiritual mission of conquest. He carries a bow used for hunting and warfare. On his head is a crown, the *stephanos*, a victory crown. From these symbols it seems apparent that the rider is Christ who goes forth conquering and to conquer the souls of men and women by the gospel.

6:3-4 The color red symbolizes war and bloodshed representing the persecution of the faithful following the preaching of the gospel (cf. Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-40; 7; 12:1-19; II Cor. 11:23-28). The *machaira*, a short sword or dagger, was the short sword of the Roman infantry, the one Jesus would send forth (Matt. 10:34), and the one used by Peter to cut off the ear of Malchus (Matt. 26:51-52; John 18:10). The word signifies a sacrificial knife used to slaughter as in sacrifice, in this case “great” because of the extent of its use.

6:5-6 The rider of the black horse carries a balance or scales indicating a scarcity of food which causes grief and mourning for the persecuted believers. The *denarius* was a Roman coin worth about seventeen cents, the amount of a day’s wage for a worker (Matt. 20:1-2). The *choenix* was a dry measure somewhat less than a quart, “about ‘as much as would support a person of moderate appetite for a day’...Usually eight *choenixes* could be bought for a *denarius*” (Vine). In this case one *denarius* could purchase only one quart of wheat and three of barley. Thus it would take all that a worker could earn in a day to purchase his daily supply of food. The supply of oil and wine, comfort items, was plentiful but unaffordable to the common worker.

¹ Hailey, p. 200.

- 6:7-8 The word *chloros*, translated pale, is a pale green color descriptive of sickness and death. The rider of this horse symbolizes death and is followed by Hades, “the region of departed spirits” (Vine). Power is given to them over a fourth part of the earth. They receive their power from Christ who has all authority (Matt. 28:18), but their activity is limited to a fourth part of the earth, indicating a partial judgment. The means to kill is fourfold: sword, hunger, death, beasts of the earth. This sword, *rhomphaia*, was the great Thracian sword which was used in military warfare and longer than the short sword or *machaira*; hunger or famine often follows war; death or pestilence follows war and famine; wild beasts devour. These four judgments correspond to the four severe judgments pronounced against Jerusalem when the city was besieged by the Babylonians (Ezek. 5:16-17; 14:21).
- 6:9-11 When the fifth seal is opened, John sees under the altar the souls of those who were martyred for the cause of the gospel (cf. 2:13; Acts 7:54-60; Phil. 2:17; II Tim. 4:6). They call for vindication, not vengeance, asking, “How long,” before God’s justice prevails. They are each given a white robe, a symbol of righteousness, but told to rest and wait for God’s appointed time (cf. Gen. 4:9-10; Deut. 32:43).
- 6:12-17 With the opening of the sixth seal God’s judgment upon the persecutors of his saints is symbolized in natural calamities—earthquake, darkness, bloodshed. Stars falling, the sky receding as a scroll, mountains and islands removed—these are pictures of destruction and terror. All classes of people are affected and seek refuge from the devastation. Similar language occurs in reference to the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians (Hos. 10:7-8), the fall of Jerusalem when besieged by the Babylonians (Isa. 2:19), the prophecy of the fall of Babylon (Isa. 13:1, 10-13), and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (Luke 23:28-30). In the same manner this describes judgment in time of a kingdom, a judgment on the ungodly. “Who is able to stand?”



I. Who are Abraham's seed? (Gal. 3:7, 26-29)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. those belonging to Christ | 5. slave |
| 2. heirs according to the promise | 6. freeman |
| 3. Jews | 7. male |
| 4. Greeks | 8. female |

J. The white robes symbolize: (Rev. 7:9)

K. The palm branches probably indicate: (Rev. 7:9-10; cf. John 12:12-13; Ps. 3:8; 118:25-26)

1. a festive spirit
2. a joyous occasion
3. salvation

L. When the multitude cried with a loud voice, the angels, the elders, and the four living creatures: (Rev. 7:11-12)

1. joined in the praise
2. fell on their faces before the throne
3. worshiped God

M. Where did those in white robes come from? (Rev. 7:13-14)

N. How were their robes made white? (Rev. 7:14)

O. What blessing do they have? (Rev. 7:15)

P. How do we wash away our sins? (Acts 22:16)

Q. We are redeemed by: (I Pet. 1:17-21)

R. Those who remained faithful through the great tribulation suffered: (Rev. 7:16)

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. hunger | 3. heat |
| 2. thirst | 4. torment |

S. Those before the throne have the _____ as their shepherd, and _____ will wipe away every tear. (Rev. 7:17)

T. The multitude are those saints who died and are before the throne. (Rev. 7:9-17)

True

False

CONCLUSION. The opening of the seventh seal is delayed by an interlude of two parts. Saints on the earth are sealed unto God indicating ownership and protection, while multitudes of faithful saints who died are before the throne praising God and the Lamb.

- 7:1 The four angels holding the four winds of the earth symbolize the restraint of the forces of judgment until released by the authority of God who has complete control over his universe.
- 7:2-3 Another angel comes from the east, signifying morning light or sunrising, with a message of mercy to seal the servants of God (cf. Ezek. 43:2; John 6:27; II Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; II Tim. 2:19). "What does this all mean? It means: 1) That the sealing visions do not guarantee physical preservation to the righteous, and 2) That the sealing visions teach the righteous are exempt from the judgment about to fall."¹
- 7:4 The number 144,000 is a symbolic number (12 x 12 x 1000) indicating completeness and representing spiritual Israel, the number of saints on earth at any given time.
- 7:5-8 In the list of the tribes, Judah through whom Jesus descended is cited first, and Benjamin the youngest of Jacob's sons is named last. Both Joseph and his son Manasseh are listed, and although Levi who did not receive a land inheritance is listed, missing are Dan and Joseph's other son Ephraim. Why? Who knows? Jeroboam from the tribe of Ephraim was the first king of Israel, the northern kingdom, and led that nation into idolatry (I Kings 11:26-39; 12:25-33). Dan left his inheritance, migrated to the northernmost area of Canaan, conquered the city of Laish, renamed it Dan, and there practiced idolatry (Judg. 18). But these are just speculations.
- 7:9-10 John sees in the heavenly scene for the first time a multitude of God's elect who have been victorious standing before the throne and the Lamb. These are clothed in white robes for they have been purified. The palm branches are an allusion to the joyous Feast of Tabernacles, a feast of thanksgiving celebrating the fall harvest and commemorating the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites when they dwelt in booths or tents after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Lev. 23:33-36, 39-43). During the feast the people expressed their joy by singing praises to God. The most significant Hallel (groups of psalms of praise) were the Egyptian Hallel (Ps. 113-118) which were recited during the feasts of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and Tabernacles. At Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem the people greeted him with palm branches and sang praises (John 12:12-13; cf. Ps. 118:25-26).
- 7:11-12 The heavenly host joins in the praise offered by the multitude.

¹ McGuiggan, p. 111.

7:13-16 One of the elders discusses with John the identity of the multitude in the white robes. These are the faithful who have come through tribulation, washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and are now before the throne worshiping and serving God day and night. Redemption is by the blood of the Lamb (1:5-6; 5:9-10; cf. Matt. 26:27-28; Rom. 5:8-9; Eph. 1:3, 7; Col. 1:13-14; I Pet. 1:17-21; I John 1:7).

DISCUSSION. “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them” (7:15). “It is clear from Scripture that at death the faithful saint goes directly into the presence of God to be with Christ. However, he is not in his final state of glory, for this occurs beyond the ultimate judgment (chap. 21).”²

- Luke 16:22 “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom.”
- Acts 7:59 “And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’”
- II Cor. 5:6-8 “So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”
- Phil. 1:23-24 “For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.”
- I Thess. 4:14 “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.”

² Hailey, p. 211.

Section 3 – THE SEVEN TRUMPETS OF JUDGMENT

Chapter 8 – THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS

INTRODUCTION. The sixth chapter of Revelation ends with the opening of the sixth seal revealing a judgment in time. The seventh chapter pictures the saints on earth who are sealed unto God for protection, and secondly, the martyrs who had died in the faith standing before the throne of God. The breaking of the seals resumes in chapter eight with the opening of the seventh seal and an introduction of the seven trumpets. The first four trumpets sound disclosing partial judgments of natural calamities affecting the physical world.

- A. When the *seventh seal* was opened, there followed a _____
in heaven. (Rev. 8:1; cf. Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 2:13)
- B. The seven angels and seven trumpets like the seven churches of Asia, the seven horns, the seven eyes, and the seven Spirits represent: (Rev. 8:2; 1:4; 5:6)
1. exactly seven
 2. a literal number
 3. fullness, completeness or perfection
 4. a lucky number
- C. When the fifth seal was opened, the souls under the altar cried, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (6:10). Now in this heavenly scene much incense was added to the prayers of *all* the saints. (Rev. 8:3-4; cf. 5:8)

True

False

- D. Who makes intercession for the saints? (Luke 22:31-34; John 16:23-24; Rom. 8:26, 34; Heb. 7:25)

- E. In answer to the saints’ prayers the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. Describe the result. (Rev. 8:5; cf. 6:12; Isa. 29:6; Joel 3:16; Luke 18:7-8)

- F. Incense was used by the Aaronic priesthood in the worship of God. (Ex. 30:1, 7-8; Lev. 16:11-14)

True

False

G. Trumpets were used in the Old Testament and in the New Testament to: (Ezek. 33:2-6; Joel 2:1-2; Amos 3:6; I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16):

1. call the people to convocation
2. sound an alarm
3. announce coming judgment
4. warn
5. announce final judgment

H. *The first trumpet*

1. When the first angel sounded, _____ and _____ followed mingled with _____, and they were thrown to the earth. (Rev. 8:7)
2. A third of the _____ were burned up and all _____ was burned up. (Rev. 8:7)
3. What effect does the shedding of blood have upon the land? (Num. 35:33)

I. *The second trumpet*

1. When the second angel sounded, something like a great _____ burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the _____ became blood. (Rev. 8:8)
2. A third of the _____ in the sea died, and a third of the _____ were destroyed. (Rev. 8:9)
3. Old Testament prophets sometimes used "mountain" to symbolize a world kingdom. (Isa. 41:14-16; Jer. 51:24-25; Amos 4:1-2)

True

False

J. *The third trumpet*

1. When the third angel sounded, there fell from heaven a great _____ burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the _____ and on the _____ . (Rev. 8:10)
2. The name of the star is _____ . (Rev. 8:11)

3. A third of the waters became _____ and many men died from the water because it was bitter. (Rev. 8:11; cf. Jer. 9:13-15; 23:15; Lam. 3:19)
4. Turning to idols is compared to a root bearing _____ and _____ . (Deut. 29:16-18)

K. *The fourth trumpet*

1. When the fourth angel sounded a third of the _____ was struck, a third of the _____, and a third of the _____, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the _____ did not shine, and likewise the _____. (Rev. 8:12)
2. Old Testament prophets used the withholding of light to represent judgment (the day of the Lord). (Isa. 13:9-11; Joel 3:14-15; Amos 8:9)

True

False

3. Who is the light of men? (John 1:1-14)
4. Wisdom comes from _____. (I Cor. 2:6-13)

L. The four trumpets which sounded seem to call for reformation.

True

False

M. Who announced the three woes? To whom are they directed? (Rev. 8:13)

CONCLUSION. Following silence in the heavenly scene, incense added to the prayers of the saints, and fire cast upon the earth, the sounding of the first four of seven trumpets occurs. The partial judgments which follow are similar to the plagues brought upon Pharaoh and Egypt. Whereas the seals reveal, the trumpets warn. "These four trumpets call for the reformation, not the destruction of mankind."¹

8:1-2 In contrast to the singing of praises that has filled the heavenly scene, now silence occurs for a short period of time, a half hour (a broken hour), a dramatic pause which seems to indicate delay. Seven angels are given seven trumpets—the number seven again representing fullness, completeness, perfection.

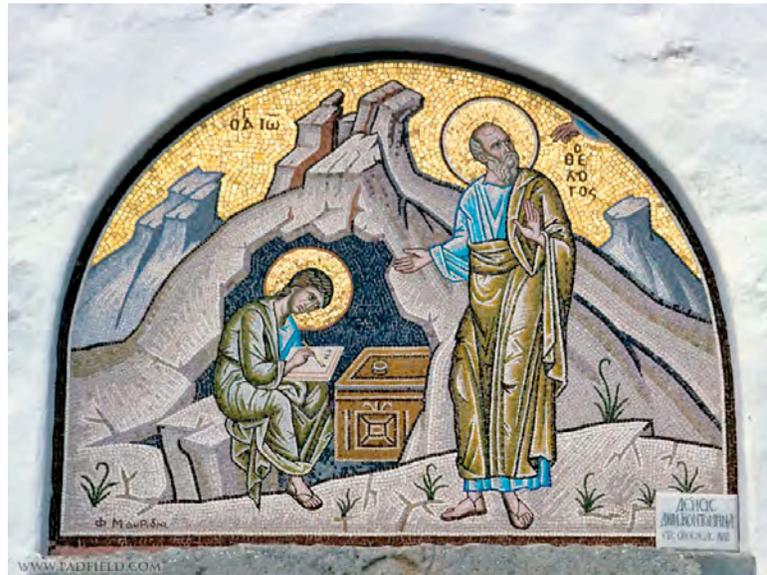
¹ Hailey, p. 223.

- 8:3-5 Another angel stands before an altar and is given much incense. This vision presents a picture of the tabernacle worship in the Old Testament which was a shadow of the "true tabernacle" (Heb. 8:1-6; 9:1-11; 10:1). The altar of burnt offering was in the outer court (Ex. 27:1-8), the golden altar of incense stood in the holy place before the curtain separating the holy place and the holy of holies (Ex. 30:1-10), and the ark of the covenant with the mercy seat and two cherubim upon the top was in the holy of holies (Ex. 25:10-22). In John's vision the altar which is apparently before the throne appears to represent the golden altar of incense in the tabernacle, while the throne is symbolic of the mercy seat where God appeared in a cloud above it and communed with Moses between the cherubim (Ex. 25:22; Lev. 16:2). In contrast, the altar under which the souls of the martyrs cried is symbolic of the altar of burnt offering (6:9; Ex. 27:1-8). The angel, assuming the role of priest of the Old Testament, adds the incense to the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar, and together the smoke of the incense and the prayers ascend to God. Then the angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and casts it upon the earth indicating coming judgment on the ungodly in response to the prayers.
- 8:6-7 The sounding of the first trumpet brings hail and fire mingled with blood, burning a third of the trees and all of the grass. God used hail and fire as his weapons in the Old Testament (Ex. 9:13-26; Isa. 28:2, 17; 30:30; Jer. 7:20). From the time of the flood God has required blood for blood (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12; Num. 35:33; Ps. 79:10; Isa. 26:21). These calamities seem to symbolize a judgment of suffering and destruction upon those who had persecuted God's people.
- 8:8-9 With the sounding of the second trumpet, the next disaster includes a third of the sea, its living creatures and ships. The removal of mountains suggests the overthrow of governments and kingdoms (Isa. 64:1-3; Jer. 51:24-25; Mic. 1:2-4; Nah. 1:5-6). The carnage and destruction continue causing havoc to world societies.
- 8:10-11 The first trumpet affects the vegetation and the second the sea. Then with the sounding of the third trumpet a falling star brings bitterness to one-third of the inland rivers and springs causing death. Wormwood, the name of the star, is symbolic of bitterness and affliction (Lam. 3:15, 19). A star represents figuratively a ruler in Balaam's fourth speech (Num. 24:17); in Isaiah's prophecy the day-star (ASV; star of the morning, NASB; Lucifer, KJV, NKJV) fallen from heaven refers to the king of Babylon (Isa. 14:3-4, 12). The third trumpet probably represents the trouble, sorrow, bitterness, and death to men due to idolatry from an earthly kingdom.
- 8:12 Completing the calamities in nature affecting the universe, the sounding of the fourth trumpet leaves a third of the heavenly bodies in darkness, withholding light a third of the day and night. Change in the heavenly bodies indicates judgment by God (Isa. 13:9-11; Joel 3:14-15; Amos 8:9). The sounding of the fourth trumpet probably symbolizes God's warning to any society of people who use human wisdom to replace God's true wisdom.

8:13 An angel (eagle, ASV, NASB; marginal note, KJV, NKJV) announces three woes representing the remaining three trumpets. These woes are directed at the inhabitants of the earth in contrast to the first four trumpets which affected nature. An angel is a messenger who delivers a message, while an eagle is a bird of prey noted for swiftness and keen eye (Job 39:27-30; Hos. 8:1; Hab. 1:6-8).

SUMMARY. “At the sounding of the first four trumpets God sent forth partial judgments which were to have warned the unregenerated inhabitants of earth. These first four pointed to

- (1) the collapse of the sinner’s world in which he trusted (8:7);
- (2) the fall of any great world power which would drastically affect the society involved (8:8-9);
- (3) the fall of earth’s eminent men and the folly of idolatry which brings its own waters of wormwood (8:10-11); and
- (4) the partial darkening of human wisdom and understanding (8:12).”²



Mosaic above the entrance to the Grotto of the Apocalypse
Isle of Patmos

² Hailey, pp. 233-234.

Chapter 9 – THE FIRST AND SECOND WOES: THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS

INTRODUCTION. In chapter eight the first four trumpets sounded warnings to the sinful to repent. The symbolic judgments that followed were directed against nature—vegetation, seas, rivers and heavenly bodies. The trumpets, hail, fire, burning mountain, falling star, darkened heavenly bodies are not literal entities but symbols revealing spiritual messages from God. In the same manner the next two trumpets pronounce woes upon man which are also symbolic signs from God, but they do not necessarily reflect specific times or events in history.

A. The first four trumpets should be interpreted as:

1. literal trumpets
2. signs and symbols of a vision

B. *The first woe – the fifth trumpet*

1. The fifth angel sounded (the first woe) and John saw: (Rev. 9:1)
 - a. a star falling
 - b. a fallen star
2. Jesus said, “I saw _____ fall like lightning from heaven.” (Luke 10:18)
3. Who was “cast to the earth”? (Rev. 12:9)
 - a. great dragon
 - b. serpent of old called the Devil and Satan
 - c. his angels
4. The fallen star was given a _____ to the bottomless pit. (Rev. 9:1)
5. The bottomless pit (pit of the abyss, ASV) is the realm of: (Rev. 9:2; 20:1-3; cf. Luke 8:30-31; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6)
 - a. demons
 - b. the Devil
 - c. the angels that sinned
6. From the bottomless pit smoke arose like the smoke of a furnace; out of the smoke came _____, and unto them was given power as _____. (Rev. 9:2-3)

7. The locusts were to hurt: (Rev. 9:4; cf. 7:3-4)
 - a. the grass
 - b. any green thing
 - c. trees
 - d. men without the seal of God on their foreheads
 8. How long were they to be tormented (mental and spiritual torment)? (Rev. 9:5)
 9. Those tormented will seek _____. (Rev. 9:6)
 10. Complete the description of the locusts. Notice they are “like” (symbolic, not literal). (Rev. 9:7-10)
 - a. _____ prepared for battle
 - b. _____ like gold
 - c. _____ like that of men
 - d. _____ like that of women
 - e. _____ like that of lions
 - f. _____ like that of iron
 - g. _____ that sound like chariots with many horses
 - h. _____ like scorpions
 - i. _____ in their tails
 11. The name of the leader is called _____ in Hebrew and _____ in Greek. (Rev. 9:11)
 12. One woe is past, _____ more woes are coming. (Rev. 9:12)
- C. *The second woe – the sixth trumpet*
1. When the sixth trumpet sounded (the second woe), what did John hear? (Rev. 9:13)

2. What was the sixth angel with the trumpet told to do? (Rev. 9:14)
3. The Euphrates River was the northern boundary of the promised land. (Gen. 15:18; I Kings 4:21)

True

False

4. The four angels were loosed for the purpose of killing a _____ of mankind. (Rev. 9:15)
5. The number of the army of horsemen was _____.
(Rev. 9:16)
6. The riders had breastplates of _____, _____, and _____; the heads of the horses were like _____; and out of their mouths came _____, _____, and _____. (Rev. 9:17)
7. How many men were killed by the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone? (Rev. 9:18)
8. From what two sources did the horses derive their power? (Rev. 9:19)
9. What was the purpose of those plagues? Were the plagues successful? (Rev. 9:20-21)
10. List three armies God has used for his purpose.
- a. Isa. 10:5-6
 - b. Jer. 25:9
 - c. Ezra 1:1-4; Isa. 45:1-4

CONCLUSION. The first woe (fifth trumpet) seems to present a picture of moral and spiritual decay of a society without God which brings a *tormenting* result to the souls of men (9:1-12; cf. Rom. 7:22-24). “Sin inflicts pain and culminates in the self-destruction of those involved.”¹ The second woe (sixth trumpet) portrays the external forces—warfare and the *killing* result—which threaten and finally bring destruction to the ungodly world (9:13-19).

