

DEDICATION

With deep affection I dedicate this volume to three of my faithful co-laborers:

First-my wife, who has spent countless hours reading and re-reading this manuscript, ascertaining that the doctrine I have preached through the years of my ministry is set forth in these pages.

Then, Jane Conley has spent numerous hours taking these messages from dictatape. She certainly has done a magnificent job, laboring untiringly - many times after hours.

Finally, Georgia Horne set these 543 pages In Vari-Type, preparing them for the press - a task requiring many faithful and painstaking hours.

My sincere thanks to these dear ladies, without whose faithful and untiring labor of love this book could not have become a reality.

Evangelist Oliver B. Greene

FOREWORD

The principle upon which this verse-by-verse study of Revelation proceeds, is that the contents of the book are, in the main, yet future and that the fulfillment of the greater part of Revelation cannot take place as long as the Church remains here on earth. When the Lord JESUS comes in the Rapture, and the Church is caught up to meet Him in the air, then the events in Revelation from chapter four through chapter twenty-two will occur. The New Testament Church - CHRIST's body and His bride - is now in the process of being called out and will be completed when the Rapture occurs. This is known as the Church Age - or the Dispensation of Grace. During this dispensation, both Jews and Gentiles are being saved and they all become members of the same body (I Corinthians 12:12-13). The New Testament Church is not a subject of prophecy, but is a New Testament revelation (Matthew 16:16-17, Ephesians 3).

Before our very eyes in this day, political and religious events are taking place which point to the end of this age of grace. But after the Rapture the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:27) will bring about startling changes here on this earth. The entire political system will be rearranged under Satan's prime minister - the Beast of Revelation. A gigantic confederation of ten powers will rule. The old Roman Empire in all of its power and glory will appear under new conditions. It will be guided and controlled by the "**Little Horn**" of Daniel 7, known in the New Testament as the Beast. His partner in murder and crime is the Antichrist, who will be the religious dictator and the head of the world church which is now in the making. What the Beast does politically, the Antichrist will do religiously. The two will control all political and religious activity here on earth. Bear in mind that this takes place after the Rapture of the church (Revelation 3:10; I Thessalonians 5:9).

Just before the King of Kings overthrows the Beast and the Man of Sin, everything that is vile religiously will head up under the leadership of the whore (the mystical Babylon). Mystical Babylon will be overthrown by the ten kings (Revelation 17:16) who at first were with her and upheld her in all of her vileness, but who later turn to destroy her. The ruin of "the great whore" is lamented by the kings, the merchants, and the people outside the Roman Empire (Revelation 18:9-18). The final destruction and annihilation of the great whore will be by Almighty God Himself (Revelation 18:2, 21-24). This will take place shortly before the destruction of the Beast. The Beast will be destroyed by the Lord in person when He comes in mighty power (read Revelation 19). The destruction of mystical Babylon and the destruction of the Beast are separate events. The destruction of mystical Babylon precedes the destruction of the Beast.

The events recorded in Revelation chapters four and following cannot take place as long as the Church is here on earth. Evil at the present is actively at work, and the mystery of iniquity is already working. But the mystery of

iniquity is restrained, kept in check, by the Holy Spirit (II Thessalonians 2:6, 7). The presence of the New Testament Church and the presence of the HOLY GHOST restrain the development of the "**mystery of iniquity!**"

The church of the Antichrist cannot be revealed and "**the faith**" cannot be totally annihilated from the visible Church until the church at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7) is raptured to meet the Lord in the air, and until the Laodiceans are spued out and remain here on the earth. However, the principles are at work which are surely and rapidly undermining the moral foundations of the professing church and of society in general. The stage is set and the higher critics are doing all in their power to undermine the faith.

The gates of hell, however, will never prevail against the Church - but the gates of hell will prevail against the visible local assembly. The true believers in the assembly will be taken out. The false professors will be left. The Rapture is imminent, and immediately after the Rapture the false messiah will come upon the scene of action. He will promise a Utopia . . . peace on earth; and for the space of three and a half years he will fulfill his promise.

And then - all hell will break loose, and "**except those days were shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened**" (Matthew 24:22).

The book we are about to study is The Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to Him by GOD the Father, and revealed by the Lord JESUS to John the Beloved on the Isle of Patmos. "**He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly**" (Revelation 22:20).

Let me join John the Beloved and say, "**AMEN! Even so, come Lord Jesus!**"

Oliver B. Greene

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

INTRODUCTION

Revelation means "*the veil rolled aside.*"

The visions recorded in the book of Revelation were seen by John the beloved disciple in the Isle of Patmos and the book was written about the year of our Lord 96.

It has three divisions.

This threefold division is found in Chapter One, verse 19. This verse is the key that unlocks the interpretation and the understanding of Revelation. Verse 19 speaks of the past, the present, and the future. There are sixty-six books in the Bible and every book has a key verse. Sometimes the key is hanging at the very entrance of the book, and this is true of Revelation.

1. "**Write . . . the things which thou hast seen.**" What John had just seen is recorded in verses 10 through 18. Christ in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands) is the central object of these verses, and this is past tense.

2. Write the things . . . "**which are.**" These things are recorded in chapters two and three. In these chapters the professing church is traced throughout its stay upon this earth from Pentecost to the Rapture. This is present tense and has been in progress since the Day of Pentecost.

3. Write the things . . . "**which shall be hereafter.**" The word "hereafter" literally means, "after these things," or "the things which will happen after the church age." This third division begins with chapter four and continues through chapter twenty-two, verse five. It is essentially the prophetic part of the book of Revelation. The third division is all future. The seals, the trumpets, the vials, Babylon, the marriage of the Lamb, the reign of the Antichrist, the battle of Armageddon, the one thousand year reign of Christ (the Millennium), Satan's imprisonment in the pit for that period of time . . . all these are future. Everything from Revelation 4:1 throughout the rest of the book is yet to be fulfilled.

At this present hour, we are living between Revelation 3:7 and Revelation 3:20. There are members of the church of Philadelphia (the true church) on earth today. Also present with us are the Laodiceans - the lukewarm professors who profess but do not possess the love of God and a genuine experience with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are living in the closing hours of the Dispensation of Grace. The next outstanding event in store for the Church is the Rapture, and this can take place at any moment. No man "**knows the day or the hour**" (Matthew 24:36) - but we are not ignorant concerning the times and the seasons (I Thessalonians 5:1, 7).

Those of us who are spiritually minded and who search the Scriptures can see that the coming of the Lord is certainly very, very near. There are twelve distinct sections in the book of Revelation. A study of these sections will help in a definite way to better understand the book:

1. Chapter 1:1-9: Introduction.
2. Chapter 1:10-18: We see Christ in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands) which represent the churches of Asia.
3. Chapters 2 and 3: We see the Church - God's witness on earth - growing in its departure from truth and its first love, moving farther and farther from God until the Laodiceans are spewed out of His mouth and the true believers at Philadelphia are caught out to meet the Lord in the air.
4. Chapters 4 and 5: We see the saints enthroned and glorified. Also read I Thessalonians 4:15-18 in connection with this division.
5. Chapters 6:1 through 8:1: We learn of the seven seals opened by the Lamb . . . the only One worthy to remove the seals from the Book. (The seventh chapter is parenthetical and very important. We will study it carefully when we reach that point in this series.)
6. Chapters 8 and 9, chapter 11:15-19: We see the seven trumpets which are sounded by seven angels.
7. Chapters 12 through 14: We see two actors (in chapter 13) and the seven outstanding results of their actions.
8. Chapters 15 and 16: We will study the seven vials of wrath poured out upon the earth. These vials are filled with the wrath of God in His dealings with Israel and this earth.
9. Chapters 17 and 18: This section has to do with Babylon . . . the mystical Babylon in her political and ecclesiastical affairs in the closing days of time. We will see her utter destruction - both political and ecclesiastical.
10. Chapters 19:1 through 21:8: This section has to do with events from the fall of Babylon until the eternal state begins. It opens with rejoicing in Heaven . . . Hallelujahs that sound like "**many waters**," and closes with the terrible picture of eternal misery in the lake of fire.
11. Chapters 21:9 through 22:5: We will study the Bride of the Lamb (the New Testament Church). We will see the Bride and Bridegroom in the Millennium in all of its splendor.
12. Chapter 22:6-21: In these solemn verses we find warnings, threatenings, encouragements . . . and the last prayer recorded in God's Holy Word.

In chapters two and three, we study the moral history of the church here on earth in the successive periods of its history from the close of the first century of Christianity to the final rejection of the Laodiceans, and the Rapture. Chapters four and five move from the earth in to Heaven, and we see the saints removed to their heavenly home.

The Rapture takes place between the last verse in chapter three and the first verse in chapter four. (Although Revelation does not mention the Rapture, it certainly teaches it.) The Lord God Almighty saw fit to reveal the Rapture to the Apostle Paul. John does not speak of it in the same language used by Paul as the Holy Spirit dictated this tremendous truth to him, but certainly the Rapture of the saints takes place immediately following the close of Revelation chapter three. Chapter four and following is future tense, after the Church age.

The following portions in Revelation are parenthetical:

1. Chapter 7, between the sixth and seventh seals.
2. Chapter 10 and chapter 11:1-13, between the sixth and seventh trumpets.
3. Chapter 14:1-4, between the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the pouring out of the vials of the wrath of God.
4. Chapter 16:13-16: These verses record what John saw between the sixth and seventh vials.
5. Chapter 19:1-10: This records what John saw between the pouring out of the seventh vial and the personal return of the Lord Jesus in power and glory, immediately following the destruction of Babylon.
6. Chapters 21:9 through 22:5: There may be some who will not agree that this section is parenthetical. but if you will follow me closely I believe you will agree. John was taken into a great high mountain in the Spirit, and there he saw the Lamb's wife - the New Jerusalem.

As we study Revelation, we will clearly see seven chief actors or persons in the coming crises, the coming judgments, and the glorious reign of righteousness in this earth:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, who is worthy to reign because He purchased the Church (His bride) at the tremendous price of His own blood (Acts 20:28, Revelation 5:12).
2. The great dragon, the old serpent, Satan, the devil (Revelation 12:7-9; 13:7; 20:10). In his last evil mission . . . his last gigantic drive here on earth . . . Satan will be supported by his two distinguished ministers - the Beast and the False Prophet.
3. The two Beasts - one religious, the other political (Revelation 11:7, chapters 12 and 13, 14:9, 16:7, 19:19-20, 20:10).
4. The Antichrist, who will be the false messiah.

(Please read John 5:43.) Paul calls him the “**man of sin . . . the son of perdition . . . the lawless one . . . the wicked**” (Read II Thessalonians chapter two). This man is also known as “**the false prophet**” (Revelation 16:13, Revelation 19:20, Revelation 20:10). He is referred to as “**another beast**” (Revelation 13:11-17). Daniel refers to him as “**the king**” (Daniel 11:36-39). Isaiah mentions him in Isaiah 30:33.

5. The King of the North (Daniel 11:23-25).

Read also Isaiah chapters 10, 14, 25, 28 and 31:1-8).

6. The King of the South (Daniel 11).

7. Gog - the last dictator of Russia, is the last actor in this great drama of the ending of the ages and the beginning of the never-ending eternity. Gog will be the head of the great northern army which will sweep down upon Israel when she is safely dwelling in her own land. Study carefully Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 and you will learn much about Gog (the ruler), and Magog (the land), and the allies of Gog who will attack Israel and be defeated on the mountains of Israel.

These characters that will ally with Satan in his last drive against Israel are of all different nationalities. Gog and the King of the North will act together in the political oppression against Israel. The King of the North (Russia), is much, much more distinguished and powerful than the King of the South (Egypt). The Beast and the False Prophet are confederates. They will work together perfectly. The former will have to do with the Civil power, while the latter will be the Religious authority . . . a dictator energized by Satan.

The King of the South (Egypt), will play a very small part in this last battle, as compared with his powerful brother from the North (Russia). The five persons referred to in this portion of Scripture are actual men. They are not systems, nor spirit-beings - but real live men such as we. They will have their various roles assigned to them by Satan, and they will be energized by him for their ungodly activity in the end-time.

But Jesus, the Lamb, will destroy them all in the final battle. They will fight against the Jews (read Psalm 83 and Zechariah 14). They will also fight against the Lord Jesus Christ (Read Revelation 19.) The Lord Jesus will be victorious in this final battle. Righteousness will conquer unrighteousness, good will overrun evil, light will wipe out all darkness, and in the sweet bye-and-bye all things will be made new. There will be a new Heaven, a new Earth, a new Jerusalem . . . new nations; ALL things will be made new. I join with John the beloved disciple and pray, **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”**

The only way to understand Revelation is to read it. Let it say exactly what it says, and look to the Spirit (I John 2:27) to reveal the deep truths He would have us know. No one will ever understand all of Revelation. May God bless you richly as you **“read and hear the words of this prophecy.”**

~ end of introduction ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER ONE

The Patmos Vision

1. **The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:**
2. **Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.**
3. **Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.**

This book is not the book of “Revelations” (plural). It is not “the Revelation of St. John the Divine.” The word “Revelation” is singular - and as the first verse clearly declares, this book is “**the REVELATION OF Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him.**”

In this interesting and only prophetic book of the New Testament, the Lord Jesus is unveiled. The future is made known in a series of visions, beheld by John the Beloved who was on the Isle of Patmos. John saw in the Spirit things that will happen literally. In Revelation we will see light and darkness . . . righteousness and unrighteousness . . . good and evil opposing each other. We will also see Jehovah God, the Lamb Christ Jesus, and Satan. We will see men - saved and unsaved. We will study angels - holy and unholy. We will witness the greatest blood bath and the greatest fire this earth or any planet will ever know.

As we study the book of Revelation, the scenes will change - from time to eternity, from Heaven to earth, from the earth to the lake of fire, from the river of blood (200 miles long, 6 feet deep and ten miles wide) to the appearing of myriads of millions of white horses with their riders in the sky! (Revelation 19:11-16). Yes, the veil is rolled back. The result? God is victorious. The millennium and the eternal glories of Christ shine forth in Revelation in undying beauty and splendor found no other place in Holy Scripture. At the consummation of all things - when all things are made new - then will be the complete fulfillment of the words of the prophet, “**He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied**” (Isaiah 53:11a).

As we move toward the end of the book, we will witness a new Heaven and a new earth (chapters 21 and 22) and we will see the righteous and holy abiding in their eternal dwelling places. As we near the end of the book (chapters 20:10 and 21:8) we will witness the horrible lake of fire and those who will spend eternity in this terrible place of torment.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John” (Revelation 1:1).

The very first words in the book of Revelation clearly reveal to us that these twenty-two chapters contain **“the Revelation of Jesus Christ”**; that this revelation was given BY God, and that it was given for the purpose of showing unto God’s servants (bond-slaves) things which **“must shortly come to pass.”** God’s angel appeared and spoke to John the Beloved, making the Revelation known to him.

It is not just a revelation - or the unveiling - of the person of Christ, although in the book we see His high priestly, kingly glory; but the greater portion of it is given over to the unveiling of those events which will precede and accompany the return of the Lord Jesus to this earth.

This truth is clearly seen from the fact that the Revelation was given to Jesus Christ by God the Father to show unto His servants **“things which must shortly come to pass.”**

Just before His death, Jesus was asked by His disciples, **“When shall these things be?”** (referring to things Jesus had declared would come to pass - Mark 13:1-3).

He replied, **“Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son** (the Greek word used here for neither literally means not yet), **but the Father.”**

After the ascension of Jesus, He received from the Heavenly Father the information the disciples had asked for. And before the close of the first century of the Church, while at least one of the disciples (John the Beloved) was still living, God sent an angel to make known to John (and through him to the churches in Asia) the information that is unveiled in this great prophetic book of Revelation. Therefore, we see that the Scriptures would be incomplete without this book - without the unveiling of the Lord Jesus and the events that will occur before and during His return to the earth.

Perhaps someone is asking, **“Why did the Holy Spirit say, ‘Things which must shortly come to pass,’ since it has already been more than 1900 years since the words were spoken?”**

II Peter 3:8 answers that question: **“. . . Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”**

We must remember that we are dealing with The Lord God, and even though time may seem long to us, it has only been a little over two days (according to God’s great Time Clock of prophecy) since these words were uttered. Therefore, to those of us who are spiritually minded, who compare spiritual things with spiritual, it has not been a long time. It has only been two days.

It is true that John the Beloved is the writer of the book of Revelation, but he is not the author. The Author of Revelation is the Lord Jesus, Himself. The Apostle John was the scribe . . . the holy man to whom God spoke these words. It seems that the Holy Spirit desires to make this known clearly and unmistakably. Revelation 1:1 and Revelation 22:8 clearly declare that the revelation came from God Almighty-not from man.

Revelation is the only book in the New Testament that Jesus personally closes with His own signature:

“I, Jesus, HAVE SENT MINE ANGEL TO TESTIFY UNTO YOU THESE THINGS IN THE CHURCHES!” (Revelation 22:16). The book of Revelation is not history, as some would have you believe. This book records things past, things present, and things yet to come.

The angel is unnamed. He is simply referred to as **“HIS angel.”** The order of the Revelation is FROM God, TO Christ - then BY Christ’s angel to John, and thence TO US . . . to all believers, servants, bondsmen . . . all who are born again. The first verse closes with the words **“. . . unto His servant, John.”**

John the Beloved always writes in the third person in the four books bearing his name, but here in the book of Revelation he writes in the first person. He names himself three times in the introduction: Chapter 1, verses 1, 4, and 9. He names himself two times in the closing chapters of the book: Chapter 21:2, chapter 22:8.

Verse 2: **“Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”**

The Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ form the sum total of all the visions and revelations beheld by John the Beloved in Revelation. John not only heard the words recorded here, but he also saw the visions.

In the Spirit, John saw what will literally take place upon this earth and in the heavenlies at the consummation of all things.

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

The book of Revelation promises a blessing - and warns of a curse. The blessing is for those who read the book and keep the things that are written therein. The curse is described in Revelation 22, and will befall those who tamper with the message of this prophecy.

The word **“blessed”** means happy. So in spite of the fact that some preachers declare that this book is a frightening book, a book to be ignored, the Holy Spirit in the very outset declares that it is a blessed book, and that it brings joy and eternal pleasure to the soul that reads it.

One outstanding commentator declares that this verse means that they will be blessed that read this book aloud to the assemblies. That simply means blessed is the man who reads it aloud in the church, and blessed are those who hear the reading and obey the message. Be that as it may, the book carries a definite blessing for those who read it, those who hear it and who keep these verbally inspired communications which came from God, through the angel to John.

The blessing is stated in Revelation 1:3 and again in Revelation 22:7. The curse is clearly set forth in Revelation 22:18-19. **God have mercy on some of the men who tamper with the book of Revelation in this day of liberalism and lying prophets!**

Paul admonished Timothy, “. . . **Give attendance to reading**” (I Timothy 4:13). For many years in the first centuries of Christianity, the Scriptures were read aloud in the assemblies, but this has been completely done away with today, with the exception of a small portion at the beginning of most Sunday morning services. Some churches today do not even have what is known as “responsive reading.” However, those who read Revelation - whether in public or in private, whether they read it aloud or silently, may rest assured of the Lord’s blessing because it is promised here, and God cannot break His promise. In the Jewish assemblies the Law declared that wherever as many as ten persons were gathered together, they could indulge in public reading of the Word of God. You will see this clearly set forth in Luke 4:16-20, Acts 13:14-27, Acts 15:21.

Verse 3 closes with the words, “. . . **for the time is at hand.**” Again, someone may be saying, “The writer John must have been mistaken, or he must have misunderstood, because it has been 2000 years since those words were dictated to John the Beloved.” But again - let me remind you that ever since Jesus came to this earth, was crucified, buried and rose again, ascended back to the Father where He is now seated at the right hand of the Father to mediate for us (I Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 1:3), we have been living in the last days.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1,2). Here the Holy Spirit clearly testifies that these are the last days. I emphasize the statement: Since the Church began, we have been living in the last days.

To further substantiate that statement, listen to these words: **“Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”** (Hebrews 9:25, 26).

Jesus came to this earth literally in the “end time,” or - the end of the world. Since Jesus came and died on the cross, we have been living in the closing days of time.

Again we read, **“Now all these things are happened unto them for ensamples (examples) and they are written for our admonition, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME.”** Surely these three Scriptures will satisfy the mind of anyone who cares to know the truth concerning this age. We are now living in the closing days of time and have been since Jesus came and died on the cross. Therefore, these things will **“shortly come to pass,”** and truthfully, **“the time is at hand!”**

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 1:4-6:

4. **John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;**
5. **And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,**

6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The salutation is addressed to “**the seven churches which are in Asia.**” The statement does not refer to the great continent of Asia, nor does it refer to the whole of Asia Minor. These seven churches were located in the western end of Asia Minor, bordering on the Aegean and the great Mediterranean seas. The area referred to here is about the size of the state of Pennsylvania. Reference to “**the seven churches which are in Asia**” does not mean that there were only seven churches in that particular district.

The Word of God clearly teaches us that there were at least three other churches in that area:

- The church at Colosse (Colossians 1:2),
- The church at Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13),
- The church at Troas (Acts 20:6, 7).

The seven churches named in the second and third chapters of Revelation represent the churches throughout the church age. They are representative churches, chosen by the Spirit because of certain characteristics typical of the character of the Church of Christ - not only in the day when John wrote, but on down through the centuries until the Church is raptured to meet the Lord in the air. These seven churches represent periods of time clearly defined in both sacred and secular history. We will see this very clearly as we study the churches individually.

The capital of this area was the city of Ephesus.

We learn from the book of Ephesians that Ephesus was the capital of idol worship in the first century of Christianity.

Someone may ask, “Why did the Holy Spirit name seven churches? Why not six . . . or why not name ALL of the churches in that locality?”

In the book of Revelation you will notice that “seven” is used frequently . . . seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven personages, seven vials, seven dooms, and last but by no means least, the seven new things. We will study each of these as we come to them in the different sections of Revelation. There are numerous other places in Scripture where that number is used, as when referring to the seven feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23, and the seven kingdom parables in Matthew 13. Seven is the number of perfection . . . God’s number. The Lord God labored six days, and rested on the seventh day. It is the number of completion.

In the first six churches in our study, you will note an overcoming company of true believers, truly born again saints. However, in the seventh (the Laodicean church) there is no saved group; all are spued out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus. In the message to the churches, true believers are repeatedly assured of safety and blessing from God.

Before the terrible hurricanes and tornadoes of God’s great judgment begin to sweep across this earth, the Church will be raptured out of the earth and caught up to meet Jesus in the clouds in the air. The Church will have a grandstand seat in the sky when the last great judgments fall upon the wicked on this earth.

God did not judge Sodom until Lot was safe outside the city walls (Genesis 19). Nor did God utterly destroy Jericho until Rahab was saved (Joshua 6). This will be just as true in the future; God will not judge this earth, nor the wicked in the final judgment, until the Church is taken out of the earth. That promise is clear: **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”** (Revelation 3:10). This verse definitely refers to the great Tribulation period. The Rapture takes place at the beginning of chapter four. A door is opened in Heaven and a Voice cries out, **“Come up hither!”** And the Church is raptured out of the earth to meet the Lord in the air. Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne” (verse 4).

The common need among all the redeemed is GRACE AND PEACE.

Without the grace of God we would all burn in hell. Without the peace of God in our hearts, we would all be miserable. Grace is the source of all blessing. Peace is the rightful and happy possession of every born again, blood-washed child of God (John 14:27). Grace and peace come by and through **“Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.”** This clearly sets forth the eternal existence of the Lord God. God is an eternal Spirit. God has always been, God always will be.

Perhaps someone is saying, “Mr. Greene, explain that.” I thank God that I cannot explain it. If I could I would be as great as God is, and I am so happy that my God is greater in wisdom and in power than I am. I would not serve a God whom I could explain.

I want a God who is greater than human explanation. I want a God who is too great to be defined in the language of man. God IS, God has always been, and God always will be. God lives in the eternal present. The grace of God brought salvation down to man (Hebrews 2:9) and it is only through the grace of God that we have peace with God (Romans 5:1).

In this verse, John mentions **“the seven Spirits which are before His throne.”** Please read Isaiah 11:1-5 in connection with this, and we will discuss it more completely a little later in the study.

Verse 5: **“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”**

Certainly it was Jesus Christ who came into the world, and He was **“the Faithful Witness”** . . . He was the Word in flesh (John 1:1, John 1:14). He was also the first begotten of the dead (I Corinthians 15:1-30), and He will be the Prince of all kings in the sweet by-and-by (Isaiah 9:6, Luke 1:28-35). It is the blood of Jesus Christ that **“cleanseth us from all sin”** (I John 1:7). **“Without the shedding of blood is no remission”** (Hebrews 9:22). We are redeemed by the precious blood (I Peter 1:18-23).

Certainly in this day of liberalism and modernism, we should cry out as never before that it IS the blood of the Lamb that washes away our sins.

Verse 6: **“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”**

Through the writer, John, the Spirit is here glorifying the Lamb who left the Father’s bosom, came into the world and shed His blood on the Cross that we might have remission of sins.

Those of us who are born again are kings and priests:

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Peter 2:9). This verse definitely refers to Gentile believers . . . those of us who in times past were without God and without hope, but who through the death of Jesus are made sons of God.

Those of us who are members of the New Testament Church, born again believers, have been washed white in the precious Blood of Jesus. The moment we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we become Sons of God and have access to God through the Blood. We are kings, we are priests . . . and we approach God through our Mediator, the Lord Jesus (I Timothy 2:5).

Therefore, in this day and age there is no such thing as priesthood separate from laity . . . we are ALL priests when we are born of God’s Holy Spirit and washed in the Blood of the Lamb. We approach the throne of God only through a new and living way, purchased by Jesus on the Cross (Hebrews 10:19, 20).

A PROPHETIC DECLARATION

Revelation 1:7:

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

The second coming of our Lord is a vital part of Christian doctrine, and there has never been a time of greater need for the preaching of this truth than today.

It is essential to distinguish the two parts of His second coming. There is definitely a period of time between the Rapture (the time when Jesus comes FOR His saints) and the Revelation (when He comes **WITH** His saints). The Rapture is mentioned in John 14:3; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15-18; and I Corinthians 15:23.

All these Scriptures refer to the next great event for Christians - the Rapture of the Church - the time when Jesus comes for His saints, and every living, born again, blood-washed child of God will be caught up to meet Him; the bodies of all the saints who have died will be raised incorruptible, and we will all be caught up together to meet the Lord in the clouds in the air.