- 9:1-2 The fallen star appears to be Satan (cf. 12:9; Luke 10:18). The bottomless pit or abyss indicates the present abode of the devil and his angels before the final judgment (20:1-3; cf. Luke 8:30-31; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Bottom or bottomless (*abussos*) denotes the abyss; “It describes an immeasurable depth, the underworld, the lower regions, the abyss of Sheol” (Vine). The “angels who sinned” were cast down to “hell,” *Tartarus* (marginal note ASV, NIV, II Pet. 4:2).² This is the only place in the New Testament this word occurs. Tartarus should not be confused with hell, *Gehenna*, the lake of fire which occurs after the final judgment (20:10, 14-15). The key to the bottomless pit is given to Satan; that is, he is permitted to open the abyss, but his power is constrained and limited by God (cf. Job 1:12; 2:6). When the fallen star opens the pit, noxious smoke like that of a furnace issues forth bringing darkness in contrast to Christ, the Bright and Morning Star, who brings light and has the keys of Hades and Death (1:18; 22:16). The smoke, symbolic of the deceptions of Satan, blinds the unbelieving “lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (II Cor. 4:4).
- 9:3-4 From out of the smoke come locusts. Plagues of locusts have been common throughout history and the biblical record (Ex. 10:3-20; Deut. 28:38; I Kings 8:35-40; II Chron. 7:12-14; Joel 1; 2); however, these locusts harm not the vegetation, but men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They are given power as scorpions symbolizing the forces of evil.
- 9:5-6 The locusts which are figurative are given authority to torment for five months, a time period probably indicating incompleteness of the woe which is controlled and limited by God. Those who are stung by the locust-scorpions, evil forces inflicting torture, prefer death to the torment.
- 9:7-10 The descriptions of the locusts present a picture of spiritual warfare. Their crowns are the *stephanos*, victory crowns, the only place in Revelation where this term is used of any other than Christ or the saints.³ Striking fear into a sinful world, the locusts are pictured as horses prepared for battle having golden crowns, faces of men, hair of women, lion’s teeth, breastplates of iron, wings sounding as horses and chariots in battle, and tails with the painful though not fatal sting of scorpions.

¹ Hailey, p. 230.

² Peter “borrows the word *hell* from Greek mythology, which designated a place called Tartarus an abode for the wicked...The evil angels remain in hell awaiting the judgment of God.” Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary, Exposition of James, Epistles of John, Peter, and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987), p. 286. See also II Peter 2:4, *New International Biblical Commentary, New Testament Series, vols. 1-18*, [CD-ROM], (Hendrickson Publishers, 1988-1999), (OakTree Software, Inc., Version 1.6).

³ Hailey, p. 230.

- 9:11 The name of their king, the angel of the bottomless pit, in two languages—Hebrew and Greek—is Destroyer. “The entire symbolic picture emphasizes this one idea: terror and destruction, for *that* is satan’s work!”⁴
- 9:12 A warning follows, one woe is past but two more woes are coming.
- 9:13-15 A voice comes from the golden altar before God upon which the prayers of the saints were offered and from where the judgments were loosed (8:3-5). The voice tells the angel with the sixth trumpet to release the four angels bound at the Euphrates River. These are not the same four angels holding the four winds of judgment (7:1). These angels are bound themselves and prepared until a time determined by God when they are released to kill a third of mankind. The Euphrates River, symbolic here, was the northern boundary of Israel during the reign of Solomon in accordance with God’s promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:18; I Kings 4:21). The river represented the boundary between the West and the Eastern powers of Assyria, Babylon and Persia. Isaiah speaks of the king of Assyria as the waters of the River who will “go over all his banks” and “pass through Judah” (Isa. 8:5-8). In Jeremiah’s prophecy, Egypt and Pharaoh Necho, “coming up like a flood,” were defeated at Carchemish on the River Euphrates by the Babylonians (Jer. 46).
- 9:16-19 The army numbering two hundred million is a mighty host to accomplish God’s purpose. The horsemen having breastplates of fire (red), hyacinth (blue), and sulphur (yellow), and the horses having heads like lions with mouths belching fire, smoke, and brimstone all present a horrifying symbolic picture of destruction, killing a third of mankind. Their power was twofold—in their mouth and tails.
- 9:20 These judgments of warning upon the ungodly failed to bring about their repentance, for they continued in their idolatrous worship and sins against mankind—spiritual and moral depravity.

SUMMARY OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS.

- The first four trumpets – a third of each realm of nature is affected (8:7-12).
- The fifth and sixth trumpets – the spiritual lives of mankind are affected:
 - (5) men are tormented, but do not die (9:1-11);
 - (6) a third of mankind is killed (9:13-21).
- The seventh trumpet – victory of Christ and his followers (11:15).

⁴ Hendriksen, p. 147.

Chapter 10 – THE SECOND INTERLUDE THE ANGEL AND THE SEVEN THUNDERS, THE LITTLE BOOK

INTRODUCTION. At the close of chapter six when the sixth seal was opened, judgments on the ungodly occurred and the question was asked, “Who is able to stand?” (6:12-17). In chapter seven, between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals, an interlude in answer to the question gives comfort and assurance to the saints. In chapters ten and eleven there is another interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets which concludes the second woe (10:1-11:14). This interlude also provides comfort to the suffering believers under God’s protection, assuring that truth will prevail during the judgments revealed by the warning trumpets.

A. John saw: (Rev. 10:1)

1. a mighty angel
2. Christ
3. God

B. The description of the angel suggests one of high-rank on a special mission: (Rev. 10:1)

1. clothed with a _____
2. a _____ on his head
3. his face like the _____
4. his feet like _____

C. In his hand was a _____ open; and he set his _____ foot on the sea and his _____ foot on the land. (Rev. 10:2)

D. He cried with a loud voice as when a _____ roars; when he cried out, _____ thunders uttered their voices. (Rev. 10:3)

E. What the voices of the seven thunders uttered was: (Rev. 10:4)

1. concealed from John
2. revealed to John
3. sealed and not written by John

F. Lifting up the right hand indicates: (Rev. 10:5-6; cf. Gen. 14:22; Dan. 12:7)

1. an appeal to God to witness
2. a sign of strength
3. a sign of defiance

G. The angel swore that there should be _____ no longer. (Rev. 10::6)

H. The mystery of God is: (Rev. 10:7; cf. Rom. 16:25-26; I Cor. 2:6-13; Eph. 1:7-12; 3:1-12; 6:19-20; Col. 1:15-29; 2:1-3; 4:2-4; I Pet. 1:10-12)

1. God's plan for redemption for mankind
2. God's plan for judgment upon the wicked

I. John was told to take the little book and: (Rev. 10:8-9)

1. read it
2. seal it
3. eat it

J. What effect did the little book have on John? (Rev. 10:10)

1. His mouth:
2. His stomach:

K. John was told to do what? (Rev. 10:11)

CONCLUSION. The interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet soundings reveals two pictures in chapter ten—the angel and seven thunders, and the little book. An angel comes down from heaven with a little book, and seven thunders utter their voices. The angel announces there should no longer be delay, and John is told to take the little book from the angel and eat it, causing sweetness in the mouth and bitterness in the stomach. He is then instructed to prophesy again.

10:1 The description of the mighty angel indicates he is on a Divine mission (cf. 5:2; 18:21).

10:2 The little book already opened signifies that the message is one part of God's purpose, not hidden but ready to be revealed. This book should not be confused with the book of seven seals in chapter five that could be opened only by the Lamb. Straddling the sea and land symbolizes the extent of the angel's mission which includes the entire world.

- 10:3-4 The power and authority of the angel's voice is compared to a lion's roar (cf. Jer. 25:30; Hos. 11:10; Joel 3:16; Amos 3:8). Seven thunders indicate completeness and judgment (cf. Ex. 9:23; I Sam. 7:10; II Sam. 22:14-16). Seven times David heard the "voice of the Lord" sweeping over the land like thunder (Ps. 29). What the thunders utter is unknown, for John is told to seal up the words (cf. Dan. 12:4, 9).
- 10:5-7 The angel swears a solemn oath by the eternal God that there should no longer be delay in the completion of the "mystery of God...as He declared to His servants the prophets." Delay, *chronos* (time, KJV), "expresses the duration of a period...In Rev. 10:6 *chronos* has the meaning 'delay'" (Vine). The "mystery of God" is God's plan for the redemption of mankind. Consider the following:
- summed up in Christ (Eph. 1:7-12; 3:8-12; Col. 1:15-20);
 - revealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:1-5; I Cor. 2:6-13; I Pet. 1:10-12);
 - made known to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:6-8; Col. 1:24-29; 2:1-3);
 - preached by the apostles to all men (Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 1:21-23; 4:2-4);
 - made known to all nations by commandment of God (Rom. 16:25-26).
- Thus the "delay no longer" concerning the "mystery of God" does not refer to the end of time but rather to the complete fulfilling and revelation of the gospel.¹
- 10:8-10 The voice from heaven again speaks (10:4), instructing John to take the little book from the angel standing on the sea and on the land (10:2, 5). When John takes the book, the angel tells him to eat it which would taste as honey but be bitter in his stomach (cf. Jer. 15:16-18; Ezek. 2:8-10; 3:1-3, 14). For those who love the word of God, the taste is sweet (Ps. 19:7-11; 119:103), but bitterness comes with suffering for the cause of the gospel, and with declaring the judgments of God against the sinners and disobedient.
- 10:11 John receives a commission to prophesy again to "many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings," indicating more prophecies are to follow. "It was sweet to learn that God's cause would be victorious in His saints, but it was bitter to prophesy of their suffering and of the destructive judgments which would befall the wicked world."²

¹ For a complete discussion of these verses, see Hailey, pp. 244-246.

² *Ibid.*, p. 248.

H. These witnesses have power: (Rev. 11:5-7)

1. by fire proceeding from their mouth to devour their enemies (cf. II Kings 1:10-14; Jer. 5:14; Dan. 3:22)
2. to shut heaven and withhold rain (cf. I Kings 17:1; 18; Luke 4:25; Jas. 5:17)
3. over waters to turn them to blood and to strike the earth with plagues (cf. Ex. 7:19ff.)
4. to complete their testimony

I. When the witnesses complete their testimony, who ascends out of the bottomless pit (abyss) to make war, overcome, and kill them? (Rev. 11:7)

J. The dead bodies of the witnesses will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called _____ and _____, where also our Lord was crucified. (Rev. 11:8)

K. Ten times in Revelation the "great city" refers to _____. (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5, 18; 18:2, 10, 16, 18-19, 21)

L. Who will see the bodies of the dead witnesses for 3½ days and not allow them to be buried? (Rev. 11:9)

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1. peoples | 3. tongues |
| 2. tribes | 4. nations |

M. Why will the earth dwellers rejoice over the dead witnesses? (Rev. 11:10)

N. What happened after the 3½ days? (Rev. 11:11)

1. the witnesses were finally buried
2. the breath of life from God entered them
3. they stood upon their feet
4. great fear fell on those who saw them

O. Who bade the witnesses to "come up here," and who saw them ascend to heaven in a cloud? (Rev. 11:12)

P. In the earthquake that followed a _____ part of the city fell, and _____ were killed indicating partial judgment on the city. (Rev. 11:13)

Q. The second woe is past, behold the _____ woe is coming quickly. (Rev. 11:14)

CONCLUSION. “The sanctuary with its worshipers is under the protection of God; Satan cannot touch these. However, the holy city, the personnel of the church, would be trodden under foot by her enemies for a troubled period of tyrannical opposition. In spite of the tribulation during that time, God’s witnesses would continue to bear testimony as they passed through trials, oppressions, and death. Ultimately, they would be victorious.”¹

- 11:1 John is given a reed in the vision and told to measure the temple, the altar, and those who worship there. The word for temple here, *naos*, refers to the sanctuary or inner part of the temple, not the building with its environs, *hieron*, which is never used figuratively (Vine). The sanctuary of the temple was entered only by the priests, but now the church is the temple of God and those who worship there are the true believers and priests (cf. I Cor. 3:9, 16-17; II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22; Phil. 3:3; I Pet. 2:5). The golden altar of incense was in the inner part of the temple, and in the vision represents the altar upon which the prayers of the saints were offered (8:3). The numbering and sealing of the true worshipers, the 144,000 (7:1-4), and the measuring are symbolic of their protection by God. “The meaning of the symbolism is that the true spiritual Israel will be protected and preserved by God in the troubles that are ahead—it is a vision of consolation for God’s own in contrast to the condemnation threatened for their oppressors.”² Although the measuring is symbolic of God’s protection of the spiritual life of the believers, nevertheless, their physical lives may undergo persecution.
- 11:2 John is told to leave out, *ekballo*, or literally “cast out” (Vine), the court of the temple from the protection of God. “The great bulk of the Gentile world dominated by persecuting Rome will suffer. This is symbolized by the fact that the court of the Gentiles was not measured for protection.”³ The holy city, spiritual Jerusalem or the church, while under Divine protection will undergo tribulation for forty-two months, a time period symbolizing a broken period of time of oppression and persecution. Compare the following:
- 42 months (42 x 30 = 1260 days), the holy city is trodden underfoot (11:2);
 - 1260 days, the two witnesses prophesy (11:3);
 - 1260 days, the woman is nourished in the wilderness (12:6);
 - time and times and half a time (3½ years x 360 = 1260 days), the woman is in the wilderness (12:14);
 - 42 months, the time of the beast’s authority (13:5).
- 11:3 Although the church will be trodden underfoot 1260 days, the preaching of the gospel will continue. Who are the two witnesses who prophesy? The number two symbolically indicates power or strength. Two witnesses were necessary for conviction under the Law of Moses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15). Jesus sent out his disciples two by two (Luke 10:1). Many opinions surround the identity of the two witnesses, but perhaps they represent the apostles and prophets who spoke the word of God by the Spirit (cf. John 15:26-27;

¹ Hailey, p. 260.

² Summers, p. 162.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

- Acts 1:21-22; 5:29-32; Eph. 3:1-5; 4:11-13; II Pet. 1:16-21). Clothed in sackcloth indicates their humility, mourning, and dependence upon God.
- 11:4 The two olive trees and two lampstands are an allusion to Zechariah's vision (Zech. 4). In that vision Zerubbabel, the governor, was assured by God through the prophet following the return to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity that the temple would be rebuilt "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit." In the same manner God's purpose would be accomplished in the church. The lampstands support the light of the gospel and the olive trees provide the oil for the lamps as God's witnesses proclaim the truth of God (cf. Phil. 2:14-16).
- 11:5-6 The witnesses have the power to protect and complete their mission of proclaiming the gospel.
- 11:7 The beast ascends from the bottomless pit and overcomes them *after* their testimony is finished. In chapter thirteen the beast is identified as a great world power rising from the sea who blasphemes God and opposes the saints.
- 11:8 In Revelation the "great city" always refers to Babylon, a world-city without spirituality, comparable to Sodom with its moral depravity, Egypt where God's people were held in bondage, and Jerusalem that crucified the Lord.
- 11:9-10 The beast overcomes and kills the witnesses who lie dead for three-and-a-half days, a broken seven. Although three-and-a-half is analogous to the time periods of forty-two months and twelve hundred sixty days (11:2-3), this is a shorter period of time in comparison. The unregenerate of the world rejoice and show no respect for the dead bodies, for they are left unburied.
- 11:11 After three-and-a half days, a symbolic period, God revives his witnesses, and they stand upon their feet causing great fear to fall on their enemies.
- 11:12 The resurrected witnesses are called to heaven in view of their enemies. Just as the Lord ascended to heaven in triumph, so the witnesses ascend in a cloud indicating victory for the truth of their message and vindication of the martyrs' cause.
- 11:13 In the same hour a great earthquake destroys a tenth part of the world-city (11:8), and seven thousand people are killed, indicating a partial judgment upon a complete number. The rest who give glory to God are afraid, not necessarily converted.
- 11:14 The second woe is past, the third woe is coming quickly.

SUMMARY OF THE SYMBOLIC PERIODS OF TIME OF THE WITNESSING.

- 11:3-6 In the apostolic age the witnesses were protected by the power of God, and the gospel was preached with success.
- 11:7-10 When the testimony was completed and written and the church positively established, then a world power arose warring against the witnesses, persecuting them and temporarily halting their work.
- 11:11-13 The power of God overcame the enemies and the truth triumphed.

CONCLUSION. It is important to remember John sees a vision and a symbolic picture of heaven. The second woe is finished and the third is coming quickly. “In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets” (10:7).

- 11:15 “The sounding of the seventh trumpet serves as a prelude to what follows, as the opening of the seventh seal served as a prelude to the sounding of the trumpets.”⁴ The third woe (11:14) is coming quickly, *tachu*, meaning “shortly, i.e. without delay, soon, or (by surprise) suddenly” (Strong). Thus, what is coming quickly without delay with the sounding of the seventh angel could not refer to the end of time but to God’s mystery, his plan for the redemption of mankind (I Cor. 2:6-13; Eph. 3:1-5; Col. 1:24-29; 4:2-4; I Pet. 1:10-12). Voices in heaven declare the victory of the kingdoms of God and the Christ. The voices are not identified, but perhaps they belong to the four living creatures (4:6-8). “This is not the beginning of the kingdom of God and Christ. This speaks of a public vindication of what is already true!”⁵ (1:5, 9; Col. 1:13-14).
- 11:16-17 The twenty-four elders give thanks to “God Almighty” who has taken his great power and reigned (cf. 4:8). The “Almighty” always refers to God the Father (II Cor. 6:18; nine times in Revelation).
- 11:18 The song of the twenty-four elders describes the end of the opposition.
- The reference to angry nations and the wrath of God descending in judgment seems to fulfill two Old Testament prophecies. The nations and kings counseled “against the Lord and against His Anointed,” but the Lord laughed and set his Son upon his “holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2). In Daniel’s vision the fourth beast warred against the saints prevailing against them, but the Ancient of Days came in judgment, and “the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom” (Dan. 7:17-22).
 - The dead, *nekros*, refers to the “actual spiritual condition of unsaved men” (Vine). These will be judged (cf. Eph. 2:1, 5; 5:14; Col. 2:13).
 - The prophets, saints, and those who fear his name will be rewarded.
 - “Destroy those who destroy the earth” or “bring to corruption those who corrupt the earth” (The Englishman’s Greek NT). Destroy or corrupt, *diaphtheiro*, refers to the “Divine retribution of destruction upon those who have destroyed the earth” (Vine).
- 11:19 The temple is opened in heaven and the ark of the covenant is no longer hidden or concealed. The ark, the symbol of the fellowship between God and his people, rested in the holy of holies in the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple and was viewed only by the high priest once each year. God dwelt between the two cherubim, and from there he communed with Moses (I Sam. 4:4; II Sam. 6:2; Ex. 25:22). The veil between the holy place and holy of holies was rent at Christ’s crucifixion. By the shedding of his blood Jesus made it possible for believers to enter with boldness into the holy of holies—the presence of God (Heb. 10:19-20). The noises following the opening of the temple are symbolic of God’s wrath to come.

⁴ Hailey, p. 262.

⁵ McGuiggan, p. 166.

II. THE DEEPER SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND CHRIST AND THE CHURCH PERSECUTED

Section 4 – THE WOMAN AND THE MAN CHILD

Chapter 12:1-6 – THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, THE MAN CHILD

INTRODUCTION. The theme of Revelation continues, i.e., the victory of Christ and his church over Satan and his allies. The first eleven chapters picture the struggle between the church and the world, “general principles of the moral and spiritual conflict between the forces of God and right and the forces of Satan and evil.”¹ A new series begins in chapter twelve, repeating the theme of the first section but with greater detail concerning the specific nature of the conflict. As chapters six through eleven in the first part deal with the sealed book in the hand of God which the Lamb was worthy to open (5:6-10), this second section reveals the contents of the little book John received from the angel and ate (10:9-11). Satan’s allies are: the sea beast revealed as the Roman Empire with its economic, military and political force (13:1-10); the earth beast representing false religion including emperor worship (13:11-18); the great harlot symbolizing the lusts of the flesh and the world (17; 18). Opposing these three forces are the victorious Lamb that was slain for the redemption of mankind, the faithful saints with the martyr spirit, and God’s righteous judgments on the ungodly. The struggle between God’s plan for redemption and Satan began in the Garden of Eden, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15).

- A. When man sinned through the enticement of Satan, God pronounced a curse upon the serpent Satan and announced a war between the serpent and the “Seed” of woman. (Gen. 3:14-15)

True

False

- B. Christ was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:30-31), and therefore is the Seed of woman. (Gal. 4:4)

True

False

- C. The promises given to Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob are:

1. in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 12:3)
2. in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 26:4)
3. in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 28:14)

¹ Hailey, p. 267.

D. The apostle Paul identifies the Seed as Christ. (Gal. 3:16, 29)

True

False

E. Who are Abraham's seed? (Gal. 3:29)

F. A sign appeared in heaven of a woman "clothed with the _____, with the _____ under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve _____." (Rev. 12:1)

G. Who are the "children light"? (John 12:35-36; Eph. 5:8; I Thess. 5:5)

H. What was the woman about to do? (Rev. 12:2)

I. Another sign appeared of a _____ dragon having seven _____ and ten _____, and seven _____ on his heads. (Rev. 12:3)

J. The dragon stood before the woman to _____ her child. (Rev. 12:4)

K. The male child was to rule all nations with a _____ and was caught up to God and his throne. (Rev. 12:5; cf. Ps. 2:7-9)

L. The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared by God where she was nourished for _____. (Rev. 12:6; cf. 11:2-3)

CONCLUSION. In John's vision a woman with the radiance of the sun in the pangs of labor is about to deliver a male child. A great dragon is waiting to devour the child, but the child who is destined to rule the nations is caught up to God and his throne. The woman flees to a place in the wilderness prepared for her by God where she is nourished for a period of time. Who is the woman, the dragon and the male child? "The story of the conflict of the church and its enemies begins with the revelation of the principal characters. On the one side there is the picture of the incarnation of the Messiah, and on the other the great red dragon, the Devil, who tries to destroy him."²

² Roberts, p. 96.