But there is another group of Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments which distinctly teach another coming, and verse 7 in our present chapter refers to this time when Jesus will come **WITH** His saints. (In connection with this read Jude 14; Zechariah 14:5; Colossians 3:4 and Revelation 19:11-14).

The statement, “**Behold, He cometh with clouds**” agrees with Daniel’s statement “**I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven**” (Daniel 7:13). This also corresponds with the prophetic utterance of the Lord on the Mount of Olives: “**They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory**” (Matthew 24:30b).

All these Scriptures refer to the Revelation - the time when Jesus will come in the air and EVERY EYE shall see Him. When the Rapture takes place, no person will see the Lord Jesus. He will not come to the earth; He will descend in the air, the trumpet will sound, the voice of the archangel will call the saints up to meet Jesus in the air. He will not stand on the earth when He comes in the Rapture, but He WILL stand on the earth when He comes in the second phase of His return. Zechariah 14:4 definitely describes the Lord Jesus standing on the Mount of Olives.

The prophets throughout the era of the Old Testament had two great prophetic themes: Judgment - and Glory. The Old Testament prophet did not see the church age it was a mystery until it was revealed to the Apostle Paul, who makes known that revelation in the book of Ephesians. As the end of the church age draws near, Jews and Gentiles will become wicked as never before on the face of the earth (Isaiah 60:2).

The nations will be gathered in open rebellion against the Lamb of God (Revelation 19:19) and they will fight against Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2).

Therefore, the earth must be cleared of evil and ungodly men before the Lord Jesus comes back to reign in glory, with His Church. Before leaving this section, let me point out that Christ is nowhere said to come with the clouds to gather the Church out of the earth. On the contrary, the saints go up in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17). God provides a royal carriage to convey the saints from the earth to meet the Lord in the air. Clouds in the Old Testament were the well-known symbol of the presence of the Lord with His people (Exodus 13:21-40; Exodus 40:34-38; Luke 9:35).

Christ is not only said to come “in the clouds” (Mark 13:26) but He will come with the clouds (Revelation 1:7) and in the clouds (Matthew 24:30). The clouds which attend His coming are symbols of His majesty and glory. Read Psalm 18:9-12.

The Lord sits on the clouds, as on His throne. We believers will be caught up in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17). The Lord Jesus ascended in the clouds (Acts 1:9) and He will come in a cloud (Luke 21:27). These facts are very interesting to spiritually minded believers. The statement “**every eye shall see Him**” is to be taken literally. Every eye will not see Him at the same identical split second - but every eye will see Jesus. One class is singled out from the mass of mankind and mentioned as “**they which pierced Him.**”

The entire earth will be in open conflict against the Lord God and His Anointed (read Psalm 2), but this one group is pointed out specifically. John is the only one who records the incident of the Gentile spear which pierced the Saviour’s side (John 19:33-37). Pilate admitted three times that there was no fault in Jesus (John 18:38-19:6); but in spite of the fact that Rome knew Jesus to be innocent, they allowed Him to be scourged and crucified. The Jews screamed aloud for His death. They invited His blood to be not only upon them, but upon their children; and their children have inherited that guilt for generations. They will see Him “**whom they pierced**” (read Zechariah 12:10).

The peoples referred to as **“those who pierced Him”** are the people whom we know today as Jews.

“All the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him.” This coming in the clouds in great glory and power will take place over the entire universe at the same identical time. All the peoples of all the earth will see the Son of God coming in the clouds of Glory. In chapter six we will learn that a world-wide prayer meeting will immediately be in progress . . . but the prayers will be unanswered.

Verse 7 closes with the words **“. . . Even so, Amen.”** That is a double **“amen,”** and certainly carries much weight spiritually. Amen means **“so be it.”** The Spirit is saying here, **“This is true. It will happen exactly as stated.”**

A DIVINE DECLARATION

Revelation 1:8:

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty”

The announcement of these divine titles - **“I am Alpha and Omega . . . Lord God . . . the Almighty!”** - is certainly a fitting conclusion to the introduction of **“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM.”** God Himself is the speaker here . . . the great **“I AM.”**

He announces His own titles. The words **“Alpha”** and **“Omega”** refer to the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet. God is the source of all things . . . He is the beginning of all things. He is the beginning of all truth, all life, all creation . . . He is the Alpha. But He is also the Omega - the end. God’s glory is the ultimate goal of His program. Everything finds its answer in Jehovah God.

God is eternal. He has always been (John 4:23,24). Jesus is God in flesh (II Corinthians 5:19; John 1:1, 14).

God is one God, manifest in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Trinity has always been. The Lord God is an eternal Spirit. He was, He is, He is to come . . . He is the Almighty! In Him all things consist. Without Him nothing could continue, either in secular life or in heavenly life. Without Him the solar systems would cease to operate and the earth would fly from its orbit to dash through space into oblivion. God is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the Lord . . . which IS, which WAS, which IS TO COME! He is the Almighty!

“THINGS THOU HAST SEEN” - THE PATMOS VISION

Revelation 1:9-18

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

10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11. **Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.**
12. **And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;**
13. **And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.**
14. **His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;**
15. **And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.**
16. **And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.**
17. **And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:**
18. **I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

In verse 9 we learn that John was not a superhuman.

He was a man just like you and me. John was our brother in the Lord. He was also our brother in persecution and in patience. He lived during the time of terrible persecution under Nero, and received the Revelation during his exile to Patmos for his testimony and for the Word of God.

With the exception of John the Beloved, all of the disciples were martyred; but in God's providence John was exiled to the lonely island of Patmos because God had a job for him to do.

God's servant is indestructible . . . he cannot be destroyed by the devil and all the forces of hell until God is finished with that servant here on earth. John was such a servant. He was faithful and true to the Lord God Almighty. The island to which he was banished was almost unknown in that day. It was extremely dreary and lonely.

It lay in the Aegean Sea, just off the coast of Asia Minor.

It is only fifteen miles in circumference, and today it is inhabited by a small settlement of Greeks.

When the emperor banished John to the Isle of Patmos, he thought he had destroyed the old fanatical preacher; but God made the bitter wrath of the ungodly emperor to praise Him! God will carry out His program, even if He must use an ungodly Herod, Pharaoh, Nero - or, in our day, a Khrushchev to fulfill His plans. God does not compromise with the devil nor with sin, and many times God causes the devil's program to backfire and in the end bring honor and praise to God. Such was the case with John and his exile to Patmos. The devil sometimes gets his wires crossed, and what he thinks will hurt, actually helps God's saint. The devil slipped up in his plans when he caused the emperor to exile John to the lonely, barren island of Patmos. For John, his stay there knew no dull moments. Every minute was alive.

There are three great periods of determined suffering for God's people:

1. The sufferings under pagan Rome.
2. The persecution under papal Rome during the middle ages and the dark ages.
3. The coming persecution under the power of the two Beasts in Revelation 13 - the Ecclesiastical Beast and the Political Beast. These Beasts will be energized by the devil himself. It will be a time of such persecution as has not been known in the past, or at any time during man's stay upon this earth. The Jews will suffer most during the reign of the two Beasts.

John the beloved disciple was not schooled in the ability to trim the Word of God to fit the times in which he lived.

The modernists and liberals of today are trained in our preacher- manufacturing plants - known as schools of theology. They are trained exactly how to preach a gospel that will suit the times and the people to whom they preach. But John preached the Word without apology, and because of his true Gospel he was banished for his testimony and the Word of God which he preached.

The Word of God declares, **“If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus he shall suffer persecution”** (II Timothy 3:12). The only reason some of us are not exiled or thrown into prison is simply because we do not preach as fervently and as sternly as did Paul, John, Peter and others. This modern “Santa Claus” religion that is sweeping the country today is not the religion Jesus taught and John practiced. Jesus did not say, “Follow me and I will put a big automobile in your garage, money in your bank, and give you a host of friends and a flowery bed of ease!” Jesus said, “Follow me - and I will give you a Cross to carry! I will let you walk beside me in my yoke. I will let you come after me and see where I live . . . no place to lay my head. And if you are willing to carry the cross, you can be my disciple, but if you are not willing to carry the cross, you cannot be my disciple, you cannot share my crown. If you refuse to suffer with me, you cannot reign with me. If you put your hand to the plow and look back, you are not fit to be my disciple.

“If you deny me, I will deny you!”

That does not sound like the modern, easy-going, happy-go-lucky, chocolate-covered, streamlined religion of today. Certainly it does not. Every saint will suffer for his testimony if he or she is godly and lives a godly life. But **“the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us”** (Romans 8:18).

We have the blessed promise that if we suffer with Him we will reign with Him. Thank God, the sufferings of this present day are insignificant compared to the glory we will share with Jesus!

The John to whom God gave the Revelation on the Isle of Patmos is the same beloved John to whom Jesus entrusted His mother on the day of His crucifixion. This is also the same John to whom God gave the marvelous salvation message (John 20:30, 31).

He is the same John to whom the Holy Spirit dictated the three Epistles that bear his name - I, II, and III John. This is the John **“whom Jesus loved”** . . . the John who laid his head on Jesus' breast at the last supper and asked, **“Is it I, Lord?”** He was a man just like you and me - but he was a man entirely yielded to the will of God.

He served God with all of his heart and soul, with all of his strength. He was perfectly contented to suffer whatsoever he was called upon to suffer for the sake of the Word of God. He did not mention the trial, the condemnation, the parting with friends (if he had any friends . . . I wonder if he had even one friend except Jesus! Not one word of reproach or complaint fell from the lips of John the Beloved. His arrest, trial, and the proceedings before his cruel exile, are passed over in complete silence, not even worthy to be mentioned by him. He simply says, **“I was in the Isle called Patmos.”**

When a little persecution comes to some of us, we cry long and loud about what we are called upon to suffer for Jesus' sake.

When some of our friends treat us coldly, we call such treatment persecution. Most of us do not know the meaning of the word.

We do not know what it means to suffer for Christ's sake. But if Jesus delays His coming much longer, I am sure that some of us will learn the meaning of real persecution for Jesus' sake. If Jesus tarries, I am sure there will be ministers of the pure Gospel of Grace who will seal their testimonies with their life's blood. This has already happened in South America and in other places outside the United States, but I doubt not that we here in America will see such persecution if Jesus tarries.

Some dear young preachers have already been banished from their churches by the denominational bosses because they preached the pure Gospel instead of the gospel of the machine. Some preachers have been banished from their denomination because they refused to deny their convictions, they refused to conform to the denominational dictators. I am sure it will get worse and worse as the end approaches . . . but say! Preachers and Christians - if they do throw you out, do not compromise. Stand up for Jesus and for His pure Word!

In the ninth chapter of John's Gospel we have the story of the blind boy whose eyes Jesus opened. The Pharisees cast the boy out of the synagogue, but Jesus was standing nearby to comfort and cheer him! If you are thrown out one door, God will open a bigger door for you to enter. **“If God be for us, who can be against us?”** If we love the Lord, if we are in His will, whatever may come our way is for our good and for God's glory.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad when you are persecuted for righteousness' sake. God has greater things in store for those who can bear persecution. Thank God for saints who can suffer and never complain!

The enemies of Jesus said, **“He hath a devil.”** They called Him an illegitimate. They said everything ugly about the pure sinless Lamb of God. They cut off the head of John the Baptist, they killed James, they crucified Peter. They cut Paul's head off. They banished John to Patmos. If you serve the Lord Jesus, how do you hope to live on easy street if these men suffered for righteousness' sake? The line of least resistance is the route of the devil. Suffer with Christ and you will certainly reign with Him; but if you deny Him, He will certainly deny you.

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

The term “**the Lord’s Day**” is found but once in the Scriptures. Most outstanding Bible authorities agree that the first day of the week is meant by the statement here in verse 10. The reason is found when we faithfully compare Scripture with Scripture.

There is a difference between “**the Lord’s day**” and “**the day of the Lord.**” The day of the Lord refers to a prophetic day. Read carefully I Corinthians 5:5, II Corinthians 1:14, I Thessalonians 5:2. It seems evident that “**the Lord’s day**” here refers to the first day of the week because of the character of the first vision.

In verses 12 through 20 in our present chapter we see Christ glorified in the midst of the churches, and certainly this could not refer to the period of coming judgment spoken of in both the Old and New Testaments as the “**day of the Lord.**” I personally believe that John was in the Spirit on the first day of the week. I believe the statement here refers to the day Jesus rose from the dead . . . the day the New Testament assemblies met to worship, pray and present their gifts. I do not believe it refers to the day of the Lord which is definitely yet future.

If you would like to know more about “**the day of the Lord,**” read Isaiah 2:12; Joel 1:15; Joel 2:1; Joel 3:14; Ezekiel 13:5; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; II Corinthians 1:14; I Thessalonians 5:2; II Peter 3:10. In these Scriptures you will read of the day in which the Lord returns to this earth in mighty judgment.

The first day of the week known as the Lord’s Day is very significant in Scripture.

- Our Lord Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week (John 20).
- The New Testament church was born on the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:16 and Acts 2).
- The saints in the New Testament church brought their gifts to God and presented them on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1, 2).

The Lord’s Day is no ordinary day; neither is the Lord’s Supper an ordinary supper. Both are extraordinary, in that both the DAY and the SUPPER are HIS. They are sacred in character and should be revered by all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

“**I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.**” These words are very significant . . . they make known to us the position of John: His back was toward the church, his face was toward the Kingdom. John heard the voice behind him. The voice was in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands) - the churches.