- 12:1 The woman is clothed with the light of the sun and moon and wears a crown of twelve stars. "She wears the two heavenly bodies which give light to the earth (Gen. 1:17, 18). She is the bearer of light in the dark world."³ Her garland of twelve stars is the *stephanos*, the victory crown, with the number twelve symbolic of God's people (twelve tribes, twelve apostles). The woman cannot merely be Old Testament believers, for she is persecuted by the dragon *after* giving birth to the male child. She cannot represent only Christians for she was present *before* the birth of the male child. Thus the woman probably represents God's people, the spiritual remnant of God's faithful. God has always had his faithful remnant. Consider Elijah and his lament at Mount Horeb, "I alone am left," but God told him there were "seven thousand" whose knees had not bowed to Baal (I Kings 19:10, 18). A remnant of both Israel and Judah returned to Palestine after Babylonian captivity (Jer. 29:4-10; 30:3; II Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4). Paul speaks of a remnant according to the "election of grace," that is, the Jews who were formerly God's people but now have obeyed the gospel (Rom. 11:2-5).
- 12:2 The promised seed of the woman, the Messiah and Redeemer, was in the womb of the faithful remnant since God's declaration to the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15). Micah prophesied that the daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs, shall labor in Babylonian captivity, and from there the Lord will redeem her from the hand of her enemies. "The one brought forth by the travailing daughter of Zion should be the ruler in Israel, the Messiah-King, for whom the people looked"⁴ (Mic. 4:10; 5:2-3). Isaiah states that Zion shall bring forth a male child and a nation (Isa. 66:7-8). "It was through this faithful remnant that the man child was born and the new spiritual nation brought forth."⁵ In the fullness of time, "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). Not only is Christ the seed of the woman, he is the promised seed of Abraham, and those who are in Christ are blessed as Abraham's spiritual seed (Gal. 3:16, 29).
- 12:3 Although in the vision, the dragon, identified as the Devil and Satan (12:9), is not actually in heaven. He is described as:
- being great-powerful;
 - being fiery red—the color of blood and thus murderous (cf. John 8:44);
 - having seven heads—the complete number indicating fullness of intelligence, deceitfulness and cunning (cf. II Cor. 11:3);
 - having ten horns—symbolic of the destructive power within his realm;
 - having seven diadems on his heads—these crowns, *diadema*, are symbolic of royalty and not the *stephanos* or victory crowns.
- 12:4 The slashing tail casts down a third of the stars indicating his power and suggestive of the first four trumpets (8:7-12). Perhaps the stars are symbolic of the angels led by him who were cast down and now await judgment (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). He stands ready to devour the male child, reminiscent of Pharaoh and Herod the Great (Ex. 1:15-16; Matt. 2:16).

³ McGuiggan, p. 171.

⁴ Hailey, p. 269.

⁵ *Ibid.*

- 12:5 The male child which is to “rule all nations with a rod of iron” and “caught up to God and His throne” is clearly a reference to the second Psalm.
- 12:6 The woman, the faithful remnant who gave birth to Christ, is now revealed as spiritual Israel or the church, the new spiritual Zion (cf. Heb. 12:18-24). She flees into the wilderness, a place symbolic of safety provided by God during a time of persecution.

SUMMARY OF TIME PERIODS. The woman is nourished in the wilderness, a place prepared for her by God, for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Again note and compare the following time periods:

- 11:2 42 months (42 x 30 = 1260 days), the holy city will be trodden under foot;
 11:3 1260 days, the two witnesses will prophesy clothed in sackcloth;
 12:6 1260 days, the woman is nourished by God in the wilderness;
 12:14 time and times and half a time (3½ years x 360 = 1260 days), the woman is nourished in the wilderness;
 13:5 42 months, the time of the beast’s authority.

In addition the book of Daniel speaks of the same time periods:

- 7:25 time and times and half a time, the saints shall be given into the hand of the fourth beast;
 12:7 time, times and half a time, when the power of the holy people has been shattered, all these things shall be finished.

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|---|--------------|---|--------------------|---|------------------|
| | Time | + | Times | + | Half a time | = | 3½ Times |
| Dan. 7:25 | 1 year | + | 2 years | + | ½ year | = | 3½ years |
| Dan. 12:7 | 1 year | + | 2 years | + | ½ year | = | 3½ years |
| Rev. 11:2 | 12 mos. | + | 24 mos. | + | 6 mos. | = | 42 months |
| Rev. 11:3 | 360 days | + | 720 days | + | 180 days | = | 1260 days |
| Rev. 12:6 | 360 days | + | 720 days | + | 180 days | = | 1260 days |
| Rev. 12:14 | 1 year | + | 2 years | + | ½ year | = | 3½ years |
| Rev. 13:5 | 12 mos. | + | 24 mos. | + | 6 mos. | = | 42 months |

The years, months and days of time calculations are to be taken figuratively, not literally, and represent a period of time determined by God. These time periods which are equivalent have a common factor—they are “broken sevens,” representing the period of the power of the oppressor which is 3½. Since seven represents perfection or completeness, the broken seven indicates the oppressor is limited by God and is not in complete control. In each of the instances the faithful are persecuted for a period of time, but they are protected and sustained by God. If all of these periods are equivalent, they seem to represent the period of Roman persecution of God’s people (the authority of the beast) which is revealed and developed beginning in chapter thirteen.

Chapter 12:7-12 – SPIRITUAL WAR IN HEAVEN

INTRODUCTION. As the vision continues, a second symbolic picture reveals a spiritual war in heaven between Michael, the archangel and defender of God's people (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9), and his angels and the dragon and his angels. We must remember that we are not seeing an actual war, but a vision teaching a spiritual truth.

- A. Michael and his angels fought against the _____ and his angels, but the latter did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in _____ any longer. (Rev. 12:7-8)
- B. Who was cast to the earth? (Rev. 12:9)
1. the great dragon
 2. the serpent of old
 3. the Devil
 4. Satan
 5. the deceiver of the whole world
- C. Because the accuser of the brethren has been cast down, _____, _____, the _____ of our God, and the _____ of his Christ have come. (Rev. 12:10)
- D. Who is now ruling and reigning? (Rev. 12:10; 11:15; cf. Acts 2:29-36; Phil. 2:5-11)
- E. The brethren overcame the Devil: (Rev. 12:11)
1. by the blood of the Lamb
 2. by the word of their testimony
 3. because they did not love their lives to the death
- F. The heavens and they that dwell in them _____. (Rev. 12:12)
- G. A "woe" was announced for the inhabitants of the earth and the sea because the Devil: (Rev. 12:12)
1. has come down to you
 2. has great wrath
 3. knows that he has a short time

CONCLUSION. In this segment Satan and his angels are defeated by the archangel Michael and his angels and cast out of heaven down to the earth. God's purpose has come—salvation, strength, the kingdom of God, and power of Christ. Thus there is rejoicing in heaven but woe pronounced upon the earth, for Satan with great wrath has a “short time.” The vision symbolizes Christ's victory over Satan in a spiritual war in heaven (cf. Isa. 53:10-12; Matt. 12:29; Luke 11:21-22; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:7-11).

- 12: 7-9 In the book of Daniel, Michael (“Who is like God?”) defended the people of God against Persia and Greece; according to Jude he disputed with Satan over the body of Moses (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9). In this vision Michael defeats the dragon, casting him out of heaven and down to the earth. The dragon is identified as the serpent of old, the Devil, *diabolos* (an accuser, a slanderer), Satan, *satanas* (an adversary), and a deceiver of the whole world (cf. Gen. 3; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Zech. 3:1-2; II Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:14).
- 12:10 “With Satan's defeat and downfall, God's purpose of providing salvation, of demonstrating His great power, and the establishing of His spiritual kingdom, all promised through the prophets, ‘is now come,’ that is, His Word is fulfilled.”⁶ Christ announced his authority after his resurrection, Paul affirmed it to the Ephesians, and Peter verified it (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23; I Pet. 3:21-22).
- 12:11 The brethren, including the martyrs under the altar (6:9-11), overcame the accuser by:
- the blood of the Lamb (7:14; Heb. 9:13-14; I John 1:7);
 - the word of their testimony (John 20:30-31; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:9-10; Heb. 3:14-15; 10:23);
 - the martyr spirit (2:10; Acts 20:22-24; II Tim. 4:6-7).
- 12:12 The Devil's time to inflict his wrath is limited by God who is in control. The “short time” may be equivalent to the “little while” of the martyrs (6:11).

Chapter 12:13-17 – THE PERSECUTION OF THE WOMAN

INTRODUCTION. The woman, identified as the spiritual remnant, brought forth the male child who was about to be devoured by a great dragon. The male child, identified as Christ, was caught up to heaven and is now ruling and reigning. The woman then fled to the wilderness where she was protected. The dragon, identified as the Devil and Satan, was cast out of heaven down to the earth by Michael and his angels in a spiritual war in heaven. So far “the devil has lost two battles in the conflict. He was unable to destroy the Christ on the earth. He was unsuccessful in his efforts to invade heaven to destroy the Christ. Now he turns to a third part of his campaign. He will exercise his wrath on the woman who produced the Christ.”⁷

⁶ Hailey, p. 275.

⁷ Summers, p. 173.

- A. What did the dragon do after he was cast to the earth? (Rev. 12:13)
- B. What was given to the woman to aid her escape? (Rev. 12:14)
- C. How long was she nourished from the presence of the serpent? (Rev. 12:14)
- D. What did the serpent do? (Rev. 12:15)
- E. How did the earth help the woman? (Rev. 12:16)
- F. When the dragon could not destroy the woman, he went after her offspring who:
(Rev. 12:17)
 - 1. keep the commandments of God
 - 2. have the testimony of Jesus Christ

CONCLUSION. After his defeat by Michael and his angels, the dragon directs his fury against the woman, the church and the new spiritual Zion. The Lord protects the woman so the serpent attempts to sweep her away by a flood. However, the earth helps the woman by swallowing the flood. The enraged dragon then makes war with the offspring of the woman.

- 12:13-14 The woman is given two wings of an eagle to aid her escape. The figure of eagle's wings to represent God's protection is not a new concept (cf. Ex. 19:4; Deut. 32:11-12; Isa. 40:31). The time and times and half a time is equivalent to 1260 days (11:6), a figurative period of time symbolizing "indefiniteness, turmoil, trouble."⁸
- 12:15 Floods overwhelming God's people is a figure used in the Old Testament prophets and psalms (cf. Isa. 8:5-8; 43:2; Jer. 46:7-8; Ps. 32:6; 144:5-8). The river from the serpent's mouth represents the lies and false religious teachings used to destroy the church (cf. John 8:44).
- 12:16 The earth, the unbelievers, swallow the deceptions of the serpent thus helping the woman. "As long as the world absorbs the river of Satan's lies, and the church drinks from the fountain of divine truth, the separation between the two will remain clear and distinct."⁹
- 12:17 When the dragon cannot overcome the church, he then makes war with individual Christians who are the offspring of the woman.

⁸ Summers, p. 173.

⁹ Hailey, p. 280.

Chapter 13:1-10 – THE BEAST OUT OF THE SEA

INTRODUCTION. In chapter twelve there is a vision of a spiritual war in heaven between Michael, defender of God's people, and his angels, and Satan and his forces who are cast down to the earth. Chapter thirteen then introduces the world power and false religion used by Satan against Christ's church—unbelievers against believers. A basic understanding of these two chapters will help prevent and refute the many unfounded and speculative interpretations of the Book of Revelation.

A. John saw a great beast rising up out of the: (Rev. 13:1)

1. sea
2. earth
3. sky

B. The expression "sea" probably means: (cf. Dan. 7:2-3, 17)

1. literal oceans, seas, bodies of water
2. sea of humanity, nations

C. Match the descriptions of the sea beast with the symbolic meanings: (Rev. 13:1)

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. seven heads | evil royalty |
| 2. ten horns | total irreverence to God |
| 3. ten crowns | worldly power |
| 4. name of blasphemy | complete knowledge |

D. The sea beast was like a: (Rev. 13:2)

1. leopard
2. bear
3. lion
4. eagle

E. His power, throne, and authority came from the _____. (Rev. 13:2)

F. Refer to Chart No. 1, *Four World Empires*, comparing Dan. 2, 7, and 8.

1. Match the world kingdoms with their respective animal descriptions. (Dan. 7:4-6).

- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| a. Babylonian | leopard |
| b. Medo-Persian | lion |
| c. Grecian | bear |
| d. Roman | |

2. The fourth beast, the fourth world kingdom, which is described as dreadful, terrible, and strong (Dan. 7:7), may be identified as the:

G. Refer to Chart No. 2, *Comparison of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13*. Compare the fourth beast (Dan. 7:3, 7-8, 19-20, 21, 25) with the sea beast (Rev. 13:1-10). Note the verses next to the statements (the first one is completed).

| Dan. 7 | Verse | Rev. 13 | Verse |
|--|--------------|---|--------------|
| 1. four beasts out of the sea | 3 | 1. beast out of the sea | 1 |
| 2. dreadful, terrible, strong | | 2. a composite | |
| 3. spoke pompous words | | 3. spoke blasphemies | |
| 4. devoured, broke in pieces, trampled the residue | | 4. authority over tribes, tongues and nations | |
| 5. ten horns | | 5. ten horns | |
| 6. made war against the saints | | 6. made war with the saints | |
| 7. shall intend to change times and law | | 7. all earth dwellers will worship him | |

H. The fourth beast, the fourth world empire (Dan. 7:7-8), and the sea beast (Rev. 13:1) appear to be the same.

True

False

I. Thus the beast out of the sea may be identified as the Roman Empire which received power, a worldly throne, and great authority from the dragon (Satan) to war against the saints. (Rev. 13:2, 7)

True

False

J. "In the days of these kings," God set up a kingdom "which shall never be destroyed." (Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14, 17-18)

True

False

K. That kingdom which shall never be destroyed:

1. was prophesied by Daniel (Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14, 17-18)
2. was prayed for by Jesus (Matt. 6:10)
3. was promised by Jesus to come with power (Mark 9:1)
4. came with power (Acts 1: 8; 2)
5. is the church (Col. 1:13, 18)
6. has been received (Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9)

L. One of the seven heads of the sea beast was _____ wounded but was healed. (Rev. 13:3)

M. To worship the beast (Rome) is to worship the dragon (Satan). (Rev. 13:4)

True

False

N. List four things given to the beast. (Rev. 13:5, 7)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

O. The beast blasphemed: (Rev. 13:6)

1. God
2. His name
3. His tabernacle
4. the Roman Empire
5. those that dwell in heaven

P. Authority was given to the beast over every _____, _____,
and _____. (Rev. 13:7)

Q. The sea beast was given authority for forty-two months and made war with the saints (13:5, 7). How long did the fourth beast in Daniel make war with the saints? (Dan. 7:21-22, 25)

1. until the Ancient of Days came
2. until the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom
3. for a time and times and half a time
4. until Christ returns a second time

R. Who will worship the beast? (Rev. 13:8)

1. all who dwell on earth
2. all whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb

S. The saints may have to endure captivity or even death by the sword which will require: (Rev. 13:10)

1. patience
2. faith
3. compromise

CONCLUSION. Satan has been thwarted three times: he was unable to destroy the man child Christ on earth; he invaded heaven but could not prevail against Michael and his angels; he was unsuccessful in destroying the woman, the spiritual remnant, the church. He now engages in a fourth battle against Christians. In this segment Satan, who was cast down to earth, enlists the sea beast to destroy God's people.

13:1 John sees a beast rising up out of the sea, a monster terrible to behold emerging from the nations, the sea of humanity (cf. Ps. 65:7; Isa. 17:12-13; 57:20; Dan. 7:2-3, 17). The beast has ten horns representing power and seven heads indicating intelligence. On the horns are ten crowns, *diadema*, the symbol of royalty and on the heads a blasphemous name, signifying complete irreverence toward God. The similarity of the sea beast to the dragon (12:3) indicates that the former is a personification of the latter. "Observe, however, that in the case of the *beast* the *horns*—and not the heads—are crowned, while the *dragon* wears his diadems of arrogated authority on his *heads*. In other words, it is the dragon, satan, who rules: his plans are executed by the governments of the world."¹ For the purposes of this study, the sea beast is the Roman Empire, the fourth world empire prophesied by Daniel (Dan. 7:7-8, 19-27).

13:2 The sea beast, like a leopard, bear, and lion, is a composite of the first three beasts representing kings in Daniel's vision (Dan. 7:4-6, 17). "The fourth beast in Daniel is not described as like any ordinary animal; here it is described as combining the agility and strength and cruelty of the other three."² He derives his power from the dragon, Satan. "In the mighty, worldwide Roman Empire was combined the tearing power of Chaldea (the lion), the crushing force of Medo-Persia (the bear), and the swift and ferocious character of Macedonia under Alexander (the leopard)."³

13:3 This verse has numerous interpretations! Perhaps the simplest is, "the deathstroke is the death of Nero, the first emperor to persecute the church, whose policy of persecution was revived by Domitian, in whom the 'the death-stroke was healed.'"⁴ Nero was the fifth emperor of the Roman Empire (A. D. 54-68) and the "first who assailed with the imperial sword the Christian sect...Domitian, too, a man of Nero's type in cruelty, tried his hand at persecution."⁵ When Nero committed suicide, anarchy occurred in the empire and three emperors of little importance ruled briefly. Vespasian secured the imperial throne and ruled well restoring order to the empire (A. D. 69-79). He was followed by his son Titus (A. D. 79-81), the Roman commander who captured and destroyed Jerusalem in A. D. 70 during the reign of his father. Nevertheless, history regards Titus as a kindly ruler who was beloved by the people. At the death of Titus, his brother Domitian, a cruel despot, became emperor (A. D. 81-96). Thus it is possible to identify the persecutor Nero with the mortal wound and Domitian with the healed "deadly wound," the revival of persecution.

¹ Hendriksen, p. 177.

² C. H. Roberson, *Studies in the Revelation*, (Fort Worth: The Manney Company, 1957), p. 92.

³ Hailey, p. 285.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 286.

⁵ Roberts, p. 109, quoting Tertullian, *Apology*, ch. 5.

- 13:4 The power of Rome was invincible—economic, political, military—and the people had pride, wealth and influence. They worshiped Rome and their emperor.
- 13:5-7 The sea beast blasphemes God and everything relating to him. He is given authority for forty-two months, a broken or limited time period.⁶ His authority includes making war with the saints and extends over every tribe, tongue, and nation. Although the *dragon* gives authority to the beast, it is *God* who is in control of the universe appointing the authorities therein (cf. Rom. 13:1). God permits this persecution as he did the crucifixion of Christ for his own purposes for the salvation of mankind.
- 13:8 All will worship the beast except those whose names are in the Book of Life of the Lamb, God's faithful remnant.
- 13:9-10 The patience and faith of the saints will be tested. Captivity and even death by the sword may be faced.
- Saints are not to resist civil powers (Rom. 13:2; I Pet. 2:13-14).
 - Saints are to fight with spiritual weapons (II Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18).
 - Saints are not to fear those who can kill only the body (Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:4).
 - Faith is the victory that overcomes the world (I John 5:4-5).
 - He who overcomes shall inherit all things (21:7).
- Nevertheless, the persecutors, those who lead into captivity and kill with the sword, are themselves destined for destruction.

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

⁶ See the *Summary of Time Periods* and discussion of the equivalent time references, Rev. 12, p. 4.

Chapter 13:11-18 – THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH

INTRODUCTION. Next John sees a second beast which rises up out of the earth. The beast outwardly looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. This earth beast exercises the authority of the first beast who received his authority from the dragon.

- A. List two characteristics of the earth beast. (Rev. 13:11)
- 1.
 - 2.
- B. The dragon (Devil) is a murderer and speaks as a _____. (John 8:44)
- C. Elsewhere, the earth beast is called the _____.
(Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10; cf. Matt. 7:15)
- D. The earth beast causes the earth and those who dwell in it to _____
the beast of the sea whose deadly wound was healed. (Rev. 13:12)
- E. The earth beast performs great signs making _____ come down
from heaven. (Rev. 13:13)
- F. He deceives the dwellers on earth by those signs, telling them to make an
_____ to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.
(Rev. 13:14)
- G. The earth beast was given the power to give _____ to the image of
the beast that the image of the beast should _____. (Rev. 13:15)
- H. Those who would not worship the image of the beast should be _____.
(Rev. 13:15)
- I. The earth beast causes “all” to be given a mark on their _____
or on their _____. (Rev. 13:16; cf. 7:3; 9:4; 14:1)
- J. It was necessary to have the “mark of the beast” to _____ or _____.
(Rev. 13:17)
- K. The number of the beast, 666, has meaning to: (Rev. 13:18)
1. those with wisdom
 2. those with understanding

CONCLUSION. This second beast rises out of the earth, that is, its origin is human. It appears as a lamb, but its mouth speaks lies as the dragon. As the beast exercises the authority of the first beast, he forces the worship of the first beast including the worship of an image of that beast. The second beast from the earth, therefore, represents paganism and false religion which seduces and deceives the earth dwellers. As the sea beast is Rome symbolic of its economic, military and political power, the earth beast is Rome symbolic of its paganism, false religion and emperor worship.

- 13:11 The beast has two horns like an innocent lamb but speaks with the voice of a dragon (cf. Matt. 7:15; II Cor. 11:13-15). The two horns may represent the political power and the religious parliament of Rome, enforcing emperor worship and paganism.
- 13:12 Exercising the authority of the sea beast, the purpose of the earth beast is to make the dwellers of the earth worship the first beast. Emperor worship was enforced by the political power of Rome and was emphasized in the empire particularly in the province of Asia under Domitian, the one in whom the deadly wound was healed.
- 13:13-15 Are the “great signs” miracles or deceptions? The records left by the Roman priests indicate they were con-men (cf. II Tim. 3:13). Contrast the true miracles of God performed by Philip with the sorceries practiced by Simon (Acts 8:5-13). The people are to make an image to the beast that was wounded and lived. That the image of the beast should speak is most likely some form of magic, or perhaps the image speaking refers to the enforcement of emperor worship by the civil government. “Here we have false religion promoted and favored by civil government and in turn the civil government is signally honored by the false religion, in the establishment of the image.”⁷ The image was probably of Domitian. History regards Domitian as arrogant who demanded the title of “Lord God.” Images of Domitian were built throughout the province, and those who did not worship the image were put to death.
- 13:16-18 God sealed his servants on their foreheads (7:3; 9:4; 14:1); now the beast imitates this and requires all to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead in order to conduct trade or commerce. These marks are part of the vision and not to be considered literal. The number of the beast, 666, has been variously assigned throughout the years to Caesar, Martin Luther, Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, Stalin, Ronald Reagan, etc. However, the number represents the “number of the beast,” the “number of a man.” “Throughout the book, seven expresses the idea of perfection or completeness: the seven churches, seven horns, seven eyes, seven spirits, and so forth. So six, which falls below the sacred seven, can never be seven or reach perfection; therefore, it symbolizes the imperfect, that which is human and destined to fail.”⁸ Thus 666 may be correlated with imperfect imperfect imperfect, incomplete incomplete incomplete, or failure failure failure.

⁷ W. S. Thompson, *Comments on the Revelation* (Memphis: Southern Church Publications, 1957), pp. 139-140.

⁸ Hailey, p. 299.

Chapter 14:1-5 – THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION

INTRODUCTION. In John's vision the forces of evil led by the dragon (Satan) against the woman and her seed are the beasts out of the sea and out of the earth. These two beasts symbolize the power of Imperial Rome and the false religion supported by Rome. God counters with his two forces of righteousness, Christ and the faithful saints, and righteous judgments symbolized by the sickle. Chapter fourteen is divided into three parts, each beginning with, "Then I looked (saw)."

A. The Lamb standing on Mount Zion is: (Rev. 14:1; 5:6; Isa. 53:7; John 1:29; I Pet. 1:19)

B. Mount Zion refers to: (Rev. 14:1; cf. Heb. 12:22-24)

1. the city of the living God
2. heavenly Jerusalem
3. the general assembly and church of the firstborn

C. The 144,000 represent: (Rev. 14:1, 3; 7:1-8)

1. those that received the seal of God on their foreheads
2. those that have the name of the Father written on their foreheads
3. those who were redeemed from the earth

D. The scene is a symbolic vision of the redeemed from the earth who are in the church and under the protection of the Lamb.

True

False

E. John heard a voice and sound from heaven like: (Rev. 14:2)

1. many waters
2. loud thunder
3. harpists playing harps

F. Who could learn the new song that was sung before the throne? (Rev. 14:3)

G. The 144,000 represent spiritually: (Rev. 14:3-5)

1. those who were redeemed from the earth
2. those not defiled with women
3. those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes
4. those redeemed from among men to be the firstfruits to God and the Lamb
5. those in whose mouth was found no deceit
6. those without fault before the throne of God

CONCLUSION. In answer to the horrors of the beasts in chapter thirteen, John sees triumphant saints standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, the first of God's forces of righteousness. A new song of redemption is sung before the throne. "The saints are pictured as loyal, pure, obedient, and courageous followers of the Lamb."¹

- 14:1 Here the Lamb is *standing*, not slain, on Mount Zion. Zion in the Old Testament was the stronghold and city of David (II Sam. 5:7; I Chron. 11:5). Messianic prophecies refer to Zion as the place where the Messiah will reign, and New Testament writers affirm the fulfillment of these prophecies (cf. Ps. 2:6; 110:1-2; 118:22; Isa. 2:2-3; 28:16; 59:20; Mic. 4:1-2, 7; Rom. 9:33; 11:26; I Pet. 2:6-8). The Hebrew writer identifies Mount Zion as the church (Heb. 12:22-24). The 144,000 standing with the Lamb are those who received the seal of God on their foreheads (7:1-8). In this vision they have the name of the Father written on their foreheads in contrast to those having the mark of the beast, 666, the human number (13:16-18). In chapter seven "they were sealed unto God in anticipation of the storm to be let loose upon the earth; here the same group is pictured as safe with the Lamb in His stronghold."²
- 14:2 A voice from heaven sounds like: many waters symbolic of majesty; thunder symbolic of volume; and harpists symbolic of melody.
- 14:3 Only the 144,000 redeemed from the earth can learn the words of the new song which is sung before the throne. Only those who are saved and redeemed, purchased by the blood of the Lamb, can sing this song.
- 14:4-5 Those who have been redeemed (purchased by the blood of the Lamb) are described further as:
- not defiled with women, spiritually chaste (cf. II Cor. 11:2);
 - followers of the Lamb, faithful disciples (cf. Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34);
 - the firstfruits to God and the Lamb, an allusion to the firstfruits of the harvest offered to God under the Mosaic law (cf. Deut. 26:1-2; Rom 16:5; I Cor. 16:15; Jas. 1:18);
 - without deceit, without compromise, without fault, "a glorious church...holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

Chapter 14:6-13 – ANGELS' MESSAGES OF WARNING A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

INTRODUCTION. After a vision picturing redeemed saints standing with the Lamb, three angels appear warning of judgments to come, and a voice from heaven commands John to write a blessing.

- A. John saw an *angel* flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel message for whom? (Rev. 14:6)

¹ McGuigan, p. 223.

² Hailey, p. 303.

B. The angel's message to the earth dwellers was: (Rev. 14:7)

1. fear (respect) God (cf. Acts 10:2, 22, 35)
2. give God glory for the hour of his judgment has come (cf. I Pet. 4:11)
3. worship God, the Creator (cf. Ps. 95:6; 96:9; 99:9)

C. The *second angel* announced the fall of _____. (Rev. 14:8)

D. Describe Babylon. (Rev. 14:8)

E. The *third angel* announced the consequences of worshipping the beast and his image. (Rev. 14:9-11)

True

False

F. The wine of the wrath of God poured out is: (Rev. 14:10; cf. Rom. 1:18; Eph. 5:5-6; Col. 3:5-6)

1. judgment
2. righteous indignation
3. torment

G. Fire and brimstone are symbolic of the judgment God has brought upon the unrighteous such as Sodom and Gomorrah. (Rev. 14:11; Gen. 19:24-28; II Pet. 2:6; Jude 7)

True

False

H. The only future the unrepentant can look forward to is: (Rev. 14:11; cf. Matt. 18:8; 25:41, 46; Luke 16:23, 28)

I. What is the "patience" of the saints? (Rev. 14:12; cf. 3:10; 13:10; 21:7; Luke 21:19)

J. A *voice from heaven* instructed John to write, "_____ are the dead who die in the Lord." (Rev. 14:13; cf. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; I Cor. 15:20-23, 58; I Thess. 4:13-18)

K. The Spirit says they may _____ from their labors. (Rev. 14:13)

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF THE MESSAGES OF THE THREE ANGELS AND THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

- 14:6-7 *The First Angel* – proclaims the everlasting good news, admonishes the earth dwellers to worship God, and warns of coming judgment. This is a judgment in time against Rome and her allies.
- 14:8 *The Second Angel* – decrees the fall of Babylon and the folly of trusting in the evil city. Babylon is introduced here for the first time and called the Harlot in chapter seventeen. Ancient Babylon, a city known for its sin and corruption, is symbolic of Rome as the center of lusts and seductions (cf. Jer. 51:7). The angel states that Babylon is fallen, not falling, for when God’s judgment is pronounced, it is as though it had already occurred (cf. Isa. 46:9-10; 48:3).
- 14:9-11 *The Third Angel* – declares the consequences of worshipping the beast and his image.
- “Just as Babylon, the wicked city, had made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, here God is pictured as giving to all who worshipped the beast and receive his mark on their foreheads the wine of his wrath.”³ This wine of God’s wrath is poured out in full strength, undiluted, into the cup of his indignation.
 - Fire and brimstone are symbolic of the destruction of the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24-28; II Pet. 2:6; Jude 7). The future everlasting torment of the wicked is taught by Jesus (Matt. 18:8; 25:41, 46; Luke 16:23, 28).
- 14:12 The patience of the saints involves keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, perseverance, enduring death or captivity, overcoming persecution. By patience the saints possess or win their souls.
- 14:13 *The voice from heaven* – announces a beatitude, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” The message comes from the Holy Spirit although it is not clear whether the voice is that of the Spirit or a voice issuing the message of the Spirit. Consider the following blessings for the dead who die in the Lord.
- The martyrs underneath the altar were at rest (6:9-11).
 - Those before the throne were serving God day and night (7:9-17).
 - Paul assured the saints at Corinth that those who had fallen asleep in Jesus had not perished but would be raised in Christ (I Cor. 15:20-23).
 - The saints sleeping in Christ shall be raised at his coming (I Thess. 4:13-18).
 - “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” (I Cor. 15:58).

³ Thompson, p. 150.

Chapter 14:14-20 – HARVEST AND VINTAGE OF THE EARTH

INTRODUCTION. This section reveals God’s judgments symbolized by the sickle, his second force of righteousness against the opposition. The scene is a twofold vision of a harvest—the ingathering of the righteous and a reaping of the forces of evil.

A. The color white symbolizes: (Rev. 14:14; cf. 1:12-14)

1. purity
2. holiness
3. heavenly

B. Clouds sometimes symbolize: (Isa. 19:1; Matt. 24:30; 26:64)

C. The “One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown” is: (Rev. 14:14; cf. 1:13; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 8:20; Heb.2:6-8)

D. In his hand was a _____ . (Rev. 14:14)

E. Another angel (*the fourth*) came out of the _____ indicating he was under orders from God. (Rev. 14:15)

F. The angel cried to Him who sat on the cloud to _____ for the harvest is _____ . (Rev. 14:15-16; cf. Matt. 3:12; 13:24-30, 37-43; Mark 4:26-29)

G. Another angel (*the fifth*) came out of the temple in heaven with a _____ . (Rev. 14:17)

H. Another angel (*the sixth*) came out from the _____ and had power over _____, and instructed the fifth angel to thrust in the sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her _____ are fully ripe. (Rev. 14:18)

I. The angel gathered the vine of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the _____ . (Rev. 14:19; cf. Isa. 63:1-6; Joel 3:13)

J. The blood from the winepress was up to the horses’ bridles and as far as _____ . (Rev. 14:20)

CONCLUSION. The harvest is reaped! The earth that is ripe and the clusters of grapes that are fully ripe are gathered. The grapes are cast into the great winepress of God's wrath. God's forces of righteousness, Christ and Divine judgment, have overcome the forces of evil, the dragon and the two beasts.

- 14:14 On a white cloud is "One like the Son of Man" wearing a golden crown, the victory crown (*stephanos*), and having a sharp sickle for reaping the harvest. This is clearly the Christ, the Lamb, King and Judge (cf. 1:13; 5:13; Rom. 14:10; II Cor. 5:10).
- 14:15-16 Another angel, a *fourth angel*, comes from the temple indicating he is on an authorized mission from God. The angel instructs the One on the cloud to thrust in his sickle. The time is come to reap, for the earth is ripe.
- 14:17 Another angel, a *fifth angel*, also comes from the temple with a sharp sickle. These angels are ministers and messengers of God.
- 4:18-19 Another angel, a *sixth angel*, comes from the altar and has power over fire. Two altars have appeared in prior visions. This altar may represent the golden altar of incense before God upon which the prayers of the saints were offered, and from which an angel cast fire of judgment to the earth (8:3-5). The souls of the martyrs rested under the symbolic altar of burnt offering (6:9-11). This angel tells the angel with the sharp sickle to gather the "clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." The earth is ripe for Divine judgment. The angel does as instructed and the vine of the earth is thrown into the winepress of the wrath of God (cf. Isa. 63:1-6; Jer. 51:33; Lam.1:15; Hos. 6:11; Joel 3:9-13).
- 14:20 The winepress is trampled outside the city, probably referring to spiritual Jerusalem. Vineyards and winepresses were generally outside villages. Bodies of the animals whose blood was brought to the priests for sin offerings were burned outside the camp; Jesus who sanctified the people with his blood was crucified outside the gate of the city (Heb. 13:11-12). The depth of the blood is symbolic and presents a picture of the completeness of the judgment. Some will explain the 1600 furlongs, about 200 miles, as (4 x 4) x (10 x 10). Four is the world number and ten is the complete or power number. Thus four times four times ten times ten would indicate complete judgment of the earth and wicked.

Note. Commentators do not all agree on the nature of the harvest in this chapter. Some hold it as a judgment in time and others as the final judgment. However, final judgment is described as destruction by fire, not the winepress (14:9-10; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8; Matt. 13:37-43, 47-50; 25:41). This scene appears to be a twofold vision of harvest, a symbol used for evangelism (Matt. 9:37-38; John 4:35) and judgment (Jer. 51:33). "As the Lord reaps his harvest through preaching the gospel, judgment falls on all who reject it (vv. 6-7, 14-16). While He will be gathering His own harvest, the judgment of the wicked in time will continue. The metaphor of the wine press indicates this idea rather than the final judgment at His second coming...Treading the winepress of God's wrath in time brought the Roman Empire, its provincial kings, and Roman paganism to an end."⁴

⁴ Hailey, p. 317.

Section 5 – THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH

Chapter 15 – THE SEVEN ANGELS INTRODUCED

INTRODUCTION. Previous visions disclosed that the seven seals reveal, affecting the fourth part (6:1-8:5), and the seven trumpets announce and warn, striking the third part (8:6-11:15). Now the seven bowls of wrath execute complete judgment (15; 16).

There is a progression in God’s mercy and justice. God sent his Son to die on the cross, to shed his blood for the atonement of sin. In this, God showed his mercy to mankind, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins” (Heb. 10:4); “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. 9:22); and “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (I John 1:7). But mankind did not heed the gospel revealing God’s mercy and plan of salvation. God then sent forth the trumpets of partial judgments (one-third destruction) to warn the people to repent; but mankind did not heed God’s warnings (9:20-21).

“If proclaiming the good news of redemption does not cause men to fear before God, and if partial judgments do not turn them from humanism and materialism to repentance, then such an unregenerated society forfeits its right to continue. A destruction by judgment is inevitable and just.”¹

A. Before the trumpets sound (8:6), God _____ his servants on their _____ . (Rev. 7:3)

B. Before the bowls of wrath are poured out (16:1), the redeemed stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion having the Father’s name _____ on their _____ . (Rev. 14:1)

C. Seven angels have _____ plagues. (Rev. 15:1)

D. The number seven should be interpreted as:

1. literal
2. symbolic
3. a complete full number

E. These are the seven _____ plagues for in them the wrath of God is _____ . (Rev. 15:1)

¹Hailey, p. 318.

F. John saw the victorious saints standing upon the _____.
(Rev. 15:2; cf. 4:6; 21:1)

G. The sea of glass was mingled with _____. (Rev. 15:2)

H. Who sings the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb? (Rev. 15:2-4)

1. the victorious saints
2. the angels
3. the four living creatures
4. the twenty-four elders

I. All nations shall come and worship before God because his _____
have been manifested. (Rev. 15:4)

J. John saw the _____ of the _____ of the
_____ in heaven open. (Rev. 15:5)

K. Seven angels came out of the temple having _____.
(Rev. 15:6)

L. How were the seven angels clothed? (Rev. 15:6)

M. What did one of the four living creatures give to the seven angels? (Rev. 15:7)

N. The temple was filled with smoke and no one could enter until the seven plagues
of the seven angels were _____. (Rev. 15:8)

CONCLUSION. As the saints were sealed and their prayers were offered on the altar to God before the trumpets sound (7:1-8:5), and as they were pictured standing on Mount Zion before the angels' voices are heard (14:1-5), in this vision they stand on the sea of glass singing praise to God before the bowls of wrath are poured out. There are no more warnings—God's complete judgment of wrath will be executed.

15:1 John sees another sign in heaven, great and marvelous. This is the third time he sees a great sign. Previously he saw the great sign of the radiant woman (12:1) and the sign of the dragon (12:3). The number seven again is symbolic indicating completeness. The wrath of God is complete, meaning, to finish, to bring to an end, to accomplish or fulfill.

- 15:2 The sea of glass was introduced in the throne scene and is the approach to God, symbolic of the separation of the Creator and the creature (4:6) Here the saints are standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire. The fire may be symbolic of the fiery trials endured by the saints who are now approaching God through the refining fire, having been proved and tested. They are victorious and receive harps with which to praise God for his greatness and salvation (cf. Mal. 3:1-3; I Cor. 3:11-15; I Pet. 1:7).
- 15:3-4 The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb is a song of praise, deliverance and victory (cf. Ex. 15:1-21; Heb. 3:5-19). "One conquered and delivered from the foe of physical bondage and tyranny; the other conquered the world and death, delivering from Satan's power."² "King of the saints!" is sometimes translated "King of the nations" (NASB; marginal note, NKJV, ASV). The nations will worship before God when they behold his judgments against the evil forces of the dragon and his allies, the sea beast and earth beast.
- 15:5-6 John sees seven angels coming from the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven. This temple, *naos*, is symbolic of the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle erected by Moses which contained the ark of the covenant with the tables of stone or the testimony. This was the place where God dwelt.³ The seven angels come with seven plagues from this inner sanctuary and the presence of God (cf. Ps. 97:2).
- 15:7-8 In the vision of the throne scene the four living creatures were "around the throne" (4:6-8); at the opening of the first four seals, they ushered in the four horsemen (6:1-8). One of the living creatures gives the seven angels seven bowls of wrath. The time for the outpouring of God's wrath is come. The smoke of God's glory and power filling the temple may be an allusion to the glory of the Lord filling the newly erected tabernacle preventing Moses from entering (Ex. 40:34-35). Similarly when Solomon's temple was completed, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord and the priests were unable to continue ministering (I Kings 8:10-11).

*Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Your ways, O Kings of the saints!
Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For your judgments have been manifested.
Rev. 15:3-4.*

² Hailey, p. 320.

³ See discussion on the heavenly temple (Rev. 11:1, 19).

Chapter 16:1-9 – BOWLS OF WRATH INVOLVING NATURE

INTRODUCTION. The bowls of the wrath of God are now poured out executing judgment against the dragon, the sea beast, the earth beast, and their followers. This is not the final judgment, but a judgment in time to cause men to repent. The first four bowls affect nature while the last three are against moral and political corruption.

- A. The bowls of wrath are of God against the _____. (Rev. 16:1)
- B. The first bowl inflicted a sore upon men that had the _____ of the _____ and worshipped his _____. (Rev. 16:2)
- C. The second poured out his bowl on the _____, and it became _____ as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. (Rev. 16:3)
- D. "Sea" symbolizes the whole of society or humanity. (Rev. 16:3; cf. 13:1; Dan. 7:2-3)

True

False

- E. A society or nation is dead in sins (spiritually dead) when it is characterized by idolatry, immorality, crime, rebellion, base and sordid literature and entertainment, divorce, and compromise.

True

False

- F. The third angel poured out his bowl on the _____ and _____ of waters, and they became _____. (Rev. 16:4)
- G. The angel of the waters pronounced the Lord _____ because he judged these things, and because those affected had shed the _____ of saints and prophets. (Rev. 16:5-6; cf. Num. 35:33; Deut. 32:42)
- H. The voice from the altar affirmed that God's judgments are _____ and _____. (Rev. 16:7; cf. John 12:48)
- I. The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the _____ to scorch men with _____. (Rev. 16:8; cf. Ps. 97:1-7)

J. The scorched men: (Rev. 16:9; cf. Rom. 2:4-11)

1. repented
2. gave glory to God
3. blasphemed God

CONCLUSION. At the close of chapter fourteen, God's judgment upon the wicked was symbolized as a vintage thrown into the great winepress of his wrath. In this chapter the intensity of the bowl judgments are directed against the dragon, sea beast, earth beast and their followers, but it is impossible to give a specific meaning to each bowl. Such judgments in time may be repeated throughout history at God's direction. Although there are similarities between the pouring out of the bowls of wrath, the sounding of the trumpets, and the plagues of Egypt, differences are also evident. The outpouring of the first bowl affects man directly, but not until the sounding of the fifth trumpet (9:1-6) and the occurrence of the sixth Egyptian plague (Ex. 9:8-12) were men affected directly. "The trumpet judgments were calls to repentance; the bowl judgments are visitations of punishment when hope of repentance is passed. The trumpet judgments were partial, touching only a third part of their objects; the bowl judgments are final touching the whole of the object."¹

- 16:1 The source of the voice from the temple of heaven is Divine—from God, Christ or an angel. Seven bowls represent a complete number.
- 16:2 Foul, *kakos*, and loathsome, *poneros*, (noisome and grievous, KJV, ASV), indicate that which is "evil, painful, bad" (Vine). Sore, *helkos*, is an ulcer which is primarily a wound (Vine).
- 16:3 The sea, symbolizing a society that is separated from God and dead in sins and trespasses, becomes as the blood of a dead man, decayed and rotting, the true nature of the spiritually dead. When the sea becomes putrid, then the nation's commerce is affected.² Throughout history God has removed the spiritually dead societies when they are unfit to continue.
- 16:4-7 When the third trumpet sounded, a third of the rivers and streams became wormwood, symbolic of bitterness and affliction (8:10-11). When the Nile River was turned to blood during the first Egyptian plague, the people could dig and obtain water to drink (Ex. 7:19-25). Now all the fresh water becomes blood and is unfit to drink. The angel of the waters praises the righteous Lord for his judgment against those who have shed the blood of the saints and prophets. As God directed his punishments against the Egyptian world in the past, now his judgments are directed against the Roman world. A voice from the altar affirms the righteousness of the judgments. Whether this is the brazen altar under which the martyrs rested and cried (6:9-11) or the golden altar where the prayers of the saints were offered (8:3-5) is uncertain.
- 16:8-9 The fourth bowl affects the sun producing scorching heat and causing men to blaspheme. They do not give God the glory, nor do they repent (cf. Rom. 1:18-25). In the final judgment there is no opportunity to repent.

¹ Summers, p. 186.

² McGuiggan, p. 237.