Therefore, we know John’s back was to the churches and his face was toward the kingdom of God, even at that early date.

Ecclesiastical ruin and decay foretold by the Apostle Paul (Acts 20:28-32; Romans 11; I Timothy 3) had already set in. During the days of Paul, certain heresies had already crept into the church, which heresies Paul denounced in his Corinthian and Colossian letters. Heresies were much more fully developed in John’s day, and in the second century of Christianity they had their own distinctive schools and in all boldness openly fought the person of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, denouncing His deity, His grace, and His blood.

In John’s day not only were the heresies very prominent, but added to these church dangers was the terrific persecuting power of the ungodly emperors and their henchmen.

Certainly we do not wonder that the eyes of the aged apostle and honored prisoner of the Gospel were directed onward to the glory and the strength of the coming kingdom . . . the kingdom when righteousness will cover the earth as the waters now cover the sea, and wickedness will be put down. Right will be vindicated, wrong will be punished, and King Jesus will sit on the throne in Jerusalem.

The Church was not put in the world to convert the world. The Church was put here for a testimony. One day there will be peace on earth and good will toward men, but the Church will not bring about this peace nor the good will. King Jesus will bring peace to earth when He sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem and the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters now cover the sea.

The “**great voice as of a trumpet**” would suggest that a matter of public importance was about to be communicated to John the Beloved, in which the whole Church should be definitely interested. The vision which John was about to witness behind him is introductory to the entire series of visions revealed one by one in the remaining chapters of Revelation. This vision which John is about to see is the first of the visions (or revelations) given to John while there in exile on Patmos. How fitting that the first vision John saw presented the Christ of God in manhood - yet in power and majesty in the midst of the churches!

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

The trumpet-voice of the Lord Jesus signified that something of great importance was about to be announced.

The trumpet voice instructed John to write in a book what he was about to hear and see. The book was to be sent to the seven churches in Asia. The seven churches were named by the voice. As I have already pointed out, there were other churches in Asia Minor. But the Spirit of God had a moral end in view when He chose these seven churches to whom the message was directed.

Seven times the Spirit admonishes, “**Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.**” But notice: In the first three churches - Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos - the statement is made before the promise to the overcomer (Revelation 2:7; 2:11; and 2:17).

In the last four churches - Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea - the command to hear “**what the Spirit saith to the churches**” is given after the promise to the overcomer (Revelation 2:29, Revelation 3:6, Revelation 3:13, Revelation 3:22).

Thus the seven churches are divided into two distinct groups. The first group, three churches; the second group, four churches. The seven assemblies named exhibit certain marked characteristics which separately stamp their character on the church universal, in successive stages of the history of the Church from its beginning to the Rapture. Collectively, these seven features distinguish the Church throughout the earth at any given time.

Then the very day John received the Revelation, and also in this day and hour in which we live, these seven assemblies give us the history of the Church in its entirety until the Rapture.

Two of the churches (Smyrna and Philadelphia) are commended and there is not one word of reproof spoken against them. However, there is no word of commendation to the church at Laodicea.

The messages to these seven churches were directed to the seven local assemblies there in Asia Minor at the time John received the Revelation; but it is equally clear that they were representative of the whole Church, not only at any given moment during her stay here on earth, but also in the successive moral stages of the history of the Church up to the moment the Church will be caught up to meet the Lord Jesus in the air.

As we study these churches one by one we will see that secular history bears out the fact that conditions did exist as they are pointed out in the messages to the seven churches.

After the third chapter of Revelation, we have no mention of nor allusion to these seven Asiatic churches.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches” is seven times repeated and signifies that the believer should have a keen ear to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit as long as the Church remains here upon this earth. As long as the Church remains on earth, the Spirit will remain on earth; however, when the Church is caught up to meet Jesus in the air, the Holy Spirit will go out with the Church (II Thessalonians 2:7).

Born again believers are led by the Spirit in this day of grace, and every born again person is indwelt by the Spirit (Romans 8:9; Romans 8:14; Romans 8:16). I believe in the local church . . . I believe in the local assembly of believers - but brick and mortar do not make a church. The Church is made up of born again individuals, each individual saved by grace, baptized into the body of Christ and kept by the power of God. Each individual is responsible to God for himself or herself. In this day, God deals with individuals. Every child of God has the Spirit of God to guide him (Romans 8:14). Every born again child of God has the Spirit to teach him (I John 2:27). Therefore, it is the business of the believer in this day to **“hear what the Spirit says.”**

Verse 12: **“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.”**

John, on turning to see the voice of the speaker, saw seven golden candlesticks - or, as the Greek word means, “lamps.” What these lamps signified is made known in verse 20: **“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”** We see clearly that the seven candlesticks (or golden lamps) are seven assemblies. The number seven in the Word of God points to what is morally complete . . . gold, the most precious of metals, signifies divine righteousness.

Therefore, in the symbol of seven golden lamps, we have the Church in its completeness and perfection here upon the earth. The true Church is perfect, and without spot or wrinkle . . . not the local assembly, the visible church, but the invisible Church as described in Ephesians 5.

Study that entire chapter carefully and you will clearly see that the Church of which Jesus is the head will be presented to the Lord Jesus, a Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. So the “**seven golden lamps**” symbolize the Church in its perfect estate. The seven Asiatic lamps have long since been removed according to the divine threat (Revelation 2:5). And a similar judgment is about to overtake the professing church as a whole (Romans 11:22). Where are the lampstands of gold today? This is a solemn and a searching question for the church on earth today. But thanks be unto God, the gates of hell shall never prevail against the true Church (Matthew 16:18).

In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, John saw a Person - one like unto the Son of man.

- Jesus is the head of the Church (Ephesians 5:21-30).
- Jesus is the foundation of the Church (I Corinthians 3:11). We who are born again are members of His body (Ephesians 5:30).
- Jesus is the head, the heart, the soul, of the New Testament Church. He died for the Church, He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

One glorious day the Church will be displayed in the heavenlies . . . “**and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus**” (Ephesians 2:6,7).

One day God will display the Church, the bride of Christ, the Lamb’s wife, in the heavenlies, and all God’s new creation will gaze upon the exceeding riches of God’s grace, through which He purchased the Church and kept it and made it possible to present it unto Himself without spot or wrinkle.

Verses 13 through 18 give us the description of the Son of man whom John saw standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

In verse 13 we learn that He was clothed with a garment down to His feet. The color of the robe He wore is not mentioned. Around His breast He had a golden girdle. The gold signifies His righteousness, the girdle itself sets forth righteousness and faithfulness. These are attributes which characterize the Lord in all His ways (Isaiah 11:5).

In verse 14 the Spirit describes the head and the hair of the Son of man. His head and hairs were white like wool, as white as the driven snow. His eyes were as a flame of fire. This person is the “**Ancient of Days**” (Daniel 7:9). Divine wisdom in all of its perfection and absolute purity . . . as pure as God Himself . . . is set forth and symbolized in the dazzling snow-white hair of the Son of man. His eyes like unto flames of fire . . . burning, penetrating, searching . . . exposing all sin and evil, no matter how thoroughly covered it may be. Who could hope to escape the scrutiny of those burning eyes of fire seen by John?

Verse 15 describes His feet: They were “**like unto fine brass, AS IF THEY BURNED IN A FURNACE.**” His dazzling feet looked like brass would look, burning in a furnace. Brass, in the Word of God, stands for judgment. This verse also describes His voice: It was as the sound of many waters. Read Ezekiel 43:2. The grandeur of His mighty voice exceeds the noise of Niagara Falls with all of its thunderous roar. “**The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea**” (Psalm 93:4).

It was His voice ten times repeated which brought order out of the terrible chaos, light out of total darkness, and life out of dust in Genesis Chapter One. Ten times in the first chapter of the Bible God spoke and mighty miracles happened! It was HIS VOICE that calmed the stormy sea and hushed the boisterous winds and waves into the calm and quietness of a sleeping baby (Matthew 8:23-27). When the winds stopped blowing and the sea became as calm as glass, the disciples were made to cry out, **“What manner of man is this?”**

It was that same voice that said, **“Lazarus, come forth!”** and a man dead for four days came out of the grave alive (John 11:43, 44).

That same voice spoke to many people throughout HIS earthly ministry, commanding them to . . . **“stretch forth thine hand . . . go to the Pool of Siloam and wash . . . show thyself to the priest . . . take up thy bed and walk.”**

When that voice uttered a command and the person to whom the command was given obeyed, a miracle followed always, without exception.

Dear reader, do you know that one day you will look into that face, you will hear that VOICE say, **“Enter thou the joys of thy Lord,”** or you will hear Him say, **“Depart, I never knew you!”**

Verse 16 tells us, **“He had in His hand seven stars.”** Verse 20 enlightens us concerning the mystery of these stars. The seven stars are angels . . . the angels of the seven churches. The stars, as a symbol, represent countless multitudes (Genesis 15:5). There are countless multitudes of angels.

Hebrews 1:14: Angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.

Psalms 34:7: The angel of the Lord encamps round about those of us who fear God.

Daniel 3:28: God sent His angel into the fiery furnace.

Daniel 6:22: God sent His angel to close the lion’s mouth when Daniel would have been devoured had not God sent the angel to take care of the situation.

Acts 5:19: God sent His angel to rescue Peter when he was in jail and would have been killed the next day, but God delivered him through the ministry of a mighty angel.

Matthew 18:10: Every little child has an angel to represent him before the Father in Heaven.

Luke 16:22: The beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom - Paradise - the place of rest. The “bosom” symbolizes rest.

The responsibility of a star is to shine. The darker the night, the brighter the star. During this night of sin while the Lord is absent from the earth, the assemblies are God’s light-bearers. The local church should be a light on a hill, and the darker the night becomes, the brighter the church should shine for Jesus. Sad but true, in this dark hour there are very few churches shining forth, and giving out the light of the glorious Gospel of salvation.

Verse 16 continues by saying, “. . . **and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.**”

God will judge through the force of His Word. God never uses His hands or the power of the members of His body against His enemies. God simply speaks. “**His Word is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword**” (Hebrews 4:12).

Jesus said that those who reject His Word will be judged by the Word they reject (John 12:48). All God need do is speak the Word - and His enemies melt in death. “**HE UTTERED HIS VOICE THE EARTH MELTED**” (Psalm 46:6). The Lord God Almighty does not need any guided missiles, hydrogen bombs or jet bombers; He does not need the force known to man. One day God will speak - and judgment will destroy the enemies of the Lord God Almighty - and this earth will literally melt. The power of the Word of God!

Beloved, one day you and I will stand before Him and hear His words. What will they be . . . for you and for me? Will He say, “**Well done,**” or will He say, “**Depart!**” God help me to ask myself that solemn, eternal question. The countenance of Jesus was “**as the sun shining in his strength.**”

This refers to the face of Jesus - the face once covered with vile spittle. John saw that face shining as the noonday sun. No person can look at the sun at high noon without black spots coming before the eyes. The reason the Holy Spirit uses the brightness of the noonday sun to describe the face of Jesus is because the brightness of the sun is the only thing known to man that will compare in the least degree with the brightness of the face of the Lord Jesus.

John 8:12: Jesus is the light of the world.

Malachi 4:2: Jesus is the sun of righteousness to Israel.

Revelation 22:16: Jesus is the bright and morning star to the Church.

There is a great contrast between the glory of the sun and the glory of the stars (I Corinthians 15:41). Jesus is the sun to the Church. His ministers are stars. We, the ministers of Christ, are reflectors of His light. The Church, made up of all born again individual believers, is a light-bearer in a dark, sinful world. The Church is here to reflect the light of Jesus, who is the Light of the world.

What a glorious vision John had of Christ!

The vision John saw is quite different from the Christ we see in the Gospels. In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we read of a Christ who is tender, humble, holy, loving, kind, compassionate, longsuffering. In this vision, we see Christ clothed in majesty, splendor and power.

Verses 17 and 18: “**And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**”

The effect of the glorious vision of the Lord Jesus Christ was more than John could bear in the flesh.

The vision caused him to fall as a dead man.

- This is the same John who pillowed his head on the bosom of Jesus at the last supper (John 13:23).
- This is the same John who outran Peter on the resurrection morning in a race to the sepulchre (John 20:4).
- This is the same John who worshipped Jesus after He arose from the dead (Matthew 28:17).
- This is the same John who witnessed the ascension of the Lord Jesus (Acts 1:9,10).

Now he lies as a dead man at the feet of Jesus! You will remember on the Mount of Transfiguration, the transfigured Christ was an object of fear to the favored three - Peter, James and John (Matthew 17:6,7). Isaiah was broken down in the presence of the glory of Christ. While the Seraphim covered face and feet, while the glory was too bright to look upon and the place too holy to tread upon, Isaiah cried out, "**Woe is me!**" Read Isaiah chapter six in its entirety, and read John 12:41.

The prophet Ezekiel also fell on his face before the glory of God's Christ (Ezekiel 1:28).

Daniel more than once fell before the glory of the Lord (Daniel 8:17,18; Daniel 10:7-10).

Here in Revelation we behold the incarnate Son of man in all His glory, and John fell at His feet "**as dead.**"

Probably John was the most loving - and the most loved - of the disciples, but he could not stand on his feet in the presence of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here human weakness is answered by divine consolation:

The glorified Saviour, "**touched with a feeling of our infirmities**" and always displaying His grace and tenderness, laid His right hand upon John.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, the touch of the hand and the voice of the Lord Jesus had instantly removed all fear from the hearts of the disciples (Matthew 17:6,7). Again, the touch of His hand and the voice of the glorified Lord removed the fear from John the Beloved, and even though he fell as a dead man, he stood to receive the Revelation and the message God was sending to him through the Lord Jesus.

To John the Beloved, the Lord Jesus spoke the two words He often uttered while here on earth: "**Fear not!**" (On several occasions Jesus spoke these words to His disciples.)

Jesus said, "**I am the First and the Last.**" This is a divine title, used three times in Isaiah (Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12). The Lord God is referred to in Isaiah. Christ uses the same term three times in Revelation (Revelation 1:17, 2:8, 22:13). The application of this title used by the Lord in the Old Testament is absolute proof, beyond a shadow of doubt, of the deity of Jesus, and of the fact that He was equal with the Father in every respect. Jesus is equal with the Father in eternal self-existence. He was in the beginning with the Father. He is the first and the last.

He is before all and above all - and from Him all things proceed. He is the last; consequently, He is after all, and in Him all things center. He is the source and the Sum of all creation. We might say that Jesus is the hub of the wheel of all things. Everything from eternity through eternity points to Jesus Christ.

There is no wonder that the Word of God cries aloud, "The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments!"

In verse 18 we read, "**I am He that liveth.**" To me the Spirit is saying in that verse, "**I am the Living One.**" This, too, is a divine title. Jesus is the author of all life. He is the source of all life. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. He is the Living One from eternity through eternity. The incarnation did not originate the life of Jesus . . . He was in the beginning with the Father. But the incarnation was the manifestation of the Christ who had existed from all eternity. Read John 1:1 and 14.

The title, "**The Living One,**" was used by the Hebrews to distinguish the Lord God from false gods. There IS but one true God . . . the Lord. He is the Living One.

We have eternal life because our God is eternal our Christ is eternal. Our inheritance is "**incorruptible: undefiled, It fadeth not away and is reserved in Heaven for us.**" Read carefully I Peter 1:4-6. What is said of God in the Old Testament is true of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament. Read Jeremiah 10:10 and I Timothy 3:15.

The Living One - "**became dead.**" Jesus was the God-man. He took a body of flesh, and in the flesh did what the Law could not do (Romans 8:1-3). But even as man is flesh, death (the wages of sin) had no claim upon the sinless Son of God. But by God's grace Jesus voluntarily BECAME DEAD that we might have life. Jesus did not just die - but became truly and really dead in our place! Jesus literally laid down His life. Matthew tells us that Jesus "**yielded up His Spirit**" (Matthew 27:50). Mark tells us that Jesus "**gave up the Ghost**" (Mark 15:37).

Luke tells us that Jesus committed His Spirit to the Father and "**gave up the Ghost**" (Luke 23:46). John tells us that Jesus bowed His head and "**gave up His Spirit**" (John 19:30).

Jesus, "**the first and the last,**" in one gigantic step came from glory. He had existed from eternity - but He became man, lived upon this earth a little over thirty years, and "**the Living One,**" the One who is the originator of life, stepped into death of His own free will, that by His death He might destroy him who had the power of death - the devil; and through His (Jesus') death He delivered the captives of the devil. (Read Hebrews 2:9, 14, and 15.) Jesus completely conquered death.

Death's bands were broken by the Lord Jesus Christ. He tore the bars of death away. He conquered death, hell and the grave. He did in the flesh what no man had ever done, what no man could have ever done. He willingly went to the cross, He willingly died, He literally laid His life down . . . God smote Him (Isaiah 53:4).

It is very interesting to note that there were no angels at the Cross. In the Garden of Gethsemane, God sent an angel to strengthen the Lord Jesus (Luke 22:43).

And after Jesus had conquered death, hell and the grave, the angels appeared both outside and inside His tomb (Matthew 28:2-7, John 20:11-13). When the Rapture of the Church takes place, it will be announced by the shout of victory . . . **“O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory!”** (I Corinthians 15:55). In I Corinthians 15:30 Paul tells us, **“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”** Death is a defeated foe, even at this moment; but in the sweet by-and-by there will be no more death. In the land that is fairer than day there will be no crepe on the doorknobs, no funeral trains in the sky! Thank God! And may He hasten that day, is my prayer.

“Behold, I am alive for evermore!” Remember, John saw Jesus standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, representing the seven assemblies, and it was there that the victor over death announced the fact that He is alive forevermore, He will die no more, He has emerged from the darkness and the domain of death, He has conquered death, He has risen from the dead, and He announces to the saints in the Church that He will die no more.

In Him, we have eternal life. **“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 8:1). Because HE lives, WE live. Thank God, salvation is **“Christ in you”** (Colossians 1:27). As believers we are **“hid with Christ in God”** (Colossians 3:3).

Verse 18 closes with the victorious announcement **“Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death!”** The keys denote complete mastery over the bodies and souls of all. Christ has the right to open and to shut; He has absolute authority over death and hell. Jesus took from Satan the keys to death and hell (Hebrews 2:14) and Satan does not now have the power of death.

The force of a key is the symbol of undisputed authority. Read Isaiah 22:22 and Matthew 16:19. The man who holds the key to a building or to a room is the man who has authority to enter that building and to shut all others out by locking the door. Thank God, Jesus personally attacked Satan and took away from him the keys to hell and death!

I fear God. I am not afraid of God . . . I FEAR God in the same manner that my boys fear me, their earthly father. We should fear God - but we should not be afraid of God.

If you are genuinely born again, you do not fear meeting God. Perfect love removes fear, and if you are saved by God’s grace, then the Holy Spirit removes the fear of dying and of meeting God. **“We have not received the spirit of bondage to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption and we cry, “Abba, Father!”** (Romans 8:15). The Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are the sons of God. If we know that we are the sons of God we know that God loved us long before we ever loved Him.

Two lovers do not fear meeting; therefore, it stands to reason, forgetting the Scriptural facts laid down in the Word of God, that a born again child of God will not and does not fear meeting God. Jesus has removed the stinger from death. Death has no sting for the Christian. Jesus has promised to go with us through the valley of the shadow, and therefore we will fear no evil.

My dear friend, if your salvation does not take from your heart the fear of dying, if your salvation does not remove from your heart the fear of meeting God, then I would advise you to check again and see if you are genuinely saved. It could be that the devil slipped you a counterfeit.

“Perfect love casteth out fear” (I John 4:18).

JOHN IS COMMANDED TO WRITE

Revelation 1:19-20:

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

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

Here we have the threefold division of the book of Revelation. In the Amplified New Testament, verse 19 reads, "Write therefore the things you see, what they are (and signify) and what is to take place hereafter." Notice the word "therefore."

John was first commanded to write (verse 11): "**What thou seest, write in a book.**" Between verses 11 and 19, John saw the glorious vision of the Lord Jesus standing in the midst of the golden lampstands which represent the churches, and John was told to write what he had just seen. Thus, the word "therefore" connects the command to write, with the Speaker whom John had just seen in all of His glory. In the vision, John had witnessed DIVINE GREATNESS. Combined with divine greatness he had also witnessed HUMAN TENDERNESS in the Lord Jesus.

John had met Jesus as no other living soul on this earth had ever known Him. "Therefore," John was ready to write what he had just seen - namely, the glorified Lord.

The things that were taking place (the "**things that are**") refer to the church age which was in progress at the time John was exiled to Patmos. John wrote about 96 A. D., near the end of the first century of Christianity, and "**the things that are**" are recorded in chapters two and three. Chapters four through 22:5 record the third division, "**the things which shall be hereafter,**" and this division has to do with the world and the Jews, and with the Corrupt, apostate church that will be spued out when the true Church is caught out.

Here, then is the key to Revelation which will unlock this prophetic book for you. As we have already stated, we find in this book things past, things present, things yet future. You cannot take events out of the future (the third division of Revelation) and put them in the second division. Each of the three divisions of this book has its own group of events, and to remove these events from one division to another is to wrongly divide the Word of truth. We are admonished to rightly divide the Word.

The three divisions of Revelation do not overlap. The first is a complete vision in itself, and by itself.

The first division does not overlap into the second division. The vision of the glorified Lord standing in the midst of the seven golden lampstands does not pour over into chapters two and three, which comprise the second distinct division of Revelation. The second division does not overlap the third. It is impossible to fit the prophetic events of the third division into this present church age. When any minister attempts to take events from chapters 4 through 22:5 and place those events in chapters one, two, or three, that person is misusing God's holy Word - and that is dangerous.

In verse 20 the mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands is revealed. The word “**mystery**” as used in the New Testament signifies “*something that is secret and hidden until revealed and made known.*” Then, of course, it ceases to be a mystery. It is then a revelation.

In the New Testament certain great truths, even after their revelation, are still spoken of as mysteries. Only believers who are spiritually minded and who are taught by God can understand the mysteries of the Bible. The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, spoken in parables by the Lord Jesus and recorded in Matthew 13, were clear as sunlight to the disciples, but dark as midnight to the Pharisees and unbelievers. Read Matthew 13:11-13. Even today the masses of church people are dreaming of a Utopia. They are trying to improve the world. They are trying to clean up what God gave up in the Garden of Eden . . . namely, the flesh. Many ministers pervert the Gospel by misusing the word “**leaven.**” Leaven denotes evil - not righteousness (I Corinthians 5:8, Galatians 5:9, Matthew 16:6). Even in Paul’s day, he declared “**the mystery of iniquity doth already work**” (II Thessalonians 2). Paul did not say, “The mystery of good is already at work,” but “**the mystery of iniquity.**”

Again Paul said, “**Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse**” (II Timothy 3:13). The Bible nowhere teaches that the world will get better and better before the end, but on the contrary the Word of God teaches that evil men and seducers will wax worse, and that as it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the days when the Son of Man shall be revealed from Heaven.

The secret and undermining scheming of the evil one will continue working evil until fully ripened and the “**man of sin**” appears. Believers who study their Bibles know the truth of the conditions that will exist before the end of the age of grace, just before the Church is raptured to meet the Lord in the air, and then the Antichrist takes over here on earth.

Why are the stars in His right hand termed angels?

The stars represent spiritual leaders in the church - persons responsible to God in giving forth the message of life, witnessing for God in this present dark night of the history of the Church. The word “angel” does not denote nature, but office. Angels are messengers, or “**ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation**” (Hebrews 1). The way “angel” is used in this particular Scripture denotes the mission and ministry of the one referred to as an angel. (Read Luke 7:24; Luke 9:52; II Corinthians 12:7; James 2:25).

In these verses angel or angels is used referring to those sent as messengers to deliver various messages. The great host of spiritual beings spoken of as angels are servants, and they do service for God and minister to God’s creatures. (Read Psalm 103:20, 21; read Hebrews 1:13,14.)

Angels represent little ones before God - “**See that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you THAT IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS DO ALWAYS BEHOLD THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN**” (Matthew 18:10).

“**The stars are the angels.**” As the stars shine in the heavens above us, the messengers and ministers in the churches should shine for Jesus. “**Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.**” Jesus spoke these words in the Sermon on the Mount.

The seven golden lampstands signify that the Church is spiritually complete before God, and one day it will be presented to the Lamb without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:26-30).

Before ever God laid the foundation of this universe - before God made Adam, before God created anything - the Church was predestined to be spotless. The Church of the living God of which Jesus is the Head and the Foundation is perfect, sinless, without mar or scar, without a wrinkle, without a spot. The local assemblies are full of spots, but the true Church, the invisible body made up of all blood-washed believers, is spotless. The Church of the living God is perfect. Jesus is the Head and the Lord adds daily to the Church those who are being saved. (Acts 2:47).

In verse 20, the seven lamps are seven assemblies. These seven assemblies were in Asia Minor; but as we have already seen in our study, the messages to these seven local assemblies have to do with the Church from its beginning to the Rapture. In chapters two and three, we will study each of these churches and we will see that the nature of each church has to do with a period of time from the time John wrote until this present hour. And anyone who will open his eyes and look; anyone who will hear with his ears, can readily pinpoint the Church today, in respect to the churches named and described in chapters two and three of Revelation.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER TWO

The Seven Churches:

“THE THINGS WHICH ARE”

THE SPIRIT’S MESSAGE TO EPHESUS

Revelation 2:1-7

1. **Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;**
2. **I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:**
3. **And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.**
4. **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**
5. **Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**
6. **But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.**
7. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.**

The first seven verses of chapter two contain the message to the church at Ephesus - the church at the end of the Apostolic Age, the church that had left its first love.

Please note that the “messages to the seven churches” are inserted between two visions. First, the vision of Christ standing in the midst of the “**seven lampstands.**” This vision is in Chapter One. The next vision in the book is the vision of “**the four and twenty elders**” round about the throne, and is found in chapter four.

In chapter four we see the vision of the glorified Church with the Lord Jesus after the Church has been caught out to meet the Lord in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-17). Then immediately the tribulation begins and runs its course in the following chapters.

What I want us to notice here is the fact that the message to the seven churches is located between the vision of the glorified Christ and the vision of the glorified Church. The seven churches represent the church age to the Rapture, and when the Rapture takes place the saints will be glorified and given bodies like unto the Lord's glorious body (I John 3:1-3).