Chapter 16:10-21 – BOWLS INVOLVING MORAL AND POLITICAL CORRUPTION

INTRODUCTION. “As bowl after bowl is emptied, the judgment increases until finally it reaches the imperial city.”³ The first four bowls of God’s wrath were directed against nature—land, sea, rivers, sun. Now the realm affected by the last three bowls is the moral and political corruption of the empire. “The bowls are grouped four, two, interlude, and one—just as were the seals and the trumpets.”⁴

- A. The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the _____.
(Rev. 16:10)
- B. The kingdom became “full of darkness” which means: (cf. Ps. 69:23)
1. the sun did not shine
 2. the loss of wisdom and understanding
- C. The unregenerated reacted by: (Rev. 16:10-11)
1. repenting
 2. gnawing their tongues for pain
 3. blaspheming God
- D. The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the _____
causing the water to _____ so that the way might be prepared for
the _____ that come from the _____. (Rev. 16:12)
- E. John saw three unclean spirits like frogs out of: (Rev. 16:13; cf. 12:3; 13:1, 11)
1. the mouth of the dragon
 2. the mouth of the sea beast
 3. the mouth of the false prophet
- F. The three unclean spirits (frogs) are _____. (Rev. 16:14)
- G. They perform _____ in order to deceive and gather together the
kings of the world to war against God. (Rev. 16:14; cf. Matt. 24:24; II Thess. 2:9-
10; I Tim. 4:1-2)

³ Summers, p. 186

⁴ *Ibid.*

H. The great day of God Almighty in this scene is: (Rev. 16:14)

1. the final judgment
2. a judgment in time

I. "I come as a thief" means: (Rev. 16:15; 3:3)

1. unannounced
2. without warning
3. when not anticipated

J. Therefore, he that watches and keeps his garments is _____.
(Rev. 16:15; cf. 3:4)

K. They, the demon spirits, gathered the kings of the world for the approaching
conflict to the place called in Hebrew, _____. (Rev. 16:16)

L. The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the _____, and a loud voice
came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying _____.
(Rev. 16:17)

M. "It is done" indicates: (Rev. 16:17)

1. the series of plagues is finished
2. the end of time has come

N. The lightnings, voices, thunders, and earthquake can be compared to: (Rev.
16:18; 4:5; 8:1-5; 11:15-19)

1. the throne scene
2. the opening of the seventh seal
3. the sounding of the seventh trumpet

O. The great city called _____ was remembered before God to give to her
the cup of the _____ of the fierceness of his _____. (Rev. 16:19)

P. The islands that fled and the mountains not found indicate: (Rev. 16:20)

1. there would be no place to hide (cf. 6:12-17; Ezek. 26:18)
2. there would be a great earthquake and flood

Q. The hail weighed a talent and caused men to: (Rev. 16:21)

1. repent
2. glorify God
3. blaspheme God

R. Match the number of the bowl of wrath with the element affected:

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| _____sores on men | _____kingdom darkened |
| _____sea to blood | _____Euphrates dried up |
| _____rivers to blood | _____air |
| _____sun to scorch | |

CONCLUSION. “It is done!” said the loud voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne. “The bowls have been poured out. The judgment is completed. Rome has been destroyed. But the details have not been given yet.”⁵ These details will be related in subsequent chapters. “Here, as in other places, the three things which led to the downfall of Rome are noted: natural calamity, internal rottenness, and external invasion. Rome was doomed. Thus does John picture God’s judgment upon the oppressors of his people.”⁶

16:10-11 The sea beast received his power, his throne and great authority from the dragon (13:1-2). When the fifth bowl is poured on the throne of the beast, darkness ensues. Darkness also followed the sounding of the fifth trumpet (9:1-2), but in this instance the entire kingdom is affected. Darkness is symbolic of the loss of wisdom and understanding (cf. Ps. 69:22-24; Rom. 11:7-10; Eph. 4:17-19). Because of pain from the sores, scorching heat and now the darkness, those affected gnaw, *masaomai*, “bite or chew” (Vine), their tongues, blaspheming God rather than repenting.

16:12 When the sixth trumpet sounded, four angels bound at the Euphrates River were released to kill a third of mankind (9:13-15). Here the waters of the great River Euphrates are dried up, a picture symbolizing the removal of a natural barrier, allowing for the invasion of the enemies from the east.

16:13-14 A brief interlude follows between the sixth and seventh bowls similar to the interludes in the other visions. John sees three unclean spirits out of the mouths of the dragon, Satan (12:3ff.), the beast, sea beast (13:1ff.), and the false prophet, earth beast (13:11ff.). This is the first time the earth beast is referred to as the false prophet. These unclean spirits are in the form of frogs indicating unclean, loathsome, disgusting (cf. Ex. 8:1-15). According to the Law of Moses these creatures were an abomination

⁵ McGuiggan, p. 249.

⁶ Summers, p. 190.

- (Lev. 11:9-12; Deut. 14:9-10). Here they perform signs deceiving the kings of the world in order to gather them to battle.
- 16:15 As John sees a mustering of forces, a voice, probably that of Jesus Christ, interjects, "Behold, I am coming as a thief." Jesus expressed this idea during his ministry, and the apostles made the same claim (Matt. 24:42-44; Luke 12:39-40; I Thess. 5:2-4; II Pet. 3:10).
- 16:16 The picture of the gathering forces for the battle resumes. Har-Magedon (ASV, NASB) or Armageddon (KJV, NKJV) means Mount of Megiddo. "The Bible speaks geographically of 'Megiddo and its three heights' (Josh. 17:11), 'Megiddo and its towns' (Judg. 1:27), 'the waters of Megiddo' (Judg. 5:19), and 'the valley of Megiddo' (II Chron. 35:22; Zech. 12:11), but makes no mention of a Mount of Megiddo. Megiddo was a strategic point in the protection of Israel and Judah, since it guarded the northern entrance to Israel."⁷ Many important, historically significant battles were fought at Megiddo. Here Barak and Deborah defeated the Canaanite king, Jabin, and the commander of his army, Sisera (Judg. 4; 5); here Gideon and his three hundred men defeated the Midianites (Judg. 7); here at the eastern extremity of the area the Philistines killed Saul and Jonathan (I Sam. 31); here Ahaziah, king of Judah, died when slain at the command of Jehu during his purge of the house of Ahab (II Kings 9:1-28); here the army of Pharaoh-Necho killed Josiah, king of Judah, when Josiah attempted to prevent Necho from joining forces with the Assyrians against the Babylonians at the Euphrates River (II Kings 23:29-30; II Chron. 35:20-25). "Thus Megiddo fitly symbolized the worldwide distress of righteousness and evil engaged in deadly combat. This is not an actual material sword and spear battle...His [Jesus'] sword is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God."⁸ The results of this spiritual battle between Satan and the forces of God defeating Rome and its paganism are discussed later (19:11-21).
- 16:17 The interlude between the sixth and seventh bowls is finished and the seventh bowl is poured out into the air. "The whole ungodly world has been smitten. Evil has been searched-out and thoroughly punished."⁹ The air is symbolic of Satan's realm of influence as the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:1-3), and as the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:7-11). Again, the voice coming out of the temple of heaven from the throne is Divine. "It is done!"—the series of plagues is completed.
- 16:18 Noises, thunderings, lightnings, great earthquake, great hail (16:21) are all symbols of Divine power. Compare the following visions: the throne scene pictures lightnings, thunderings, and voices (4:5); the seventh seal opens and includes an earthquake (8:1-5); and added at the sounding of the seventh trumpet is great hail (11:15-19). With the pouring out of the seventh bowl greater intensity occurs, for the earthquake is a "mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth."

⁷ Hailey, p. 336.

⁸ Summers, p. 189.

⁹ McGuiggan, p. 243.

- 16:19 “The great city,” Babylon, was first introduced as the place where the dead bodies of the two witnesses lay, and where a tenth of the city fell in an earthquake killing seven thousand people in a partial judgment (11:8-13). Later the second angel pronounced doom upon the city as though it had already occurred (14:8). The meaning of “divided into three parts” is uncertain. Ezekiel prophesied regarding the destruction of Jerusalem that a third would burn, a third would be put to the sword, and a third would be scattered to the wind (Ezek. 5:2). However, the picture here may refer to the death, mourning and famine of complete destruction (18:8).¹⁰ Other cities of the nations who supported Babylon also fell—those who drank of the “wine of the wrath of her fornication” (14:8). God remembered the city to give her “the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.”
- 16:20-21 There is no place to escape or hide (cf. 6:12-17). Hailstones estimated to be about a hundred pounds fall from heaven upon the wicked who blaspheme God rather than repent. Hail is symbolic of God’s judgment (cf. Ex. 9:18-26; Josh. 10:11; Ps. 78:47; 105:32). “These plagues did not introduce the final judgment; for after hail had killed whom it killed, there were those left who blasphemed God. The severest of divine judgments had now been poured out upon wicked and ungodly men, touching all phases and realms of Roman society and power. Only the final judgment, which would bring all men, nations, and wickedness to a total end, could surpass in intensity and finality judgments such as these.”¹¹

A COMPARISON OF THE BOWLS OF WRATH, THE TRUMPETS, AND THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

| <i>Bowls of Wrath</i> Rev. 16 | <i>Trumpets</i> Rev. 8-9 | <i>Plagues</i> Ex. 7-11 |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. sores on men | 5. torment to men | 6. boils on men |
| 2. sea to blood | | |
| 3. rivers to blood | 3. water to wormwood | 1. Nile River to blood |
| 4. sun to scorch men | 4. sun darkened | 9. darkness three days |
| 5. kingdom darkened | | |
| 6. Euphrates dried up | 6. four angels loosed | |
| 7. air | | |

¹⁰ Hailey, p. 338

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 340.

Section 6 – THE FALL OF THE GREAT HARLOT AND BEASTS

Chapter 17:1-6 – THE HARLOT IDENTIFIED

INTRODCTION. In chapter twelve a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a garland of twelve stars upon her head represented God’s faithful remnant, the church, the redeemed (12:1, 13; cf. Mic. 4:10; 5:2-3). In direct contrast another woman arrayed in earthly splendor is introduced in chapter seventeen as the mother of the harlots of the earth. As the picture unfolds, the second woman probably represents Rome and all the earthly lusts—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (cf. I John 2:15-17).

- A. One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls showed John the _____ of the great harlot (Rev. 17:1)
- B. The many waters are: (Rev. 17:1, 15; cf. Jer. 51:12-13)
1. oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers
 2. peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues
- C. List four ancient cities that are described as a harlot or as a mistress of pleasure.

| | City | Feature |
|----|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Nah. 1:1; 3:1, 4, 7 | conquest |
| 2. | Isa. 23:1, 14-17 | trade |
| 3. | Isa. 47:1, 5-15 | pleasure |
| 4. | Isa. 1:1, 21; Jer. 2:1-2, 20 | spiritual adultery |

- D. The sea beast in chapter thirteen appears to be a composite of the first three beasts in Daniel’s vision (13:1-2; Dan. 7:1-6). Name the empire represented by each of the following beasts in Daniel’s vision (see Chart No. 1, *Four World Empires*).

| Beast | Empire |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. lion | |
| 2. bear | |
| 3. leopard | |

E. As the sea beast is a composite of Daniel's beasts, in the same manner the harlot appears to be a composite of the four "harlot" cities and represents the city of _____, the world ruler in John's vision. (Rev. 17:18)

F. The kings of the earth committed _____ with the harlot. (Rev. 17:2)

G. "Drunk with the wine of her fornication" refers to: (Rev. 17:2; cf. 14:8)

1. influence of earthly vices
2. influence of wealth and commerce
3. influence of political and military power
4. emperor worship

H. Compare the scarlet beast upon which the woman sat with the sea beast. (Rev. 17:3; cf. 13:1, 5-6)

| <i>Characteristic</i> | <i>Scarlet Beast Rev. 17:3</i> | <i>Sea Beast Rev. 13:1, 5-6</i> |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

seven heads

ten horns

names of blasphemy

I. Isaiah identifies the color scarlet with what? (Isa. 1:18)

J. The woman was arrayed to represent: (Rev. 17:4)

1. righteousness, purity
2. earthly royalty, wealth, luxury

K. The golden cup was full of: (Rev. 17:4; cf. Jer. 51:7; Eph. 2:1-3; I John 2:15-17)

1. abominations
2. the filthiness of her fornication
3. all that appeals to the lusts

L. The name written on the forehead of the harlot was: (Rev. 17:5)

M. The woman was drunk with the blood of: (Rev. 17:6; 18:24)

1. saints
2. martyrs
3. prophets
4. all who were slain on the earth

N. Satan has appealed throughout the ages to whom and by what means?

1. Gen. 3:1-5
2. Matt. 4:1-11
3. I John 2:15-17

CONCLUSION. One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls of wrath shows John a harlot arrayed splendidly in purple and scarlet and supported by a scarlet beast. The woman is identified as Babylon the Great.

17:1 The angel shows John the judgment of the harlot. Who is the harlot, what is her identity? The evidence points to pagan Rome. "There are several reasons:

1. She sits on seven hills: 17:9
2. She rules the earth in John's day: 17:18
3. She is a terrible persecutor of the saints: 17:6; 18:20, 24
4. She is the leading commercial power on earth: 18:3, 11ff, 15-19
5. She is supported by the military might of Rome: 17:3, 7
6. She is destroyed by her own military power, etc.: 17:16, 17"¹

The waters where the harlot sits—the peoples, multitudes, nations, tongues—are symbolic of the nations over which she rules (cf. 17:15).

Four Old Testament cities are referred to as harlots or as the mistress of pleasure:

- Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria known for her ruthless conquests and "the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries," was in turn destroyed by the combined forces of the Babylonians and the Medes, (Nah. 1:1; 3:1, 4, 7);
- Tyre, the city of great commerce who committed "fornication with all the kingdoms of the world," was in time destroyed by Alexander the Great (Isa. 23:1, 14-17; Ezek. 26:3-4);
- Babylon, wealthy, full of sorceries, enchantments, and "given to pleasures," was conquered by Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire (Isa. 47:1, 5-15);
- Jerusalem, who played the harlot on "every high hill and under every green tree," was guilty of spiritual adultery (Isa. 1:1, 21; Jer. 2:1-2, 20).

As the sea beast is a composite of Daniel's three beasts (Dan. 7:1-6), so the harlot appears as a composite of the Old Testament harlots—conquest, commerce, lustful pleasures and religious whoredom.

17:2 The kings of the earth committed fornication with the harlot by forming alliances with her—politically, economically, socially, and religiously. The wealth and power of Rome was intoxicating and those who trafficked with her were drunk with the rewards gained by their commerce (cf. Isa. 29:9; Hab. 2:4-5).

¹ McGuiggan, p. 251.

- 17:3 The angel carries John in the Spirit into the wilderness where he beholds a woman sitting on a scarlet beast. Wilderness can be a place of desolation where John saw this woman or a place of protection where the woman who brought forth the male child was nourished (12:6, 14). The scarlet beast has the same characteristics as the beast out of the sea (13:1), thus the two are the same, symbolic of the Roman Empire.
- 17:4 The woman, representing the wicked city of Rome, is arrayed as royalty in splendor and luxury. She is supported by the beast, the Roman Empire, and holds in her hand the filthiness of worldly lusts.
- 17:5-6 On her forehead a name written reveals her identity as Babylon, the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Her name symbolizes Rome, and Rome symbolizes lust and seduction. This intoxicated harlot was drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. John marveled at the sight of what he saw: "a drunken harlot, arrayed in splendor, in a wilderness of desolation."²

Chapter 17:7-14 – THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN AND BEAST REVEALED

INTRODUCTION. The angel reveals to John the mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her. The vision depicts a woman sitting on a beast with seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are seven mountains representing seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. The beast is also the eighth and is of the seven. Ten horns are ten kings. The evil forces war with the Lamb and his followers. What does it all mean?

A. The beast that John saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to _____. (Rev. 17:7-8)

B. Match the following references involving the bottomless pit or abyss:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. smoke and locusts came up from the abyss | Rev. 11:3, 7 |
| 2. the angel ruling over the abyss is Satan | Rev. 9:11 |
| 3. the beast from the abyss warred with the two witnesses | Rev. 9:1-3 |

C. Who will marvel at the beast? (Rev. 17:8)

1. those who dwell on the earth
2. those whose names are not written in the book of life
3. saints

D. The angel told John, "I will tell you the mystery...Here is the mind which has wisdom." How do we obtain wisdom? (Rev. 17:7, 9; I Cor. 2:6-8; Jas. 1:5)

² Hailey, p. 348.

- E. The seven heads represent: (Rev. 17:9-10)
1. seven mountains on which the woman sits
 2. seven kings
 3. seven represents fullness, completeness
- F. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the _____, and is of the _____, and is going to _____. (Rev. 17:11)
- G. The ten horns are _____ who have received no kingdom as yet, but receive authority with the _____ for one hour. (Rev. 17:12)
- H. The ten kings that support the beast with power and authority have: (Rev. 17:13)
- I. Who will be victorious in the war that follows? (Rev. 17:14)
1. the beast and the kings
 2. Christ and the church

CONCLUSION. These verses in chapter seventeen are some of the most difficult in the book of Revelation to interpret, and varied explanations are offered by different sources. If the sea beast represents the Roman Empire, then the interpretations must agree with that assertion; however, the separation of the woman, the city, and the beast, the empire, is rather difficult as one feeds on and supports the other. Just so, it is most difficult to separate the emperor and the empire, for the empire is personified in the emperor. Nevertheless, there is one certainty. Whoever or whatever the symbols represent, they are doomed for judgment and are going to perdition.

- 17:7 The beast that carries the woman, the harlot, has seven heads and ten horns, a description of the sea beast identified earlier as the Roman Empire (cf. 13:1; 17:3-4).
- 17:8 John sees a beast that “was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit.” Previously the head of the beast that was “mortally wounded” was identified as perhaps the emperor Nero, and the “deadly wound... healed” as the emperor Domitian representing a revival of persecution (13:3). The same idea seems to be expressed here. The “was” represents the persecutor Nero; the “is not” represents the persecuting element that ceased when he died. From the bottomless pit or abyss ruled by Satan will come another persecutor, the “yet is,” representing Domitian, but the beast will go to perdition, *apoleia*, meaning destruction, loss of well-being (Vine). The earth dwellers marvel at this beast, but Christians do not wonder for they know the beast is doomed.

- 17:9 The angel begins with a call for a mind of wisdom then explains that the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. The city of Rome, founded in 753 B. C., was settled on the Palatine Hill near the Tiber River. Gradually the city grew and eventually occupied seven hills.
- 17:10-11 The seven mountains symbolically represent seven kings—"five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth and is of the seven." One problem that arises is how to count the kings or kingdoms.
- McGuiggan, Roberts and Summers name the following emperors or kings: Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius (Caligula), Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Titus. In this list three minor rulers between Nero and Vespasian are omitted who reigned briefly during civil war and contributed nothing to the empire. The first five kings had fallen in John's vision, thus the reigning ruler, the "one is," represents Vespasian. The one "not yet come" represents Titus who ruled only two years, a short time. The "eighth" who is "of the seven" is Domitian who revived Nero's policy of persecution. However, the above interpretation does present a problem. According to this view the vision occurs in the reign of Vespasian, the "one is," but the early tradition of the church according to Irenaeus (A. D. 120-202) and other early writers places the vision in the reign and persecution of Domitian. Roberts offers a solution to the difficulty. If John had been banished to Patmos during Vespasian's reign, "his banishment could have extended through the short reign of Titus and on into the reign of Domitian, thus giving rise to the later tradition that the vision was seen in Domitian's time."³ Although historically there is no evidence of a persecution of Christians during the reign of Vespasian, John could have been banished by a local official.
 - Some interpretations equate the seven heads or seven kings with kingdoms—past, present and future—although not all agree regarding the identity of the past kingdoms. The seven heads as kingdoms would be consistent with identifying the beast as the Roman Empire since the beast was a composite of preceding kingdoms, bearing their same characteristics (cf. 13:1-2; Dan. 7:1-7). If the number seven symbolically signifies completeness, then the seven kings may represent the kingdoms of the world that would oppose God's kingdom. The number five is less than seven, less than complete, and so represents those kingdoms that resisted God in the past and have fallen. The "one is" represents Rome, the current world power in John's vision. The "other has not yet come" represents the future world powers that withstand the kingdom of God. Roberson describes the "beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven" as one that "attains his highest point in history and action...For here he is at the summit of his evil influence...In his last hour he rages with the keen and determined energy of despair. So he may be mentioned as *an*

³ Roberts, pp. 140-142. See also McGuiggan, pp.191-197, 259; Summers, pp. 192-193.

eighth; so also *of the seven*, not one of the seven, but the highest, and fiercest, and most cruel embodiment of them all.”⁴

- Hailey presents a general interpretation. “Probably the best solution to the problem is to adhere to the symbolic character of the book. Repeatedly John has used seven as the symbol for completeness or perfection, and ten for the fullness of power...The beast represented the total of forceful anti-Christian or anti-theistic opposition, and the harlot represented that which is lustful, enticing, and seductive—all that appeals to the flesh. The seven kings, therefore, were a symbolic number, representing all kings or kingdoms, past, present, and future that would oppose the kingdom of God. Each who would come would still be part of the seven. Although kingdoms arise out of the upheavals in the sea of society, their anti-God rulers originate in the abyss, the satanic realm. Each continues for a little while, then goes into perdition, which is the end of all who oppose God.”⁵

17:12 The beast has ten horns which are ten kings. The symbolic number ten represents power. Daniel’s fourth beast had ten horns interpreted as arising from that kingdom (Dan. 7:7, 24). “The beast from the sea (Rev. 13:1) also had ten horns that were crowned, and in the present vision this is explained as ten kings who have not yet received authority. When they do become manifest, they will remain for only one hour—a short time. Also they will receive authority together with the beast...They are the kings of the earth with whom the harlot commits fornication (17:2; 18:3, 9); they join the beast from the abyss in making war on the saints (16:12-14; 19:19); and at the last they are the ones who are to turn against Rome, hate her, and become the instruments of her destruction (17:16, 17).”⁶

17:13-14 These ten kings are of one mind—the mind of the dragon—and give their support to the beast. They were called to war (16:14) and to make war with the Lamb and his followers. They are doomed for defeat for the Lamb will overcome them as Lord of lords and King of kings (cf. Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23; I Pet. 3:22).