Ephesus, the capitol of Asia in the time when John wrote Revelation, was known as "*the light of Asia*." Ephesus was the capital of heathen idolatry. The city was the stronghold of Satan's ungodly power, and from Ephesus idolatry spread all over the known world of that day. Read Acts 19.

Small silver shrines representing the great goddess Diana were bought by strangers and travelers and set up in their homes as deities to be worshipped. The huge temple of the goddess Diana was adorned and beautified by the wealth of all Asia, and was counted one of the seven wonders of the world. Ephesus became the scene of fierce warfare between the powers of righteousness and the powers of unrighteousness . . . between the God of Light and the devil of darkness.

There were two devoted believers there - Aquilla and Priscilla - and they labored untiringly for quite a long time in this city of idolatry. At an earlier date, twelve of John's disciples had helped in a small way to break the darkness of idolatry, but their efforts were undoubtedly very feeble, owing to their limited knowledge of the Scriptures at that particular time. Study Acts 19.

The very, very capable and eloquent Apollos was also there, but accomplished very little against the gigantic power of darkness in the great city of Ephesus. Paul was used of the Holy Spirit to break the power of darkness and lead converts against the terrible systems of idolatry and superstitions. The leaders in the idolatrous worship of Diana hated Paul beyond measure, and would have liked to annihilate him had not God protected this spiritual giant. Paul had a job to do for Jesus and the devil could not stop him. The forces of darkness and idolatry trembled under the preaching of the Apostle Paul.

Next in line was the beloved John. After leaving his home in Jerusalem, John lived in Ephesus and for about thirty years made that city the headquarters for his work for the Lord Jesus. The glory of Ephesus has departed and the once proud heathen city, the capital of idolatry, is now a miserable village. The city is now known as "*Ayasalook*."

When Paul moved into Ephesus to declare war upon the forces of darkness, he did not preach a series of sermons on the evils of Diana, nor did he use the subject, "Thou shalt not surely bow at the shrine of Diana." No, wherever Paul preached, he had a singular subject:

"God FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY, SAVE IN THE CROSS." And as always, Paul was determined not to know anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The message of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ will shake the forces of the devil even in the darkest city, spiritually speaking.

The Spirit opens His message to the church at Ephesus with the words, **"To the angel of the church in Ephesus, write."**

Note that the same words are repeated in the introduction to each of the seven churches. The message for each church is directed to the members of the local assembly. I am sure it was true in that day as it is today, there were some born again members and some who were just members . . . they had joined the church, but were not born of the Spirit.

Paul wrote to the saints in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1). John is writing to the angel of the church in Ephesus. No doubt the reason for the more distant form of addressing the church was because the church had sunk so low morally that the Lord could not address it through John as to the saints. No doubt they had declined to a spiritual status where they could not be referred to in the true sense of saints; but as babes in Christ, eating milk instead of meat.

During the day of Paul the church at Ephesus was made up of almost altogether devout saints; but in John's day the saints had departed from their first love.

“These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”

In chapter 1:20 the stars are seen IN His hand. In chapter 3:1 He has the stars, but here intense action is suggested: **“HE THAT HOLDETH THE SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND”**. He has a firm grip on the stars . . . the light bearers. The stars derive their light from Him who is **“the Light of the world.”**

- They are subject to His power (**“Without Him ye can do nothing”**).
- The stars are sustained by Him (**“In Him we live and move and have our being”**).
- He guides the stars (**“As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the children of God”**).
- He holds them fast (**“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, that we may boldly say, God is my helper”**).

My! My! What strength! What power! What security!

In Revelation 1:13, the glorified Christ is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; but here (chapter 2:1) we see Him walking in their midst. He is moving about, taking note of every need of every individual, not overlooking the difficulties that may arise, the trials and temptations that may come. Paul tells us, **“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”** (I Corinthians 10:13).

Jesus DOES walk among (or in the presence of) the believers. He never leaves us nor forsakes us, He neither slumbers nor sleeps. He is a very present help in time of need, and His help can be had instantaneously. He is available at all hours of the day or night. He walks in and out among the churches, He observes the ways of every believer, and He has grace sufficient for every need of every believer. He will trim our lamps and keep them burning if we will only allow Him to do so. The gates of hell shall never prevail against the true Church (Matthew 16:18), nor shall the gates of hell ever prevail against any individual member of the true, invisible body of Christ (Romans 8:38, 39).

Verse 2: **“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”**

I often make the statement in my sermons, “You may rest assured that you will receive from the hand of Almighty God exactly what is coming to you.” God is just, He cannot be unjust . . . He rewards fully. If a rebuke is needed, God rebukes. If any praise is due, commendation will certainly be given. God commends the church at Ephesus . . . the Lord Jesus loves to commend His saints when they allow Him to do so. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly, but the sad thing is that most of us will not permit God to shower His abundant grace upon us. We take God’s second best, when it is His good pleasure that we enjoy His very best.

God cannot bless us above what we allow by the way we live. Salvation is free . . . salvation is by grace; but rewards, happiness, and joy come as the result of faithful labor of love in the Lord.

In our present verse, God says, “I know thy works!” No doubt the good works of the believers at Ephesus were varied and many. The local assembly there was a working church. But all work is not necessarily well pleasing in the sight of God.

- The believers at Ephesus labored - and the Lord knew about their labors.
- They were patient, and the Lord knew of their patience.

They were patient toward the weaker Christians, but this did not cause them to close their eyes toward evil.

In this same verse, the messenger declares that the believers at Ephesus had tried them “which say they are apostles and are not, and found them to be liars” (read Romans 5:3, II Corinthians 6:4). Even in the midst of trial and opposition the church was neither patient nor indifferent toward evil. The word “tried” signifies that the Ephesians had put these apostles to the test and had found that they were not true apostles, but were liars. Paul called such men **“false apostles”** (II Corinthians 11:13). Read also I Corinthians 9:2 and Acts 20:29,30. Many churches need to reread and study this particular portion of God’s message to the church. Certainly there are false prophets, liars, and spiritual wolves in the pulpits all over the world today, and the sad thing is that only a very small minority of believers seem to care!

Verse 3: **“And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”**

In this verse, the Lord’s commendation to the believers at Ephesus continues. John, the “secretary of the Lord,” wrote, “. . . **and hast borne . . . for my name’s sake.**”

The church at Ephesus had suffered much, had been tried many times - but they were cheerful, they did not grumble; they were suffering for Christ’s sake . . . for the sake of the One who had suffered so much that they might have the forgiveness of sins (I John 2:12). They had not wearied. There was no thought of giving up nor of surrendering in the conflict with evil.

What a beautiful picture we have here, of complete surrender and wholehearted devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 4: **“NEVERTHELESS I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”**

Yes, the believers at Ephesus were hard workers.

They labored in patience, they hated evil; but in spite of that, the Lord had something against them.

Revealed here is the root of church and individual failure:

DEPARTURE FROM CHRIST!

“The first fruit of the Spirit is love” (Galatians 5:22). In Paul’s day the church at Ephesus was known for its **“love unto all the saints.”** But seemingly that love began to grow cold.

We learn from the New Testament record that only what we do because we love Jesus with all of our heart, soul and strength will receive a reward at the end of life’s journey. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do it all to the glory of God, not to the glory of man, a church or a denomination. Love is the heart of Christianity. Read I Corinthians 13.

The one thing that the Lord Jesus had against the church at Ephesus was, **“Thou hast left thy first love.”** When a church leaves its first love (or when an individual does), it is a serious and dangerous matter.

Notice here in verse 4, **“I have somewhat against thee.”** But in the same chapter, verse 14, we read, **“But I have a few things against thee.”** First, one thing - the church left its first love. Next, a few things. When a church or an individual departs from the virgin love of the new birth experience, that person or church will find itself slipping farther and farther as the days and weeks go by.

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

In this verse, judgment is threatened. The Lord Jesus had a positive cause of complaint against the angel of the church at Ephesus. The church had left its first love, and this was serious. The Lord never forgets His joy in the first love of His people: **“Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown”** (Jeremiah 2:2). The Lord God never forgot Judah’s first love; neither does the Lord Jesus forget the first love of His Church. The first commandment is to love the Lord with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your strength. Love is the center, the soul, the very essence of a genuine new birth experience.

The admonition to the believers at Ephesus was twofold:

1. Remember.
2. Repent!

The Lord is saying to the believers at Ephesus, “Remember the moral elevation you once occupied. Remember the heights of love you once demonstrated. And then cast your eyes upon yourself and see how far short you have fallen - and then repent. Judge the state of your own heart, lest I am forced to judge you. I will judge you quickly unless you repent and return to your first works and your first love. I will remove your candlestick out of its place - and the only way you can prevent the removal of the candlestick is to repent.”

The removal of the lampstand as a light bearer has nothing to do with the salvation of the individual. It has to do with the Church as a whole. Certainly the lamps which once shone so brightly in this particular part of the earth - especially in the city of Ephesus - have been taken out of their place, and gross darkness engulfs that part of the world today. Mohammedanism is the religion in the seven cities where these churches were located.

So we see that the lampstand HAS been removed.

The light of the pure Gospel does not shine as it did when Paul preached in Ephesus - or even as it did when John was there. I warn you, precious reader, unless the western world remembers and repents, the lampstand will be removed from this great country of ours - and from other countries that have been blessed exceedingly because of their faith in God and their love to Christ. Unfaithfulness - whether on the part of an individual or a church - must be judged (and WILL be judged) by a holy God. If Christendom continues as it is today, gross darkness will cover these lands if Jesus tarries. Read Isaiah 60:2.

Verse 6: **“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.”**

The believers in the church at Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. Some outstanding Bible authorities teach that the sect of the Nicolaitanes began with Nicolas of Antioch. Other authorities deny this suggestion. However, the word comes from *nikao*, which means “*to conquer*,” and *laos*, which means “*the people*” (the laity). No doubt the deeds of the Nicolaitanes hated by the church at Ephesus was the setting up of certain men to rule over the ordinary believers in the church, and this probably marked the beginning of the priestly order in the church, which continues in this day in the Roman Catholic church and others.

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” so said the Lord Jesus. God never intended His Church to be divided into priests and laity. No man has a right to be **“lord over God’s heritage”** (I Peter 5:3). **“There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”** (I Timothy 2:5) - Christ Jesus - not some two-legged fellow who calls himself a priest, or God’s representative here on earth - not the virgin nor the pope, nor the pastor - **BUT THE MAN Christ Jesus!**

Every born again believer is a priest . . . not just a priest, but a royal priest (I Peter 2:9), every believer is invited to enter boldly into the holy of holies (Hebrews 10:19-25).

There are no special persons in the Church of the living God. The New Testament Church knows no church bosses or priests. This business began in Ephesus - but it is not well pleasing to God. God appoints undershepherds to care for the flock, to feed the sheep and to keep out the wolves; but God does not appoint church bosses, or special men to pray for us or listen to our confession of sin. We are to confess our sin to the Lord God through our Mediator the Lord Jesus Christ.

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!” (John 8:36). “As many as are led by the Spirit of God (not a preacher, a priest or a pope) they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

I wonder what the Lord Jesus thinks of some of the modern set-ups. Folks are commanded to sign a pledge, sign a document, sign a resolution. They are commanded to promise this, or promise that before they can become a deacon or a teacher in Sunday school. I wonder what the Lord Jesus Christ thinks when He looks down upon all the little religious dictators we have today. These fellows who are lording it over God’s sons and daughters belong to the same sect that the spiritually minded believers at Ephesus hated. They did not hate the persons . . . they hated their deeds. God loves all men regardless of how sinful they may be; and certainly true believers should love all, regardless of their wickedness. We do not love their sins, but we love them because Jesus died’ for them.

Corruption spreads, and spreads rapidly.

- Ephesus hated these impurities - Pergamos sheltered them!
- Ephesus hated the terrible deeds of the Nicolaitanes; Pergamos accepted them.
- Ephesus was troubled only with deeds - but by the time the deeds reached Pergamos, they became doctrine (Revelation 2:15).
- Ephesus would not put up with the Nicolaitanes, but Pergamos held the corrupters to her bosom and permitted them to corrupt and poison the sources of purity and morality in the local assembly there.

We still have these poison peddlers with us today . . . and the sad thing is, they peddle their damnable poison in the name of religion!

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

In this verse we have THE SPIRIT’S CALL TO HEAR.

At Ephesus the church is spoken to as a whole . . . not as individuals, but as an assembly. It is interesting to note that John uses the word **“repent”** seven times in Revelation, but in the other writings of John that word is not used even once.

After Ephesus, a remnant is admonished to repent. The call is no longer to the group, but to individuals, or to a small remnant. Individual and direct responsibility to Almighty God is a cardinal truth and a cardinal doctrine of the New Testament Church; however, in the Roman Catholic church, souls are commanded to follow the church. Individual conscience toward God is completely ignored. It is the church, the pope, the priest, the bishops who deal with God for the members of the church of Rome. But in the New Testament Church, individuals are commanded to repent and believe the Gospel. Individuals are invited to enter boldly into the holy of holies. The New Testament doctrine is, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith.”**

Not only in the church of Rome, but in many protestant churches there are spiritual dictators who command the people to follow them, and they change the Word of God to fit their own ideas; but according to God’s holy Word, there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus - not a priest, not a bishop, not a preacher, not an evangelist . . . but God’s Son, the Lord Jesus. He is the only One who can mediate between us and God. John even speaks of such a man in his Third Epistle:

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.
(III John 1:9-10)

“To him (the individual) **that overcometh”** will be given the glorious privilege of eating of the tree of life in the Paradise of God. The word **“paradise”** means *“Garden of Pleasure,”* and that is exactly what God intended Eden to be. It would have been God’s great Garden of Pleasure for Adam and Eve had they not disobeyed God and listened to the devil. The Paradise of God will be restored at the beginning of the eternal ages (Revelation 16:7, Revelation 22:1-7).