Chapter 17:15-18 – THE HARLOT FURTHER IDENTIFIED

INTRODUCTION. The angel further explains to John the mystery of the harlot, Babylon the Great, the identity of the waters on which she sits, and the role of the ten kings in her ultimate fate.

A. The waters where the harlot sits are: (Rev. 17:1, 15)

1. oceans, seas, lakes, rivers
2. peoples, multitudes, nations, tongues

⁴ Roberson, pp. 130-131.

⁵ Hailey, pp. 352-353.

⁶ Roberts, pp. 142-143.

B. The fourth world kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was portrayed with: (Dan. 2:33)

1. legs of _____
2. feet part of _____ part of _____

C. The description of the fourth world kingdom seems to indicate: (Dan. 2:40-44)

1. strength
2. division

D. In John's vision the ten horns are ten _____ who shall: (Rev. 17:12, 16)

1. hate the harlot
2. make her desolate and naked
3. eat her flesh
4. burn her with fire

E. God's purposes will be accomplished (Rev. 17:17). Note the following examples:

1. Ex. 4:21
2. Judg. 7:19-23
3. I Sam. 14:20-23
4. II Chron. 20:22-24

F. The woman is identified as the _____ which reigns over the kings of the earth. That city is _____. (Rev. 17:18)

CONCLUSION. The chapter concludes with the final identification of the woman who sits on the beast. There is no longer any doubt—she is the “great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

17:15 The waters where the harlot sits are now identified as the many and diverse peoples of the world. Daniel prophesied that the fourth world kingdom would be partly strong and partly fragile, and as iron does not mix with clay, neither will the peoples adhere to one another (Dan. 2:40-43). Rome was never able to amalgamate the conquered nations into one.

17:16 The ten horns, future kingdoms that initially join themselves through greed and lust to the harlot, will eventually turn on her with hate desolating her, eating her flesh and burning her with fire.

17:17-18 God's purpose will be accomplished (cf. Dan 2:19-22). Imperial Rome, the great city, is doomed.

Chapter 18:1-8 – FALLEN, FALLEN IS BABYLON

INTRODUCTION. In previous visions Satan used the sea beast (the Roman Empire), the earth beast or false prophet (false religion, emperor worship), and the harlot (the city of Rome) in an attempt to defeat God's people (the church). This vision gives a detailed picture of the fall of the harlot—spiritual Babylon full of pride, earthly lusts, seduction and moral corruption.

A. The angel is described as: (Rev. 18:1)

1. coming down from heaven
2. having great authority
3. illuminating the earth with his glory

B. Babylon the great has been identified as: (Rev. 18:2; cf. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. the great city | 3. Rome |
| 2. the mother of harlots | 4. symbolic of worldly lust and seduction |

C. The fall of Babylon (Rome) can be compared with the fall of ancient Babylon. (Rev. 18:2; cf. Isa. 13:19-22; 14:3-23; 21:9; Jer. 50:1-2)

True

False

D. The “wine of the wrath of her fornication” means: (Rev. 18:3; cf. 14:8; 17:2)

1. earthly lusts and vices
2. earthly wealth and commerce
3. political and military power
4. idol and emperor worship

E. A voice from heaven commanded, “Come out” (Rev. 18:4). Match the following events to the reference in which God commanded others to come forth:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Abraham from Haran | II Cor. 6:17 |
| 2. Lot from Sodom | Isa. 48:20 |
| 3. Israel from Egypt | Ex. 3:10 |
| 4. the remnant from Babylon | Gen. 19:12, 17 |
| 5. Christians from idolatry | Gen. 12:1-3 |

F. God's people were to come out lest they: (Rev. 18:4; cf. I Cor. 5:9-11; Eph. 5:11)

1. share in her sins
2. receive her plagues

G. Who was aware of the sins and iniquities of the harlot? (Rev. 18:5)

H. Who is to “render” to the harlot: (Rev. 18:6; cf. Rom. 12:17-19)

1. people of God
2. the instrument of the Lord

I. The measure indicates: (Rev. 18:6)

1. punishment in proportion to her sins
2. double according to her works

J. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, she is to be given

the same measure of _____ and _____. (Rev. 18:7)

K. List three boastings made by the harlot: (Rev. 18:7; cf. Prov. 11:2; 16:18; 29:23; Isa. 47:1, 7-11)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

L. List four judgments to fall upon the harlot because of her boastings and pride: (Rev. 18:8; cf. 17:16)

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 3. |
| 2. | 4. |

CONCLUSION. An angel from heaven having great authority and illuminating the earth with his glory, declares judgment upon Babylon for her sins. Another voice from heaven admonishes the people of God to come out of her.

18:1-2 An angel comes down from heaven with great authority. His Divine presence is symbolized by the illumination of the earth with his glory. He announces the fall of Babylon as though it has already occurred. The fallen city no longer luxuriates in splendor but has become the dwelling place of demons, foul spirits and every unclean and hated bird. One hundred fifty years before the fall of ancient Babylon, similar language was used by Isaiah to describe that city’s demise (Isa. 13:19-22; 14:3-23; 21:9). Although the old city of Babylon continued on for centuries after she was conquered by the Persians, the Babylonian kingdom ceased to exist, never to rise again.

- 18:3 The fall of the harlot Babylon is explained—the wine of fornication of Rome was the same as that of ancient Babylon. “It was an unholy, idolatrous political and economic alliance of kings for business and commercial advantage, through which their pleasures were purchased.”¹
- 18:4-5 The people of God are admonished to come out of her to escape her judgment, for her sins have reached to heaven and God has remembered her iniquities. Christians are to separate themselves from the world—they are in the world but not of the world (cf. I Cor. 5:9-11; II Cor. 6:17-18; 7:1).
- 18:6 The amount of punishment the harlot has earned will be in proportion to her sins. As the cup the harlot mixed was a double portion, so God’s wrath will be mixed in double measure and rendered to her—she will receive double according to her works (cf. Jer. 50:15, 29; Gal. 6:7). This picture portrays a balancing of the scales. Who does the rendering? The judgment is carried out by Divine authority, perhaps by the ten kings (cf. 17:12, 16). The people of God are not the avengers, for vengeance belongs to the Lord (Rom. 12:17-19).
- 18:7-8 The harlot will receive torment and sorrow in the same measure as she glorified herself and lived in luxury. Her boastings will come to nought, for her plagues will come suddenly—death, mourning and famine. She will be utterly burned with fire, totally destroyed.

Chapter 18:9-20 – THE EARTH WEEPS OVER BABYLON

INTRODUCTION. The allies of the harlot mourn her demise. Their mourning is not because of love for her but because of the loss of their wealth and trade.

A. List the three classes of mourners mentioned:

1. Rev. 18:9
2. Rev. 18:11
3. Rev. 18:17

B. They mourn because of: (Rev. 18:9, 11, 19)

1. a sincere love for Babylon
2. the loss of wealth and trade

C. The lost merchandise that is listed would best be described as: (Rev. 18:12-13)

1. basic
2. luxuries

¹ Hailey, p. 359.

D. The “fruit” which the harlot longed for was: (Rev. 18:14)

1. material
2. spiritual

E. The merchants who became _____ by her will stand at a distance for fear of her _____, weeping and wailing. (Rev. 18:15)

F. How was the great city clothed? (Rev. 18:16)

G. The expression “one hour” means: (Rev. 18:10, 17, 19)

1. sixty minutes
2. a short time, suddenly

H. While earth-dwellers mourn the fall of Babylon, there is rejoicing by: (Rev. 18:20)

CONCLUSION. The wrath of God executes judgment against the harlot city, Babylon the great, which symbolizes Rome. In one hour she becomes desolate. The cry of the martyrs beneath the altar has been answered (6:9-11).

18:9-10 First, the kings who whored with the harlot partaking of her wealth and pleasure lament her destruction and the source of their strength. However, they stand at a safe distance, careful not to be drawn into her doom.

18:11-16 Next, the merchants who traded with the harlot weep and mourn over her for the loss of their profitable market—their source of revenue is gone. Rome was the center for trade, and the commodities listed came from all parts of the empire and world. From gold to bodies and souls of men (slaves, KJV, ASV, NASB) the people indulged themselves with the luxuries brought to their shores, but the fruit they desire is no longer available. The merchants like the kings stand at a safe distance for fear of her torment, weeping for their loss of the wealth that clothed the great city.

18:17-19 Last, the shipmasters, sailors and seafarers mourn the destruction of the harlot city, and they like the others weep for the loss of their trade and wealth. The destruction comes in one hour, suddenly, for all three classes to witness and lament (18:10, 17, 19). Compare Ezekiel’s description of the fall of Tyre with that of the harlot Babylon (Ezek. 26:1–28:19).

18:20 God’s people, the church, are avenged. Babylon is fallen. “The heavens and they that dwell in them had been called upon to rejoice at the casting down of Satan, although woe would be the fate of the sea and earth (12:12). That woe upon the earth and sea had now been experienced and judged.”²

² Hailey, p. 369.

Chapter 18:21-24 – SILENCE IN BABYLON

INTRODUCTION. “After having shown John the symbolical destruction of the mighty city of Babylon, by scenes of plagues which came upon a proud and haughty woman that reduced her to sorrow, death and desolation; then by scenes of the burning of the city, destroying the markets which have made merchants rich and kings morally corrupt; the Revelator then illustrates the destruction of the city by having an angel take a great stone, like unto a millstone, and cast it into the midst of the sea.”³

A. A “mighty” angel took a great _____ and threw it into the sea, symbolizing that the great city Babylon shall be _____, and shall not be found anymore. (Rev. 18:21)

B. List five types of activities in Babylon that shall cease: (Rev. 18:22-23)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

C. Three reasons for the judgment upon Babylon are: (Rev. 18:23-24; cf. I John 2:15-17)

1. the _____ were the great men of the earth
2. by _____ all nations were deceived
3. in her was found the blood of _____

CONCLUSION. Babylon the great city, Rome, is destroyed. She stands as a warning to all who would oppose God.

18:21-24 A great millstone cast into the sea symbolizes the final destruction of the harlot, Babylon the great. Everyday activities in the city cease—music, crafts, grinding of millstones, lights, wedding celebrations. These aspects of normal life represent joy and gladness, business enterprise, parties and merriment. The desolation is due to the greed and avarice of the merchants who trafficked with the harlot, the sorceries and deceptions of the harlot, and the blood shed by the harlot. As guilt is cumulative, she is guilty of the blood of prophets, saints and martyrs of all time. Rome the symbol of the world of lust, seduction and base desires is silent.

³ Thompson, pp. 196-197.

Chapter 19:1-10 – VICTORY! THE HARLOT’S FALL AND JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION. This section completes the description of the harlot’s judgment revealed in the previous two chapters—a victory of righteousness over the forces of evil. “We have passed through the great woes and have seen the ravishing effects of evil upon both the spiritual and physical creation. Now, we enter the great section of hope!”¹ Four times praises are offered to God with hallelujahs. Then there is a call to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

A. The rejoicing appears to be a response to the command given earlier (Rev. 19:1; cf. 18:20).

True

False

B. The first hallelujah spoken by the “great multitude” included what words of praise to God? (Rev. 19:1; cf. 7:9-10)

C. List three reasons given for the praise: (Rev. 19:2)

1.

2.

3.

D. The second hallelujah was a rejoicing over what event? (Rev. 19:3)

E. The third hallelujah was spoken by whom? (Rev. 19:4)

F. A voice from heaven called upon whom to praise God? (Rev. 19:5)

G. The answering voice saying the fourth hallelujah was: (Rev. 19:6)

1. as the voice of a _____

2. as the sound of _____

3. as the sound of _____

¹ Strauss, p. 268.

H. What was the reason for the praise given by the great multitude? (Rev. 19:6)

I. The three groups praising God were: (Rev. 19:1, 4, 5-6)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

J. Saints are to be glad, rejoice, and give glory because: (Rev. 19:7)

- 1.
- 2.

K. The church is described as the _____ of Christ. (Rev. 19:7; cf. Rom. 7:4; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-32)

L. The wife is arrayed in "fine linen" which represents: (Rev. 19:8)

M. The ones called to the marriage supper of the Lamb are _____.

These are the _____ sayings of God. (Rev. 19:9)

N. John was told to worship _____. (Rev. 19:10; cf. 22:6-9; Matt. 4:10; John 9:35-38; Col 2:18)

CONCLUSION. The vision beginning with the announcement of judgment against the harlot (17:1) now concludes with a celebration of her destruction. The rejoicing calls for an invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

19:1-3 In response to the command given in the previous chapter (18:20), a heavenly chorus (cf. 7:9-10) praises God for his judgment of the great harlot. This is in contrast to the weeping and wailing of the kings, merchants and mariners over the fall of the great harlot city Rome. "Hallelujah" appears in the New Testament only in this scene (19:1, 3, 4, 6) and means, "Praise ye Jah" (Vine), a Hebrew phrase. The first hallelujah is followed by praise for redemption and deliverance not only from sin, but also from the forces of evil (cf. II Tim. 4:18). The song ascribes glory and honor to God for providing that redemption, and acknowledges the power and omnipotence of God as the ruler of the universe. His judgments against the harlot are true and righteous. The chorus repeats the hallelujah and rejoices as the smoke of the destroyed city rises up forever.

- 19:4 The next group, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures (cf. 4:4-8; 14:3), fall down and worship God saying the third hallelujah.
- 19:5-6 An unidentified voice from the throne calls for the servants of God to offer their praise. Whenever servants of God are referred to in Revelation, they are upon the earth (cf. 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 22:6). Therefore, it appears the voice is speaking to the church on earth, those who fear God both small and great. If this is correct, then the three groups shouting hallelujahs are the redeemed in heaven, the twenty-four elders and four living creatures, and the saints on earth.² Note, John describes the voice he heard, “as it were,” indicating this is a vision. The hallelujahs and praise of this group proclaim God’s omnipotence, total and absolute sovereignty over all his creation.
- 19:7-8 The multitude rejoices for the marriage of the Lamb has come and the wife is ready. Two women were previously introduced, the radiant woman in chapter twelve and the harlot in chapters seventeen and eighteen. Now a third woman is revealed as the wife of the Lamb. As the wife of Christ is the church (cf. Rom. 7:4; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-32), this woman, the wife, is the radiant woman under a new symbol.³ She is arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, symbolizing the righteous acts of the saints in contrast to the gaudy and worldly apparel of the harlot.
- 19:9 The unidentified speaker instructs John to write, “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” Those called to the marriage feast are the ones called by the gospel into the fellowship of Christ (cf. I Cor. 1:9; II Thess. 2:14). The “true sayings” may refer to the beatitude just spoken or to the vision of the harlot (17:1–19:9).
- 19:10 The speaker forbids John to worship him as he is a fellow servant with John and his brethren who have the testimony of Jesus (cf. Matt. 4:10; John 9:35-38; Col 2:18). The last sentence, “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” signifies that the testimony of Jesus, the truth, originated with God, the Father, and all prophecy is fulfilled in the Son, by him and through him (1:1-2; cf. Matt. 5:17-18; John 8:47-50; 14:24; 17:17).

Chapter 19:11-16 – THE WARRIOR-KING

INTRODUCTION. The harlot has now been judged and destroyed. There remains the sea beast, the earth beast or false prophet, and Satan. It should be remembered that Satan used the sea beast (Rome), the earth beast (paganism, false religion, and emperor worship), and the harlot (worldly lusts) as allies in his war against God, Christ and his church.

- A. The rider on the white horse was called _____ . (Rev. 19:11; cf. 1:5; 3:14; 6:2; Matt. 24:35; I Pet. 1:25)

² Hailey, pp. 375-376.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

B. "His eyes were like a flame of fire" describes _____. (Rev. 19:12; cf. 1:14; 2:18)

C. Compare the number of crowns of the following:

1. On his head were _____ crowns (diadems). (Rev. 19:12)

2. The dragon, Satan, wore _____ diadems. (Rev. 12:3)

3. The sea beast wore _____ diadems. (Rev. 13:1)

D. He was clothed with a robe dipped in _____. (Rev. 19:13)

E. His name, "The Word of God," identifies him as _____. (Rev. 19:13; cf. John 1:1, 14)

F. How are the armies clothed that followed him on white horses? (Rev. 19:14)

G. The war described is: (Rev. 19:15; cf. 16:14-16; 17:14)

1. a literal battle
2. a spiritual battle
3. a final judgment at Christ's second coming
4. a judgment in time

H. The sword is: (Rev. 19:15; cf. 1:16; 2:12, 16)

1. the gospel
2. judgment

I. He will "rule them with a rod of iron" is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. (Rev. 19:15; cf. Ps. 2:9; Isa. 11:4)

True

False

J. The armies, the sword, and the rod are all symbols of: (Rev. 19:14-15)

1. tools of warfare
2. Divine judgment
3. tools of chastisement

K. He treads the winepress indicates: (Rev. 19:15)

1. judgment in time
2. final judgment
3. domestic tranquility

L. Who is the one who judges, makes war, and treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God? (Rev. 19:15)

M. Who is “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”? (Rev. 19:16; cf. 1:5; 17:14)

CONCLUSION. John has a vision of a warrior on a white horse judging and making war in righteousness. The names he is called identify him as the Christ.

19:11 The heaven opens and a rider on a white horse comes forth. White denotes purity and holiness. The name of the rider is Faithful and True, who judges and makes war in righteousness, thus identifying the rider as Christ (cf. 1:5; 3:14). Earlier the rider on the white horse was also identified as Christ (6:1-2), but in that scene he wore a victory crown (*stephanos*) and went forth to conquer souls by the gospel.

19:12 His eyes are like a flame of fire (cf. 1:14; 2:18). On his head are many crowns (*diadema*), royal crowns. Satan wore seven diadems and the sea beast wore ten (12:3; 13:1). The name written that “no one knew except Himself” may indicate the mystery of his nature. “Only the Son of God can understand the mystery of His own Being.”⁴

19:13 His robe dipped in blood may refer to the blood of his enemies (cf. 14:20; Isa. 63:1-6; Joel 3:9-13). His name is called “The Word of God,” a description of Christ given by John in his gospel account (John 1:1, 14).

19:14 The armies following him may symbolize “a divine judgment and a spiritual war directed from heaven, led by a heavenly warrior-king. It is fought by a host of pure and faithful warriors, whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and whose names are written there (Luke 10:20)—the faithful saints of God.”⁵

19:15 Christ the warrior-king makes war with his sword, *rhomphaia*, the sword of judgment (1:16; 2:12, 16); rules with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9; Isa. 11:4); and treads the winepress of the wrath of God (14:19-20).

19:16 Christ has a name known only to himself; to the saints he is known as Faithful and True and the Word of God; to all whether friend or enemy, he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

⁴ Hailey, pp. 382-383, quoting from Henry Barclay Swete, *Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 252.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.384-385.

Chapter 19:17-18 – THE GREAT SUPPER

INTRODUCTION. John's visions in Revelation are symbols of the spiritual conflict between Satan and his forces—the sea beast, the earth beast, the harlot—and Christ and his church. The picture portrays the defeat of the enemies of God. All the symbols are spiritual—the war, the victory, the defeat.

A. An “angel standing in the sun” indicates: (Rev. 19:17)

1. a place of importance
2. a place to be clearly seen

B. The angel calls for all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven to come and gather for the _____ of the great God. (Rev. 19:17)

C. The eating of the flesh is: (Rev. 19:18)

1. a vivid picture of defeat for Satan and his allies
2. a gory symbolic meal of destruction
3. a symbol of God's judgment

CONCLUSION. In this segment God provides a symbolic supper for the carrion birds in contrast to the marriage supper of the Lamb (cf. 19:7; Ezek. 39:17-20).

19:17-18 An angel standing in the sun, indicating a place of prominence easily seen, cries to all the birds in mid-heaven to gather for the supper of God. The feast provided for the scavenger birds is the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses and riders, and all people, the free and slave, small and great. Only the righteous are not called to the feast (cf. Matt. 12:30). The latter group is victorious while the former group is doomed.

Chapter 19:19-21 – THE DEFEAT OF THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET

INTRODUCTION. The sea beast and the earth beast or false prophet, first introduced in chapter thirteen, were identified respectively as the Roman Empire, and the paganism, false religion, and emperor worship supporting her. Previously the dragon and his two allies, the sea beast and false prophet, called the kings of the world together for the great decisive battle at a place called Armageddon (16:13-16). Then the ten kings allied with the beast to make war with the Lamb (17:12-14). No battle was described. Now for the third time these enemies are pictured, gathered together, to war against Christ and his army. Again no battle is described, only the outcome.

- A. Name the opposing forces making war. (Rev. 19:19)
- B. The beast was captured with the false prophet who worked signs deceiving whom? (Rev. 19:20)
- C. Where were the two cast alive? (Rev. 19:20)
- D. What is the destination of the following? (Rev. 19:20)
 - 1. the harlot (17:16; 18:8-9, 18)
 - 2. the Devil (20:10)
 - 3. Death and Hades (20:14)
 - 4. those not written in the Book of Life (20:15)
 - 5. the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, liars (21:8)
- E. What happened to the followers of the beast and false prophet? (Rev. 19:21)
- F. What is their final fate? (Rev. 14:9-10; 20:15)

CONCLUSION. In this vision the battle of Armageddon, a spiritual conflict, now takes place, but again the battle is not described, only the outcome. The beast and his allies are defeated, Christ and the church are victorious.

19:19-21 The beast, kings, and their armies gather to make war against the one on the white horse, Christ, and his army. Although the battle is not described, the results are revealed. The beast and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. The rest, the kings and the armies, are killed by the sword of the rider. Their final fate is described later (20:15). Rome and her paganism are destroyed. "The vision of Daniel is fulfilled (Dan. 7:11), and in this defeat and destruction is revealed the destiny of all such powers that should ever arise to fight against God and His kingdom. This is God's guarantee of victory to the saints who lived then and to all who would come after them, even until the end of time."⁶

⁶ Hailey, p. 388.

Section 7 – THE JUDGMENT UPON THE DRAGON THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

Chapter 20:1-10 – SATAN BOUND AND THE THOUSAND YEARS

INTRODUCTION. The book of Revelation has many schools of interpretation. The Historical Background is the principle basis for this study. Chapter twenty offers one of the greatest challenges to the Bible student. Even respected and conservative commentators do not agree regarding the various segments. “The chapter needs to be approached with great humility of spirit, a recognition of its difficulties, an avoidance of dogmatic statements, and respect for the honest interpretation of others.”¹

The premillennial dogma of which there are many facets look to this chapter for their doctrine of a literal one thousand year reign of Christ on earth on David’s throne in Jerusalem. John’s vision, however, does *not* mention:

- the second coming of Christ;
- a bodily resurrection;
- a reign of Christ on earth;
- the literal throne of David;
- the literal city of Jerusalem.

What then is the meaning of the various symbols in this vision to John? Previously, the sea beast, the earth beast or false prophet were cast into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone following the battle of Armageddon (19:19-21). The harlot, drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs and the symbol of worldly lust, was “utterly burned with fire” (18:8). The dragon Satan is now alone stripped of his allies. Thus the chief subject of this section (20:1-10) is not the reign of one thousand years, but the victory of the martyrs and the overthrow of Satan. Following are some key questions to be answered:

- What is the *first* resurrection? (20:6)
- If there is a *first* resurrection, is a *second* resurrection necessarily implied?
- What is the *second* death? (20:6)
- If there is a *second* death, is it necessarily implied there is a *first* death?
- When did the *one thousand year reign* start? When will it end?

THE FIRST DEATH.

Death, *thanatos*, in the scriptures is a separation: “(a) the separation of the soul (the spiritual part of man) from the body (the material part), the latter ceasing to function and turning to dust...(b) the separation of man from God...Death is the opposite of life; it never denotes non-existence. As spiritual life is ‘conscious existence in communion with God,’ so spiritual death is ‘conscious existence in separation from God’” (Vine). In the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or they would surely die (Gen 2:16-17). When they disobeyed God’s command, they were under a sentence of death. They immediately

¹ Summers, p. 202.

experienced spiritual death, for their sins separated them from God (Gen. 3:6-13, 22-24; Isa. 59:2). Paul states that the Ephesians before their conversion were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1; cf. I Tim. 5:6). Included in the spiritual death of Adam and Eve, but following later, was their physical death, a separation of the body and soul (Jas. 2:26). The effect of the spiritual death was to cause the body to decay which occurred over a period of time. The unbeliever though physically alive is dead spiritually which is the first death, but involved in it and following from it is physical death.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

Resurrection, *anastasis*, is a “raising up, or rising up” from the dead (Vine). Paul continues his message to the Ephesians, “even when we were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:5-6). He states the same truth in Colossians, “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:12-13; cf. Rom. 6:4-11). Compare the words of John, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren” (I John 3:14). These passages which speak of “raised us up together,” “raised with Him through faith,” and “passed from death to life” indicate that the soul which was dead in sin and separated from God was raised up or resurrected, the first resurrection.

THE SECOND RESURRECTION OR GENERAL RESURRECTION.

This is the resurrection of the body that occurs at the second coming of Christ when the spirit and body are united. In writing to the Romans Paul states, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). To the Corinthians Paul said, “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible...” (I Cor. 15:52). Paul includes the wicked in his message to Felix, “I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15).

THE TWO RESURRECTIONS (John 5:24-29).

In his gospel account John records the words of Jesus regarding two resurrections. Jesus clearly states, “I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life...the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:24-25). The passing from death into life depends upon hearing and believing. Thus the first resurrection is a conditional one. In addition, “the hour is coming, and now is,” speaks of a spiritual resurrection that takes place now through the preaching of the gospel and does not refer to some future event. The Christian experiences the first resurrection following his obedience to the gospel. Hear again the words of Jesus, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25-26).

Concerning the second resurrection Jesus said, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28-29). Note this resurrection is not conditional—all will hear and come forth. Omitted in this statement are hearing and believing the word. Also omitted is the expression "now is" which indicates the resurrection of the body is a future event.

Therefore, the first resurrection is a spiritual one of those who hear and believe the gospel (John 5:24-25), and the second resurrection is a bodily one of both righteous and wicked (John 5:28-29) when the soul and body will be reunited (I Cor. 15:51-53).

THE SECOND DEATH.

The first death, spiritual death, affects the soul which is dead in sin and trespasses and separated from God. However, by the grace of God and obedience to the gospel, there is hope of resurrection for the soul and restoration of fellowship with God. The second death, also a spiritual death, is final and eternal, "the lake which burns with fire and brimstone," prepared for the Devil and his allies and the unrepentant and unbelievers.

THE ONE THOUSAND YEARS.

Numbers in the book of Revelation are symbolic. The number ten suggests a rounded total, a complete number, and one that indicates fullness of power. One thousand equals $10 \times 10 \times 10$, or 10^3 , thus a symbol of highest completeness. The one thousand years of which there are many interpretations is a figurative expression that may refer to the Christian dispensation, or perhaps it is a number indicating a full and complete period of time or condition known to God (cf. Deut. 1:10-11; 7:9; Ps. 90:4; II Pet. 3:8). When applied to Satan, he is perfectly and completely bound. When applied to the saints, they are perfectly and totally victorious.

A. In this vision John saw an angel having the key to the bottomless pit or abyss and a great chain. The key and chain are to be interpreted: (Rev. 20:1; cf. 1:18; 3:7; 9:1; Matt. 16:19; Luke 11:52)

1. literally
2. figuratively

B. Satan is described by the following four terms. Match the meanings: (Rev. 20:2; cf. 12:9)

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. dragon (12:7) | adversary |
| 2. old serpent (Gen. 3:1; II Cor. 11:3) | accuser, slanderer |
| 3. Devil (12:10; Job 1:6-11) | cunning deceiver |
| 4. Satan (Matt. 4:1-11) | strong, ferocious, powerful |

- C. The binding of Satan means: (Rev. 20:2-3; cf. Matt. 12:28-29; John 12:31-32)
1. his power is curtailed or greatly diminished
 2. he can no longer deceive nations as before
 3. his power is limited by God
- D. Since numbers in Revelation are generally used symbolically, the probable meaning of one thousand years is: (Rev. 20:2; cf. Deut. 7:9; Job 9:3; 33:23; Ps. 50:10; 90:4; Eccl. 6:6; 7:28; II Pet. 3:8)
1. a literal one thousand years
 2. a full and complete period
- E. The bottomless pit or abyss is: (Rev. 20:3, 10; Luke 8:31)
1. a place for restraining Satan
 2. the final abode of Satan
 3. dreaded by demons
- F. How long must Satan be loosed? (Rev. 20:3)
- G. Who sat on thrones? (Rev. 20:4; cf. 6:9; 7:13-17)
1. the souls of beheaded martyrs
 2. the souls who had not worshipped the beast or his image
 3. the souls who had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands
- H. How long did they live and reign with Christ? (Rev. 20:4)
1. one thousand years
 2. a full and complete period
 3. an undetermined period known only by God
- I. When did the rest of the dead live again? (Rev. 20:5)
- J. Who is blessed and holy? (Rev. 20:6)
- K. The second death has no power on: (Rev. 20:6; cf. 2:11; Rom. 8:11)

- L. Three rewards listed are promised to the blessed and holy: (Rev. 20:6)
1. the second death has no _____
 2. they shall be _____ of God and Christ
 3. they shall _____ with him a _____
- M. The term "second death" is a place that burns with _____ and _____ . (Rev. 21:8)
- N. When will Satan be released from his prison? (Rev. 20:7)
- O. What will be his purpose? (Rev. 20:8-9)
1. to deceive all nations
 2. to gather them together to battle
 3. to surround the camp of the saints
- P. Describe the result. (Rev. 20:9)
1. fire came down from God out of heaven
 2. fire devoured the saints
 3. fire devoured the allies of Satan
- Q. Where is the final destination of Satan? (Rev. 20:10)
- R. Who else is there? (Rev. 20:10)
- S. How long will they be tormented? (Rev. 20:10)

CONCLUSION. In this vision John sees an angel with a key to the bottomless pit and a chain; he binds Satan and casts him into the abyss for one thousand years; after this Satan is loosed for a little while. Those who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, who refused to worship the beast or his image, who had not received his mark, live and reign with Christ for one thousand years; the rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years are finished. At the end of the one thousand years, Satan is released and goes forth to deceive the nations, gathering them to battle and surrounding the camp of the saints and the beloved city. Fire comes down from God from heaven and devours Satan and his forces. Satan is cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet are, and they will be tormented forever.

- 20:1-2 An angel, a minister of Christ, having the key to the bottomless pit and a chain binds Satan with the chain for one thousand years. The key and chain are symbolic, not literal. The key represents power and authority (cf. 1:18; Matt. 16:19; 28:18). The binding of Satan began when Jesus overcame him by resisting the temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). Jesus then began to cast out demons. When the Pharisees accused him of casting out demons by the power of Satan, he told them, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house" (Matt. 12:28-29). Jesus states here that he cast out demons by the Spirit of God. He first bound the strong man—Satan; then he entered his house and plundered his goods—robbed him of his property, the evil spirit within the man. When the seventy disciples returned from their mission, they joyfully said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:17-18). To an audience of Greeks Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die" (John 12:31-33). The falling, casting out, and binding of Satan began with the ministry of Jesus and the preaching of the gospel. "All peoples," those from all nations, will be drawn to Christ, for through his death he would destroy the power of Satan. Some identify the chain with the gospel which binds Satan, limiting his influence and power. This binding will continue for a complete period determined by God, a figurative thousand years.
- 20:3 Satan is cast into the bottomless pit where he is shut up and a seal set on him. It is a preventative measure, for his punishment will come later. He is no longer able to deceive the nations. When God sent his Son to earth to be a sacrifice for sin, peoples from all nations could partake of the blessings offered by God through the preaching of the gospel. Consider the parables of the mustard seed and leaven (Matt. 13:31-33). The influence of the gospel grew and spread throughout the world. Although Satan is bound, he is not totally helpless, for he walks about like a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Many will hear the gospel message, but not all will heed and obey. Nevertheless, Satan's activity is limited and restrained by the omnipotence of God.
- 20:4 John sees a new vision, a vision of victory—thrones and judgment given to those sitting on the thrones. Those on the thrones are the souls who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, those who had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark (6:9; 13:11-17). Thrones indicate the seat of authority. Thus those on the thrones are judging with Christ, that is, the judgment against God's enemies is made by Christ on behalf of the saints (cf. John 12:31; Ps. 72:1-2; 96:13; Isa. 42:4; Dan. 7:21-22). The vision reveals that the souls of the martyrs and faithful, now triumphant, are in an exalted state sharing

- with Christ his rule of victory. They are living and reigning with Christ for a thousand years, a period of perfection determined by God. All Christians purchased with the blood of Christ reign with him, but these are not the ones pictured in this vision (cf. 5:8-10; Rom. 5:17; II Tim. 2:12).
- 20:5 The rest of the dead, those who are spiritually dead in their sins and separated from God, do not live until the thousand years are finished. They have no part in the first resurrection for they are spiritually dead.
- 20:6 Those who have part in the first resurrection, those dead in trespasses and made alive with Christ (Eph. 2:1-6), are blessed and holy. The second death has no power over them. They shall be priests of God and of Christ. Thus as priests they worship God and Christ, and as royalty they reign with Christ. Just as all Christians reign with Christ, all Christians are also priests of God and Christ (cf. 1:6; 5:10; I Pet. 2:5, 9-10). The characteristics of those reigning are the same characteristics of all Christians—blessed and holy, a priesthood.
- 20:7-8 Before the coming of Christ, Satan deceived the nations, but Christ by his death and resurrection bruised the head of Satan, destroying his power or authority thus binding him (cf. Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:14). At the end of the thousand years, the period of perfection and completeness, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations again. When he is loosed, Satan will gather the nations from the four corners of the earth to battle, no longer relying on one evil power. His new forces are Gog and Magog. “Gog, of the land of Magog,” in the Old Testament was a prince symbolic of the heathen enemies of God’s people (Ezek. 38; 39). Although many theories surround Gog and Magog of Revelation, they probably represent the future enemies of the church.
- 20:9 Satan and his forces wage spiritual warfare against the church. Satan’s deceptions are subtle—he plants doubt, unbelief follows, and rebellion against God is the result. The camp of the saints, God’s faithful, and the beloved city, the church, are surrounded, but fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours the forces of evil.
- 20:10 The devil was first cast down to earth (12:9) and then into the bottomless pit (20:3). The great deceiver now joins his allies, the beast and false prophet, in the lake of fire which was prepared for him and his angels, and they will be tormented forever (cf. Matt. 25:41, 46).

Chapter 20:11-15 – THE FINAL JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION. The judgments studied thus far have been interpreted as judgments in time during the reign of the Roman Empire—judgments of the trumpets and bowls of wrath; judgments against the harlot, the sea beast and false prophet. This new vision of John concerns the final judgment and destiny of man.

A. "Then I saw" introduces a new vision. (Rev. 20:11)

True

False

B. The color white describing the throne indicates: (Rev. 20:11)

1. purity
2. holiness
3. righteousness

C. Who sat on the throne? (Rev. 20:11; cf. 3:21; Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:22-23, 26-27; 10:30; Acts 17:30-31)

1. God
2. Christ

D. The expression "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away" means: (Rev. 20:11)

1. they shall perish (Ps. 102:25-27; Heb. 1:10-12)
2. they shall pass away (II Pet. 3:10)

E. The scene John saw pictures: (Rev. 20:12; cf. John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15)

1. all the dead
2. the dead of the Old Testament
3. the dead of the New Testament

F. The "Book of Life" is a figure that represents: (Rev. 20:12; cf. Matt. 25:46; Luke 10:20; II Cor. 5:10; Phil. 4:3)

1. the life of the righteous
2. the life of the unrighteous
3. the life of all mankind

G. We have interpreted the sea to mean: (Rev. 20:13; cf. Rev. 13:1; Dan. 7:2-3, 17)

1. the literal sea
2. the mass of human society

H. The expressions "the sea gave up the dead" and "Death and Hades delivered up the dead" emphasize that all were judged. (Rev. 20:13; cf. Acts 10:42; I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:16-17; II Tim. 4:1; I Pet. 4:5)

True

False

- I. They were judged, each one according to his _____. (Rev. 20:13; cf. Eccl. 12:13-14; Heb. 4:13)
- J. What is the last enemy to be destroyed? (I Cor. 15:26)
- K. What is the second death? (Rev. 20:14; 21:8)
- L. Who will not be hurt by the second death? (Rev. 2:11; 20:6)
- M. What is the end of any not found written in the book of life? (Rev. 20:15; cf. Matt. 25:41, 46; Heb. 10:26-31)

CONCLUSION. In this vision John sees a great white throne, the one sitting upon the throne, and all the dead standing before God. Nations and forces of evil God judges in time, but people receive their reward or punishment at the final judgment when this present order passes away.

- 20:11 John sees a great white throne—great because it surpasses all others, and white because of its purity and righteousness. The one sitting on the throne is Christ (cf. 3:21; John 5:22-23, 26-27; II Cor. 5:10). Christ executes judgment on behalf of the Father; he and the Father are one in purpose and work (John 10:30). “The earth and the heaven fled away...there was found no place for them” indicates the perishing and passing away of this present order (cf. Ps. 102:25-27; Heb. 1:10-12; II Pet. 3:10).
- 20:12 When man sinned his soul died immediately for it was separated from God. Due to the grace of God his body did not die immediately but it was under the sentence of death. “Through Christ it is the soul which recovers first. It is resurrected and restored to fellowship with God. This is the first resurrection. Upon the death of the body the soul of the believer enters into the intermediate state of heaven. The soul of the unbeliever remains in a dead state and is never restored to fellowship with God. It enters into the abode of the wicked which Christ describes as the place of torment. The bodies of both believers and unbelievers enter into the grave to await the final resurrection”² (cf. the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31; the thief on the cross Luke 23:39-43). The “books” and “Book of Life” are figurative symbolizing the Divine record of all individuals who are judged according to their secrets, thoughts and deeds (cf. Rom. 2:16; I Cor. 4:5; II Cor. 5:10). However, as a comforting fact, God does not remember the sins of his elect (cf. Ps. 85:2, 103:12; Isa. 43:25).

² J. Marcellus Kik, *An Eschatology of Victory*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 258-259.

- 20:13 The sea, Death and Hades give up their dead which are judged. Except for the references to the sea of glass before the throne (4:6; 15:2; 21:1), the sea has been interpreted to represent human society. Death and Hades are here personified—Death is the killer and Hades follows (cf. 6:7-8). Death, the separation of the body and the spirit (Jas. 2:26), “claims the body, which returns to the dust; and Hades claims the spirit, which, after death, is in the realm of the unseen”³ (cf. Acts. 2:27, 31). In the general resurrection the spirit and body of both the believers and unbelievers will be reunited (I Cor. 15:26, 51-57; I Thess. 4:13-18; I John 3:1-3). Christ overcame Death, the last enemy, and Hades gives up the departed spirits. The souls of the righteous will leave Hades and united with the body are changed to enter into the kingdom prepared “from the foundation of the world,” (Matt. 25:34). The souls of the wicked will leave Hades, and body and soul will enter into the “everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).
- 20:14 Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire. Death and Hades rode together and here they end together (cf. 6:7-8). Death, the separation of the soul and body, and Hades, the state of separation, cease to exist for the righteous and wicked after the general resurrection at the second coming of Christ. What John sees symbolically, Paul states plainly, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death...So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’” (I Cor. 15:26, 54; cf. Isa. 25:8; Hos. 13:14).
- 20:15 Those not found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life are also cast into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death which now in John’s visions has claimed the harlot, the beast, the false prophet, Satan, Death, Hades, and the unrighteous.

Note. The twentieth chapter of Revelation is probably the most difficult chapter of the book to understand. Many interpretations are offered by commentators. The above discussion is submitted with humility and with no intent to be dogmatic. The student is encouraged to study further, particularly the passages cited, remembering that any conclusions must be in harmony with plain passages in the scriptures. The book of Revelation presents a series of visions—the pictures John sees are not the message; rather the interpretation of the pictures is the message.

³ Hailey, p. 113.

Chapter 21:1-8 – ALL THINGS NEW

INTRODUCTION. The enemies of Christ and his faithful followers have been defeated: the sea beast symbolic of the Roman Empire with its military, political and economic power; the earth beast or false prophet supporting the sea beast with emperor and idol worship; the harlot city representing Rome with all the earthly lusts and enticements; Satan, the great deceiver; and the wicked not found in the Book of Life. All have been cast into the lake of fire. The present order has passed, and John now sees a vision of the church at home with God in eternal glory.

A. What did John see? What had passed away? (Rev. 21:1; cf. Isa. 65:17; 66:22)

B. What does “passed away” mean? (II Pet. 3:10-13)

C. Compare the following references regarding the sea:

1. before the throne a sea of _____ (Rev. 4:6)

2. a sea of _____ mingled with _____ (Rev. 15:2)

3. _____ sea (Rev. 21:1)

D. John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a _____ adorned for her _____. (Rev. 21:2)

E. Who will be with those in the New Jerusalem? (Rev. 21:3)

F. List five former things that will pass away. (Rev. 21:4)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

G. The words John was commanded to write are _____ and _____ (Rev. 21:5)

H. "I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts" means:
(Rev. 21:6; cf. 7:17; 22:1; John 4:10; 7:37)

1. there will be water to quench the thirst of all
2. there will be full realization of all spiritual desires

I. Who will inherit "all things"? (Rev. 21:7; cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21)

J. List what the faithful will inherit:

1. Matt. 19:29
2. Matt. 25:34
3. Heb. 1:14
4. I Pet. 3:8-9

K. Who shall have their part in the second death? (Rev. 21:8)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

CONCLUSION. There are two main views concerning this chapter and the one following. One is that the vision describes the victorious church today, purified and glorified by the trials and tribulations suffered. The second view is that the vision pictures the church in its final glorified state at home with God beyond the judgment. The latter seems more tenable, and the following discussion is based on that premise. However, whichever view is espoused, the vision is a description of the ideal church, the result of God's redeeming grace.

- 21:1 At the judgment scene John saw that the earth and heaven fled away (20:11) indicating the passing of the present order (cf. II Pet. 3:10-13). Here he sees a new heaven and a new earth—a new order. In the throne scene, there is a sea of glass before the great throne of God symbolic of the separation of the created from the Creator (4:6). Later victorious saints stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire, perhaps symbolizing the fiery trials through which they pass (15:2). Now the sea is no more, for the faithful are in direct fellowship with God. Another interpretation, however, equates the sea in this passage to the restless sea of humanity from which the beast arises (13:1) and which has now vanished.
- 21:2 The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven indicating its Divine origin. Abraham looked forward to this city “whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10); and Christians here on earth “have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come” (Heb. 13:14). The city is arrayed as a bride for her husband and now is presented holy and without blemish (19:7-8; cf. Eph. 5:25-27).
- 21:3-4 The unidentified voice from heaven states that God will dwell with his people in perfect fellowship. The sorrows of this earth have passed away, for sin and death are swallowed up in victory (cf. I Cor. 15:54-57).
- 21:5 Whether God or Christ is the speaker is undetermined, for both sit on the throne (3:21), and Christ acts on behalf of the Father (5:7; cf. John 10:30). John is instructed to write the words, for they are true and faithful.
- 21:6-8 It appears that God is the speaker here, although near the close of the book, Christ claims the title of Alpha and Omega (cf. 1:8; 22:13). Jesus spoke of spiritual water to the Samaritan woman at the well and to the crowd at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 4:10; 7:37). God gives the fountain of the water of life freely to the faithful. Those who overcome shall inherit all things. Consider the rewards promised in the letters to the seven churches of Asia to those who would overcome (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). The characteristics of the wicked and unrighteous are enumerated and their destiny revealed. The choices are clear—living water from God or endless fire.