Jesus promised, **“I will give to him to eat of the tree of life.”** In the Paradise of God (yet to come) there will be no tempter, no devil, no sin. It will be the Garden of Pleasure. The devil will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10).

Paradise is referred to three times in the New Testament. In Luke 23:43 Jesus said to the thief on the cross, **“Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”** In II Corinthians 12:4, Paul said he knew a man caught up to the third Heaven, **“INTO PARADISE.”** Paul declared that this man who was caught up into Paradise heard words and saw things that were not lawful to utter. The third mention of Paradise is here in our present Scripture - Revelation 2:7.

The promise made here is to each individual who is an overcomer. That individual will be granted the glorious privilege of eating of the tree of life, in the Paradise of God, when Paradise is restored. Thank God, there will be no repetition of the Adam and Eve experience. When God restores Paradise and the tree of life, that restoration will be eternal. It will never be invaded by sin, sorrow and disappointment (Revelation 21:27).

Many believe that the only thing involved in Christianity is to be born again, and then just “take it easy” until Jesus comes for us. But certainly such an idea of Christianity is not according to Scripture. We are saved by grace, the gift of God. Salvation cannot be earned or merited. But to be a victorious Christian is our responsibility. If we trust and obey, we will be victorious. If we are careless and unconcerned, we will live a defeated Christian life. If we are an overcomer we will share a full reward; but if we are careless and unconcerned about spiritual things, we will **“suffer loss.”**

Salvation is free . . . rewards are earned. If we overcome, we will be granted certain privileges in Paradise that those who failed to overcome will not be granted. Certainly there will be degrees of reward in Heaven (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

It is interesting to me to note that the Lord Jesus Himself will present the rewards. (**“To him that overcometh WILL I GIVE to eat of the tree of life.”**) Jesus Himself will grant the privilege. This teaches me how closely believers are connected to the Lord - not only here, but in eternity.

Heaven will be a big place, there will be a lot of people there; but it will not be so big, nor will there be so many individuals, that Jesus will not have time for those individuals. I am glad I'm going there. If you are not on your way to Heaven - repent, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, **“and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31, John 5:24).

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO SMYRNA

Revelation 2:8-11:

- 8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;**
- 9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.**
- 10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**
- 11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.**

The second church named in our Scripture is the church at Smyrna. The message to this church represents the period of the great persecution about A. D. 316. Smyrna was about forty miles north of the city of Ephesus.

It is now one of the most important cities of the Turkish Empire, and it is estimated that about 200,000 people now live there. In many respects, Smyrna was a rival of Ephesus. Its natural and commercial location brought commerce, and through commerce came much wealth and splendor. Its buildings, even in that day, won for the city the name of The Beautiful. Smyrna was not far behind Ephesus in the practice of idolatry. This city is not named in the book of Acts, nor does Paul name the church at Smyrna in any of his Epistles. Therefore, we have no way of knowing exactly when or how the Gospel was introduced to the people there, nor when the church there was founded.

The imperial laws against Christianity were enforced severely in Smyrna. Jews and heathen combined brought much persecution through the local authorities . . . they put pressure on local authorities and forced them to carry out their laws against the Christians. Polycarp, the bosom friend of John the Beloved, was slain in Smyrna in his ninetieth year. Most Bible authorities put the date at 168 A. D. Polycarp was possibly the last person to carry on a conversation with John the Beloved, according to Bible history and books on Bible antiquity.

The fierce and bloody persecution which raged in Asia Minor had its center in the city of Smyrna. The terrible persecution lasted about two hundred and fifty years. It was very, very fierce at times, and at other times grew lighter. During this time of imperial and pagan persecution, the Church went through a terrible blood bath; but not without the knowledge of Him who stands in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

Verses 8 and 9: **“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, AND TRIBULATION, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.”**

The briefest of the Spirit’s messages is the message to Smyrna. The longest message is to the church at Thyatira. The assembly at Smyrna is commended - not one word of reproach is addressed to the assembly there. By way of contrast, the message to the assembly at Laodicea is a message of rebuke. Not one word of commendation or praise is in the message to the Laodiceans.

Again by way of contrast, the poverty and tribulation of Smyrna stand out, while the rich and self-satisfied condition of Laodicea is unmistakable. There is but one other church that is not censured or condemned (or warned) and that is the church at Philadelphia. However, we are not to suppose that there was nothing wrong in either Smyrna or Philadelphia, because the local assembly will always have faults. The only perfect Church is the invisible body of which Jesus is the head. Where there are earthly members of a local assembly, weakness will be found; and any church stands to be censured by the Lord.

The Church in its Ephesian period lost its first love; therefore, the Lord permitted chastisement to come upon the Church to cause it to return to Him. Smyrna means “*bitterness*” and “*myrrh*” - an ointment associated with death. In the meaning of the word, a prophecy of persecution and death is seen, and is sure to befall the members of the church at Smyrna. These names are not accidental nor were they picked at random. The names Ephesus, Smyrna, and all the others have a very deep and special meaning in Scripture. However, the members of the assembly at Smyrna are told not to fear even though they were to suffer and many would be put to death. The reward for sealing one’s testimony with one’s lifeblood is to receive a “**crown of life,**” a martyr’s crown.

The message to Smyrna opens with the words, “**These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.**” The title used here is the spiritual Rock of Gibraltar, against which no power can stand. As The First, He is before all in time, and above all in power.

As The Last, He is after all - He closes all things, He is the consummation of all things. The One speaking to the saints at Smyrna is the Eternal One; but even though He is from eternity through eternity, He came into this world to die. Death had no claim upon Him, because He had not sinned; nevertheless, He died that we might have life.

He entered into the very heart of death, He conquered death - and rose again to die no more.

Verse 9 opens with the consoling words, “**I KNOW.**” The Lord Jesus, our Saviour, knows every heartache. He knows every pain, every tear, every burden. **WE FLOURISH BEST AND ARE THE RICHEST WHEN WE SUFFER.**

When the Church is persecuted it spreads like wildfire.

When the Church is at ease in Zion, God’s work suffers sorely!

- Jacob was a better man after wrestling all night with the angel (Genesis 32:24-32).
- Paul was given a thorn in the flesh. He prayed for God to remove the thorn, but God did not remove it. God promised and gave grace sufficient to bear it - and Paul was the richer for it (II Corinthians 12:7).
- The Hebrew Christians joyed in the spoiling of their goods (Hebrews 10:34).
- The three Hebrew children knew the Lord from the historical standpoint; but when they met Him in the midst of the fiery furnace they knew Him as they could never have known Him had they not stood when the king commanded them to bow (Daniel 3:1-25). Read this portion and feast upon it.
- Daniel knew the Lord - but I am sure he knew the Lord much better after spending a night in the lions’ den, in the company of lions and the angel of the Lord.

Sometimes we are the richest when we are the poorest. We may not realize it, but we are poorest when we think we are the richest. Sometimes we are the happiest when we think our heart is broken with sorrow. Just remember - God’s ways are not our ways - and never forget, God knows all about us at all times.

If we are born again, our treasure is in Heaven. Our inheritance is there also, from whence we look for the Saviour. An inventory of Christian wealth and assets is furnished in Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 3:21-23).

- If we are born again, we are in God (Colossians 3:3).
- Christ is in us (Colossians 1:27).
- Positionally, we are sons of God (Romans 8:14).
- We are destined to be conformed to the image of God’s Son (Romans 8:29).
- Our wealth as a son of God is limited only by Christ and His riches (Ephesians 1:10,11).

Yes, the Church is rich even though, materially speaking, she may seem to be in poverty. Some of the churches that seem to be in poverty so far as the local assembly is concerned, are much richer than some of the churches that have million dollar edifices. The true Church is rich, endowed with the love and the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The church at Smyrna was suffering from the pagan world without, and from an enemy of a religious character within.

It seems that there was a group in the church who claimed to be Jews, but who were not really Jews. They were in the church for what they could get out of it - not for what they could give to the Christ in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

In Ephesus we saw a company of clergy who promoted themselves - they were proud and lofty. (They were also exposed as pretenders and liars.) That particular movement was crushed for a time, but the devil does not take defeat easily. Even though that movement was crushed, a similar movement on a lesser scale began to show up in Smyrna.

Today we have the same element in many of our local assemblies . . . men and women who join the church for business or social reasons, and for gain. It would be interesting to know just why some people do unite with the local assembly, and sometimes keep pushing themselves until they are elected deacon, trustee, or Sunday school teacher. We have them; they have been in the church ever since Ephesus, and they will be there until the Church is raptured.

Thank God, they will be left behind when the true Church IS taken out!

The Spirit puts no frills or sugar-coating on the words that expose this crooked religious crowd. The Spirit clearly states that they are not Jews, **“but are the synagogue of Satan!”**

That does not sound like some of the sweet talk we hear from the pulpits today, does it? Today we hear, “All religions should get together; all denominations and cults should unite - and should teach the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.” No! there is a true Church, composed of true believers. All else is false and belongs to the synagogue of the devil. That may sound a little rough - but we need to speak words easily understood when making truth and error known to our listeners.

In Smyrna, this group of religious pretenders railed against the church in its suffering. They brought contempt and false accusations against it, and the Spirit declares they are of the synagogue of Satan.

In Revelation, two names are used when referring to the archenemy of man:

(1) Satan - which means “*adversary*,” and (2) Devil - which means “*slanderer*.” Of course, to the Church and to the child of God he is both Satan (the adversary), and the devil (the slanderer). He is the instigator of all persecutions and slander brought against the Church and the people of God.

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

The message begins, **“I KNOW”** - and since the Lord God Almighty knows all about His children and stands in the very midst of the Church, we are commanded, **“FEAR NONE OF THOSE THINGS WHICH THOU SHALT SUFFER!”** The devil is a powerful being, but his power is limited and controlled by the all-powerful One: **“Power belongeth unto God”** (Psalm 62:11).

Since the devil’s power is limited and controlled, he cannot judge even the most feeble of the saints without express permission of the Lord God Almighty, who is all-powerful and the Master of all, including the devil. Read Job, chapters one and two. Study them. It will do you good.

In the true sense of the word, **“There is no power but of God”** (Romans 13:1). All power is permitted by Almighty God, and the devil cannot make one move against God’s child without God’s permission. Read I Corinthians 10:13, and Hebrews 13:5. God’s purpose in permitting persecution to come upon the assembly at Smyrna was to cause the saints to repent and return unto Him. Thus God’s saints were purified. Their love, faith and courage were strengthened.

The church at Smyrna had a definitely appointed period of tribulation: “Ten days.” Some Bible authorities point out that there may be an allusion here to the well-known ten persecutions, and that there may also be an allusion to the tenth persecution under the ruler Diocletian. This persecution lasted exactly ten years, according to Bible history. The expression ten days certainly signifies a limited period.

In this Scripture, the command is **“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!”**

But Bible history and antiquity tell us that a few of the early Christians were appalled by the dread of the terrible torture and horrible death before them, and therefore they denied the Lord. Faithfulness - every step, every inch of the way, even unto death - is urged by the Spirit throughout the New Testament, and especially in our present Scripture during severe persecution. Steadfastness to the end must be maintained by the martyr, if the martyr’s crown is to be won.

The Word of God tells of various crowns that may be won by a believer. There are five crowns mentioned in different parts of the New Testament, and there is the crown of gold on the head of every redeemed one in Heaven!

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold” (Revelation 4:4). These four and twenty elders represent the Church after the Rapture. I have been reading Revelation for many years throughout my ministry, I have delivered the series on radio verse-by-verse seven times - and I confess until this study I had never seen the solemn truth that every saint will wear a crown of gold, especially at the marriage supper. After that, I do not know; but here in this Scripture, the saints are pictured wearing crowns of gold.

- The crown of righteousness will be presented to the believers who live holy and righteous in their daily walk here on earth (II Timothy 4:8).

- The crown of glory will be bestowed upon all who shepherd the beloved flock of God faithfully. This is the pastor's crown (I Peter 5:4).
- There is the martyr's crown - the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

There are still other crowns for rewards - and what makes me so happy is the fact that Jesus will personally present the crowns.

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

As I have already pointed out, seven times the Spirit admonished individuals to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. It is the responsibility of the individual to hear the message of the Spirit. We will not be excused by God at the judgment seat if we depend upon others to do our hearing, our praying, our confessing. It is an individual matter. We must individually hear and obey what the Spirit has to say to us.

The message to Smyrna closes with a promise: *Overcomers shall in no wise be injured or hurt of the second death.* The synagogue of Satan raged on one hand, the mass of heathen raged on the other. These two powerful forces were allied together to crush Christianity and destroy the Church . . . and between them stood the believer - the one who had confessed the Lord Jesus. His only defense was patience and meekness. What was his human outlook? He could lose everything . . . friends; material goods, loved ones . . . yes, even life itself!