Chapter 21:9-27 – THE NEW JERUSALEM

INTRODUCTION. In this vision John is carried “in the Spirit” to a high mountain to view the New Jerusalem, the bride of the Lord. God dwells with his people in this glorious city that is described with beauty and splendor.

- A. One of the seven angels who had one of the seven bowls of wrath told John he would show him the _____ . (Rev. 21:9)
- B. Instead of seeing a woman in bridal garments, John saw: (Rev. 21:10)

C. What made the city glorious? (Rev. 21:11)

D. The jasper stone is like a: (Rev. 21:11; cf. 4:3)

1. diamond
2. ruby
3. topaz

E. The wall of the city was _____ and _____. (Rev. 21:12)

F. Describe the gates in the wall: (Rev. 21:12-13)

1. there were _____ gates
2. _____ were at the gates
3. the names of the _____ were written on the gates
4. there were three gates on the _____, three on the _____, three on the _____, and three on the _____

G. How many foundations did the wall have? (Rev. 21:14)

H. Whose names were on the foundations? (Rev. 21:14; cf. I Cor. 3:10; Eph. 2:19-20)

I. The twelve gates and the twelve foundations symbolize:

1. the uniting of the Old and New Covenants
2. all the redeemed are together
3. there is one eternal home for the righteous

J. The one speaking had a _____ to measure the city, gates and wall. (Rev. 21:15; cf. 11:1)

K. The city laid out as a square measured _____. (Rev. 21:16)

L. The wall measured _____. (Rev. 21:17)

M. The wall was of _____ and the city was pure _____ like clear glass. (Rev. 21:18)

- N. The foundations of the wall were adorned with _____.
(Rev. 21:19-20)
- O. The twelve gates were twelve _____, and the street was pure
_____ like transparent glass. (Rev. 21:21)
- P. Describe the temple in this city. (Rev. 21:22)
- Q. Why is there no sun or moon? (Rev. 21:23)
- R. The nations of those who are saved are from: (Rev. 21:24; 5:9; 7:9)
1. every tribe
 2. every tongue
 3. every people
 4. every nation
- S. The political forces opposing God, Christ, and his church have been crushed
and destroyed (19:19-21); now the kings of earth bring _____
into the city. (Rev. 21:24; cf. Isa. 60:3)
- T. Why are the gates never shut? What shall be brought into the city? (Rev. 21:25-
26; cf. Isa. 60:11-12)
- U. Who shall not enter the city? (Rev. 21:27)

CONCLUSION. The description of the New Jerusalem pictures the holy city in beauty and splendor. The persecuted church is now the bride of Christ; the marriage has taken place. The glory of God fills the city where the faithful are in direct fellowship with God.

21:9-11 One of the seven angels who had the seven last plagues (15:1) bids John to come and see the bride, the Lamb's wife. He carries John away in the Spirit to a high mountain, and John sees a city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God with the glory and light of God. This city is in direct contrast to John's vision of the harlot city (cf. 17:1-3).

21:12-14 In the vision John sees a high wall and twelve gates which are symbolic. City walls were built for protection in early times. This wall symbolizes the perfect security and fellowship of the inhabitants with God rather than protection from enemies without, for those enemies have been destroyed.

The twelve gates, three to a side, are the portals of entrance to the city and are inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The number twelve signifies perfection and here the abundant means of entrance to the city. The three gates on each of the four sides may indicate the faithful have come from all nations. Since there are no foes left, the angels at each gate probably do not represent guards, but perhaps symbolize the completion of their work as ministering spirits (cf. Ps. 91:11-12; Heb. 1:13-14). Written on the twelve foundations of the wall are the names of the twelve apostles. The twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes and the twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles indicate the Old and New Covenants are united with all of the redeemed together into one eternal home with God.

- 21:15-17 Earlier John was given an ordinary reed like a rod to measure the temple or church, an act symbolic of the protection and preservation of God (11:1). Here an angel with a golden reed measures the heavenly city. The city measures twelve thousand furlongs in each direction; again the perfect religious number twelve, multiplied by one thousand, symbolizes perfection and completeness. A furlong is one-eighth of a mile. Thus the city revealed as a cube measures fifteen hundred miles in length, width, and height—an awesome number indicative of God’s greatness. The angel also measures the wall which is one hundred and forty-four cubits. A cubit is approximately eighteen inches, thus the measurement is about two hundred sixteen feet. Whether this represents the height or thickness of the wall is uncertain, but clearly the measurements of the wall are comparatively insignificant and out of proportion to the size of the city. The expression, “according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel,” means the measure represents one used by man but in the hands of an angel. Remember, this is a vision and the language is figurative.
- 21:18-21 The wall of jasper, the city of pure gold, and the foundations of precious gems are all descriptions of beauty and splendor. Each gate was a pearl, another precious jewel. Jesus told the parable of the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46). Pearls are formed in six tropical species of oysters that live on rocky ocean bottoms. They are the only gems made by a living process, and the only gems that come from the sea.
- 21:22 “There is no temple in the city. The temple was the place where God met his people, where sacrifice for sin was made, where intercession was made. It is not needed in the New Jerusalem, because there is no sin to be atoned for and because the people are in the immediate presence of God.”¹
- 21:23-24 The glory of God illuminates the city and the Lamb is its light. The nations, the glorified saints (5:9; 7:9), walk in this light. In contrast to the kings who opposed the Lamb and were destroyed, those kings who gave their allegiance to the Lamb now bring their glory and honor into the city.
- 25-27 The open gates imply that the redeemed from all nations shall bring their glory and honor into the city. Only those not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will be excluded (3:5; 20:15).

¹ Summers, p. 214.

H. Match the statements regarding those having the name of God on their foreheads with the reference:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. he who overcomes | Rev. 22:4 |
| 2. the servants who are sealed | Rev. 14:1 |
| 3. those standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion | Rev. 7:3 |
| 4. the servants who see His face | Rev. 3:12 |

I. What is absent in this glorified city? What is the source of light? (Rev. 22:5)

CONCLUSION. The destiny of the redeemed is pictured in a beautiful garden with access to the river of water of life, the tree of life, and the throne of God and of the Lamb.

- 22:1 Jesus offered living water to the Samaritan woman and to the crowd at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 4:10; 7:37). In John's vision the water of life, eternal life, proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The reference to the throne of God and of the Lamb indicates joint occupancy of the throne by the Father and Son.
- 22:2 The picture here is difficult to envision. The terms "tree of life", "street", and "river" are used collectively, thus in the city are parks, streets, rivers, and trees bearing fruit regularly. "The vision pictures a beautiful park with golden streets, rivers of crystal pure water flowing through it, and banks and avenues lined with trees for fruit and leaves for healing."²
- 22:3 By his crucifixion and the gospel, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for us, for "cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). In the restored Eden nothing accursed can abide in the presence of God and the Lamb.
- 22:4 The faithful, those with his name on their foreheads, will see his face, a blessing no one has experienced yet (cf. Ex. 33:18-23; I John 3:2).
- 22:5 John repeats that there shall be no night, no need for the sun, for God is the light (cf. 21:23-25). "The thought has developed from walking in the midst of the light (21:24), to serving in the light (22:3), and now, to reigning in that light."³ The faithful will reign forever and ever.

² Hailey, p. 422.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

K. There are seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. Match the characteristics of the blessed with the reference.

1. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy. ___ Rev. 22:14
2. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. ___ Rev. 22:7
3. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. ___ Rev. 20:6
4. Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! ___ Rev. 19:9
5. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. ___ Rev. 16:15
6. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. ___ Rev. 14:13
7. Blessed are those who do his commandments... ___ Rev. 1:3

L. Those who do the commandments have access to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city. Who are outside the city gates? (Rev. 22:14-15)

M. Who speaks and gives authenticity to the book of Revelation? What titles does he have? (Rev. 22:16)

N. Who offers the exhortation, "Come"? (Rev. 22:17)

1. the Spirit
2. the bride
3. he who hears

O. Who is urged to take the water of life freely? (Rev. 22:17)

P. What warning is given to those who add to this book? (Rev. 22:18)

Q. What warning is given to those who take away from the words of this prophecy? (Rev. 22:19)

R. In closing, Jesus who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am _____ quickly." (Rev. 22:20)

S. John responds, "Amen. Even so, _____!" (Rev. 22:20)

CONCLUSION. In this section there are two Divine attestations, two witnesses, for the revelation and John's testimony: God's declaration (22:6), Jesus' affirmation (22:16), and John's written record (22:8-9). The testimony of two witnesses is necessary for legality (cf. Deut. 19:15; II Cor. 13:1). As the vision closes the benediction is pronounced, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

- 22:6 It is somewhat difficult to determine who is speaking in this section. The speaker in this verse, an angel, appears to be the same as the one to whom the Lord gave the commission at the beginning as the language is similar (cf. 1:1-3). The words are "faithful and true" and attested by the angel of the "Lord God of the holy prophets," confirming the Divine origin of the Revelation. The "things which must shortly take place" indicates speedily or quickly and refers to the conflict written about in the book.
- 22:7 Again it is difficult to determine the speaker. Is it God who would come in the person of Christ; is it Christ declaring his speedy coming; or is it the angel who continues speaking? Regardless of whom the speaker is, it is certain that it is Jesus who is coming (cf. 2:16; 3:11). The speaker adds a blessing for the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of the book.
- 22:8-9 John adds his personal affirmation to the authenticity of the book. Once again he is reproved for worshiping an angel (cf. 19:10).
- 22:10 The angel instructs John to seal not the words of the prophecy, for "the time is at hand." Earlier he was told, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered," thus we do not know what they were (cf. 10:4). Daniel was told to seal up his vision and the words he had heard, for they referred to "many days in the future" (cf. Dan. 8:26; 10:14; 12:4, 9). John's prophecy "is at hand," thus the words are not to be sealed.
- 22:11 The speaker continues by dividing society into two groups, the unjust and filthy and the righteous and holy. Jesus spoke of two classes of people, believers and unbelievers, those who love light and those who love darkness (John 3:18-21).
- 22:12 The swiftness of the coming of the Lord is emphasized (22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20). Since the book is not sealed and the "time is at hand," this coming cannot be a reference to the second or final coming of Christ for that event is not "at hand" (cf. II Thess. 2:1ff). The judgments seen in the visions of the book are "comings" of the Lord. The Lord brings his rewards with him for every one according to his works, indicating he will render justice at his coming.
- 22:13 It appears Christ is the speaker here identifying himself with the Father as "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last," expressing his completeness, his Divine authority, and his eternal being (cf. 1:8, 11, 17; 2:8; 21:6; John 1:1; Col. 1:15-16).
- 22:14-15 "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city" (ASV translation; NASB and NIV similarly translated). The seventh beatitude of the book promises the blessings of the right to the tree of life and entrance through the gates of the city to those who obey the commandments (KJV, NKJV) and wash their robes (ASV, NASB, NIV). Outside the gates are the wicked doomed to the lake of fire.

- 22:16 Jesus testifies to the authenticity of the book, adding his testimony to that of the Father. In addition to his claim of Deity as Alpha and Omega, (22:13), he now affirms his humanity as “the Root and the Offspring of David,” the messianic king from the royal line of David (cf. II Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5-6; Matt. 1:20-21). To the church at Thyatira, Jesus promised the morning star to those who would overcome (2:28). Balaam prophesied that a Star shall come out of Jacob and a Scepter out of Israel and destroy all the sons of tumult (Num. 24:17). Jesus identifies himself with the Star, a symbol of royalty. As the offspring of David, and as the Bright and Morning Star, he is king and conqueror, promising the dawning of a new day.
- 22:17 Jesus has promised to come quickly. The Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles, the bride of Christ or the church, and he who hears or the individual members of the church all combine to answer the voice of Jesus. Their response is, “Come!” Then those who thirst, those who desire the water of life given freely, are invited to come.
- 22:18-19 The book was authenticated by God and by Jesus (22:6, 16), and John added his testimony (22:8). Now there is a warning not to add to or take away from the words of this prophecy (cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Gal. 1:6-9). Although the reference is to the book of Revelation, the principle applies to the entire word of God.
- 22:20 Jesus adds his final word in response to the Spirit, bride and the faithful— “Surely I am coming quickly.” John answers with, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”
- 22:21 The benediction is pronounced. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!” Rev. 5:12*

*“I will declare the decree:
The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’” Psalm 2:7-9*

Chart No. 1

FOUR WORLD EMPIRES

Dan. 2; 7; 8

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Empire | Daniel 2 <i>Image - Metal</i> Dan. 2:31-33 | Daniel 7 <i>Four Beasts are Four Kings</i> Dan. 7:17 | Daniel 8 |
| Babylonian (625 - 539 B. C.) Dan. 1:1; Jer. 25:8-12 | Head of Gold Dan. 2:32, 37-38 | Lion with Eagle's Wings Dan. 7:4; Jer. 4:7; 49:19, 22; 50:17; Lam. 4:19; Ezek 17:3, 12; Hab. 1:6-8 | |
| Medo-Persian (538 - 331 B. C.) Dan. 5:28; 10:20; 11:2 | Chest and Arms of Silver Dan. 2:32, 39 | Bear Dan. 7:5 | Ram Dan. 8:3-4, 20 |
| Grecian Alexander (331 - 323 B. C.) Successors (323 - 30 B. C.) Dan. 10:20; 11:3-4 | Belly and Thighs of Bronze Dan. 2:32, 39 | Leopard Dan. 7:6 | Goat Dan. 8:5-7, 21 Four Horns Dan. 8:8, 22 Little Horn Dan. 8:9, 23 |
| Roman Republic (509 - 27 B. C.) Empire (27 B. C. - A.D. 476) Luke 2:1-3; 3:1-2 | Legs of Iron Feet of Iron and Clay Dan. 2:33, 40-43 | Dreadful, Terrible, Strong, Different Teeth of Iron, Nails of Bronze, Ten Horns Dan. 7:7, 19-20 | |

Chart No. 2

Comparison of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13

| Daniel 7 | Description | Revelation 13 | Description |
|-----------|---|---------------|--|
| 7:3 | Four Beasts from the Sea | 13:1 | Beast out of the Sea |
| 7:7 | Dreadful, Terrible, Strong, Different | 13:2 | A Composite |
| 7:8, 25 | A Mouth Speaking Pompous Words, Words against the Most High | 13:1, 5-6 | A Mouth Speaking Great Things, Blasphemies against God |
| 7:7, 19 | Devouring, Breaking in Pieces, Trampling the Residue, Different | 13:7 | Authority over Every Tribe, Tongue, Nation |
| 7:7-8, 20 | Ten Horns, a Little Horn | 13:1 | Seven Heads and Ten Horns |
| 7:21, 25 | Making War against the Saints | 13:7 | Made War with the Saints |
| 7:25 | Intend to Change Times and Law | 13:8 | Authority over Earth Dwellers |

Chart No. 3

The Victory of Christ

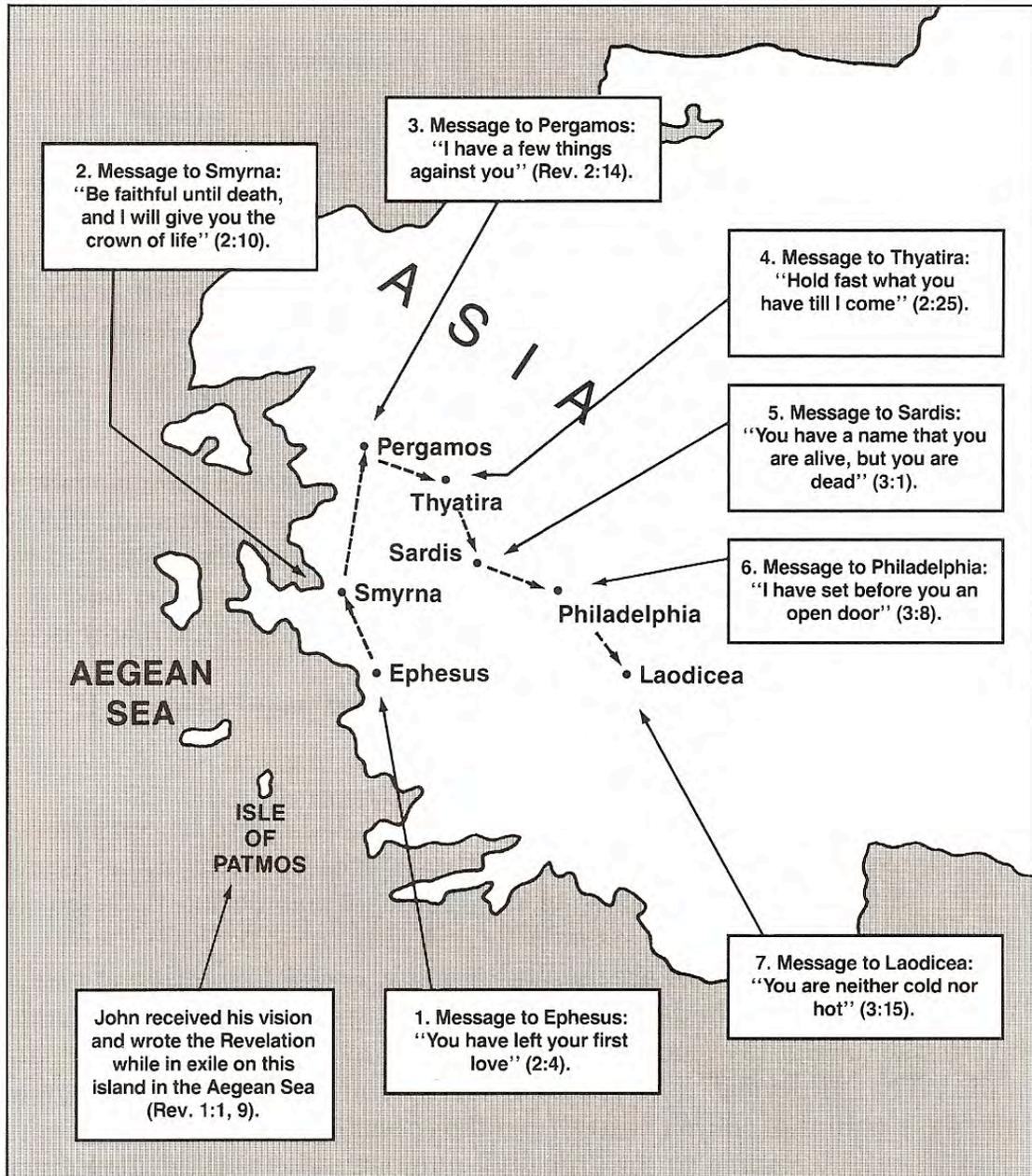
| Symbol | Introduced | Defeated | End |
|---|--|---------------|---|
| Dragon (Satan) | Rev. 12:9, 13 | Rev. 20:10 | cast into lake of fire and brimstone; tormented day and night |
| Sea Beast and Earth Beast (False Prophet) | Rev. 13:1, 11 | Rev. 19:19-20 | cast alive into lake of fire burning with brimstone |
| Harlot | Rev. 17:1 | Rev. 18:1-8 | utterly burned with fire |
| Mark of the Beast (those not found written in the Book of Life) | Rev. 13:16-17 Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 20:12 | Rev. 20:15 | cast into lake of fire |
| Death and Hades | Gen. 3; Rev. 6:8 | Rev. 20:14 | cast into lake of fire; this is the second death |
| Cowardly, Unbelieving, Abominable, Murderers, Sexually Immoral, Sorcerers, Idolaters, Liars | | Rev. 21:8 | lake which burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death |

CHART No. 4

ROMAN EMPERORS – 1ST CENTURY A. D.

| <i>EMPEROR</i> | <i>DATE</i> | <i>EVENT</i> |
|------------------|-----------------|---|
| Augustus | B.C. 27-A.D. 14 | Birth of John the Baptist Birth of Jesus, c.6 B.C. Death of Herod the Great, 4 B.C. |
| Tiberius | A.D. 14-37 | Ministry and death of John the Baptist Ministry and death of Jesus Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, 26-36 Caiaphas, high priest, c.18-36 |
| Gaius (Caligula) | 37-41 | |
| Claudius | 41-54 | Apostle James killed by Herod Agrippa I |
| Nero | 54-68 | Persecution of Christians, 64 |
| Galba | 68-69 | |
| Otho | 69 | |
| Vitellius | 69 | |
| Vespasian | 69-79 | Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, 70 |
| Titus | 79-81 | |
| Domitian | 81-96 | Apostle John exiled to Isle of Patmos, received Revelation |

The Seven Churches



The Seven Churches of Revelation

| | Commendation | Criticism | Instruction | Promise |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Ephesus (2:1-7) | Rejects evil, perseveres, has patience | Love for Christ no longer fervent | Do the works you did at first | The tree of life |
| Smyrna (2:8-11) | Gracefully bears suffering | None | Be faithful until death | The crown of life |
| Pergamos (2:12-17) | Keeps the faith of Christ | Tolerates immorality, idolatry, and heresies | Repent | Hidden manna and a stone with a new name |
| Thyatira (2:18-29) | Love, service, faith, patience is greater than at first | Tolerates cult of idolatry and immorality | Judgment coming; keep the faith | Rule over nations and receive morning star |
| Sardis (3:1-6) | Some have kept the faith | A dead church | Repent; strengthen what remains | Faithful honored and clothed in white |
| Philadelphia (3:7-13) | Perseveres in the faith | None | Keep the faith | A place in God's presence, a new name, and the New Jerusalem |
| Laodicea (3:14-22) | None | Indifferent | Be zealous and repent | Share Christ's throne |

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