To be an overcomer under such conditions took strong faith, clear spiritual vision and understanding, looking to Him who is invisible. Even though He IS invisible, He is nearer than breath itself, promising never to forsake the saints, but to go with them faithfully even to the end, and through the valley of the shadow of death!

The overcomer may die under torture and in horrible suffering . . . his executioner may delight in shedding his blood; but the overcomer is assured that no matter how horrible physical death may be, the second death shall in no wise, under no circumstances hurt the one who lays down his life for the Gospel!

The second death mentioned here refers, of course, to the lake of fire, the everlasting abode of the wicked and of the devil himself (Revelation 20:10-14; Revelation 21:8). God give us grace, even though we may not be going through the terrible persecution endured by the believers at Smyrna to stand true in this hour when liberalism and modernism are sweeping the country.

To be an old-fashioned, fundamental, God-fearing, Bible-believing Christian may cost you your friends; it may cost you social popularity, or it may cost you your job; but if these dear believers at Smyrna were commanded to be faithful unto death, God pity you and me if we are not willing to suffer the persecution that may befall us in this hour.

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO PERGAMOS

Revelation 2:12-17:

12. **And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;**
13. **I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.**
14. **But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**
15. **So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.**
16. **Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**
17. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.**

The message to the church at Pergamos is the message to the church under imperial favor . . . the church settled in the world. This period was about A. D. 316, and, of course, will continue on until the Rapture.

Smyrna was about forty miles north of Ephesus, and Pergamos was still farther north. The city of Pergamos had little or no commerce, but was remarkable for its institutions of learning. It was a city of refinement, science - especially medicine. Many kings lived in Pergamos over a period of years. Bible history tells us that the library at Pergamos consisted of 200,000 books! It was in Pergamos that the art of curing skins for writing, was perfected. (The word "parchment" was derived from the process of curing skins to be used for writing.)

The goddess Diana was the great idol in Ephesus, and the deity in Smyrna was Dionysus. Ephesus and Smyrna were evil and wicked cities of idolatry, but Pergamos was even worse. It was known as "**Satan's throne**" and also as the place "**where Satan dwelleth.**" In the outstanding and celebrated temple of Aesculapius was the wreathed serpent, and behind this serpent was Satan ("**the old serpent**"). What a terrible idol to have in a temple! This idol was used in ceremonies for healing.

In reality, this chosen deity of Satan was substituted for the Lord Jesus Christ in that city. Pergamos was the capital of Mysia, and the city today still exists under the name Pergamo. But it is not the city of glory that it was in the day when John wrote to the assembly there.

Verse 12: "**These things saith He that hath the sharp sword with two edges.**"

Thus began the message to the church at Pergamos. These words were used in the glorious description of Christ in the first vision in Revelation (chapter 1:12-16), and are applied several times in the addresses to the churches. In Chapter One, the sword proceeds out of His mouth, while here He is said to have a sharp, two-edged sword. The sword is a symbol of Judgment, and of course the sword that proceeds out of His mouth is the Word of God. Paul tells us that God's Word is quick and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword (Hebrews 4:12).

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

Here we have those solemn words again - **“I know.”**

Historians tell us that probably the most severe persecution came under Decius, between A. D. 249 and the Emperor Diocletian, A. D. 284. Satan attempted to destroy Christianity *from without* - but failed. His next move was to destroy the Church in its true character and testimony *from within*. He used “religious” men and teachers to accomplish this deadly, damnable, undercover work.

Paul prophesied this in Acts 20:29-30, and the cruel, ungodly schemers of whom he wrote were certainly operating during the Pergamos period. At the time John wrote, Pergamos was the capital of Roman government in Asia.

Heathenism and idolatry reigned supreme. From Pergamos, which was the center of idolatry and persecution, suffering among the believers spread over all of western Asia. Because of this, Pergamos was called **“Satan’s seat”** (or throne) and **“the city where Satan dwelleth.”** Satan had his headquarters in Pergamos, and from that city he sought to strangle and crush Christianity in that part of the earth. I pointed out in the beginning of this study that the messages to these seven churches not only have to do with the seven local assemblies, but with the Church at different periods from its birth to the Rapture. We must keep this in mind if we are to understand the deep, spiritual meaning of the messages to these individual churches.

Thus, the message to Pergamos brings us up to the time of Constantine . . . the beginning of the fourth century after Christ. The repeated attacks of Satan as a **“roaring lion”** (I Peter 5:8), his open persecution against the Church for two hundred and fifty bloody years, left the Church spiritually richer, if seemingly poorer in the eyes of the world.

Diocletian was the last of the persecuting emperors and his persecution had failed to destroy the Church.

Now Constantine, the first Christian emperor, succeeded his bloody predecessor. When Constantine ascended to the throne, the edicts of his predecessor were repealed and liberty was granted the Christians to worship according to their conscience. This took place in A. D. 313.

However, the Christian religion was regarded as but one of the many religions of the empire. All religions were tolerated. As time went on Constantine learned more about Christianity and became better acquainted with Christians. He noticed that his Christian subjects could be relied upon and trusted, while his pagan subjects were continually causing trouble and giving him much difficulty throughout the empire. This being true, he realized that Christianity certainly had something the pagan religions did not have. Because of this, in A. D. 324 Constantine issued edicts against paganism and sought with all of his power to force Christianity on his empire as the one and only religion. He banished pagans from his court and from his government, and Christians were given posts of honor.

These Christians were not like Daniel.

Because the Emperor offered the gold and positions of honor, many of them eagerly swallowed the bait, sacrificed their convictions and allegiance to the Lord - and the church settled into the world. Before that time the church had walked apart from the world (John 17; II Corinthians 6:14-16). When Constantine made these kind gestures toward the church and believers, they locked arms with him and with the state, and thus the church made a fatal union. The unhappy and spiritually unprofitable alliance of church and state can be dated from that particular time.

Up until this time, the believers met in homes and ordinary places of worship, but now the gorgeous temples of heathenism and the vestments of the priests were consecrated by the Emperor for Christian service. Many times men were forced at the point of the sword to be baptized.

Whereas the church had been in poverty (yet spiritually rich), it now was walking in what seemed to be golden slippers and splendor. In order to keep the good graces of the people, the church was forced to become reconciled to some of the pagan superstitions of the priests who were forced to become Christian at the point of the sword. The admonition to believers is, **“Come ye out from among them . . . have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness . . . how can two walk together except they be agreed?”**

The effects of the unholy alliance that began with Constantine, remain to this present hour.

Verse 13 sheds light that we certainly need today, relative to the devil and his activities here on earth. We learned that the devil does have a throne, and that he does have a dwelling right here on this earth. He is the god of this world, he is the prince of the power of the air.

The New Testament Church is made up of a heavenly people. Our citizenship is in Heaven, the Head and the Foundation of the Church is in Heaven, our conversation is in Heaven, we sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are dead, and our lives are hid with Christ in God. It is a terrible thing when the Church sits down where Satan's seat is, and where Satan dwells.

The false church is minutely described in Revelation chapter 18. There are named 28 items in the false church. The first is GOLD, and the last is SOULS. We will study it carefully when we reach chapter 18.

In spite of the horrible persecution of the church at Pergamos, and in spite of the fact that the church was in the city where Satan had his headquarters, the message declared, **“Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.”** The saints had been tested, and even though their goods had been taken, they had been tortured, robbed and martyred, they did not deny the name of the Lord Jesus, nor did they deny the faith. Satan is a powerful person - but his overthrow is determined, and the moment of his eternal imprisonment is fixed (Revelation 12:7-13; 20:10).

The Spirit gives honor where honor is due. The believers at Pergamos, in spite of all that had come upon them, had not surrendered one article of fundamental truth, had not deviated from the faith **“even in the days in which Antipas, my faithful witness, was slain among you.”**

The name of Antipas, that faithful, uncompromising, fearless witness who sealed his testimony for Christ with his life’s blood, has been handed down to us on the pages of Holy Scriptures.

We do not know one thing about him save his name and the fact that he gave his life for his faith; but there is so much wrapped up in that one sentence, **“MY FAITHFUL WITNESS!”** What the Lord Jesus Christ was to God the Father (Revelation 1:5), Antipas was to the Lord Jesus Christ! Greater words could not be spoken about any saint of God.

Verses 14 and 15: **“But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.”**

Verse 14 opens with the words, **“But I have a few things against thee.”**

These words were spoken to the angel at Ephesus (chapter 2:4) and also to the angel at Thyatira (chapter 2:20). At Ephesus, it was the departure from first love. In Thyatira it was the corruption of doctrine; and here in Pergamos it is plural **“things,”** pointing to more than just one evil.

Always remember that when a minister begins to compromise in the least, the compromising will spread and grow. If we give the devil an inch he will take a mile. A believer cannot do business with the devil in any form, regardless of how insignificant or little it may seem. It does not seem to be such a terrible sin just to love the Lord Jesus a little less; but when our love cools, that always opens the door for other things to happen.

In the church at Pergamos, there were those in the assembly who held to the teaching of Balaam, and those who held to the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. Both groups were tolerated in the local assembly. What Ephesus hated, Pergamos accepted (Revelation 2:6 and 2:15).

If you will study the life of Balaam, you will readily see that his heart was not in the prophecies he was compelled by the Spirit of God to utter (Numbers 23 and 24). The king of Moab had offered him honor and gifts and his soul longed for these things. For enough money, he would curse the people of God. **“HE LOVED THE WAGES OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS”** (II Peter 2:15).

Balaam was exceedingly baffled in his wicked attempts to curse those whom God had abundantly blessed. The ungodly Mesopotamian prophet taught the wicked, demented Moabite king to cast a stumbling block in the path of God’s chosen people, Israel.

The Old Testament does not give us the record of the transaction between these two characters. The prophet and the king went their respective ways (Numbers 24:25). But the scheme succeeded.

Under the direction of their evil leader, the women of Moab caused the children of Israel to sin (Numbers 25-31). Thus Balaam, even more guilty than the king, was (through Satan) the real instigator of the fall of Israel, which led to the signal judgment inflicted through the power of God, upon 24,000 of the people (Numbers 25:9).

Paul refers to this terrible judgment in I Corinthians 10:8: **“Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.”** Peter, Jude, and John, three writers in the New Testament, specifically refer to Balaam. Israel committed two sins which brought this judgment upon them. The sins were idolatry and fornication.

Paul denounced both sins III I Corinthians 10:19-28 and I Corinthians 6:15-18.

In Pergamos, the teachers of these terrible, impure practices were sheltered and protected within the church itself! These sins were the result of the teaching of Balaam. For the born again child of God, any object, any person, place or thing that occupies the place God should OCCUPY in the heart and life of the individual, is an idol, and thus becomes idolatry (I John 5:21).

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

Illicit intercourse with the world is spiritual fornication (II Corinthians 6:14-16). In the Old Testament, Israel is charged with adultery in having fellowship with the Gentiles (Jeremiah 3:8). Israel was married to the Lord; thus to be friends with the enemies of the Lord was adultery. In the New Testament, the church is charged with fornication in allowing friendship with the world (Revelation 2:21). (The New Testament Church is not yet married to the Bridegroom. The marriage will take place immediately after the Rapture.)

Thus, for the church to show friendship with the world is spiritual fornication. We are commanded to **“Love not the world . . . come ye out from among them . . . touch not the unclean . . . have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness . . . abstain from the appearance of evil.”** When a believer participates in the things of the world, that participation is spiritual fornication.

There was a difference between the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes and the doctrine of Balaam, but the result of both doctrines was the same-moral ruin to all who participated in such unholy teachings and practices. The outstanding sin in the church at Pergamos was the sin of tolerating evil men and their teaching in the church. Balaam, the false prophet, still has his representatives in the local assemblies today. Men who are twin brothers to Balaam occupy positions of responsibility in the local churches. The sin of Pergamos is still with us.

In the warning to the assembly at Ephesus, the Spirit said, **“Remember, therefore, and repent.”** No assembly on earth at that time had quite so much to be thankful for as the church at Ephesus. Paul had labored at Ephesus for three years. He served with tears and with much suffering. The result was abundant fruit. He had taught the people, suffered with them - and they had grown in grace.

But in spite of it all, they had left their first love. The Spirit admonished the Ephesians to remember the good days, the spiritual days, to remember what they had fallen from, and to repent and return to their former spiritual status, which they had enjoyed under the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

In Pergamos, there had been no Apostle Paul. That church had not had the privileges and the teaching Ephesus had enjoyed. So the Spirit leaves off **“remember,”** and simply states, **“REPENT!”** In Ephesus the message was **“Remember - and repent, or else I will come and remove thy candlestick.”** Here, the warning to Pergamos is **“Repent, or else I will come and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”** In other words, **“I will not only come in judgment - but I will declare war! I will fight with the sword!”** Thus the Lord distinguishes between evils committed by the assemblies. There are degrees of sin - and proportionately, degrees of punishment. The Lord also distinguishes between leaders and those who are led.

In the different forms of discipline suggested in the New Testament, in order to preserve holiness and purity in God’s house and among God’s people, this distinction should be carefully recognized and acted upon in all church discipline. **“Of some, HAVE COMPASSION, MAKING A DIFFERENCE: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”** (Jude 22 and 23).

“The sword of my mouth” refers to the judging power of the Word of God. **“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”** (John 12:48).

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

To each of the seven churches is given the solemn admonition, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.”** We then have a promise to the overcomer, concerning special and personal rewards of hidden manna, and a white stone - and in the stone a new name written **“which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”**

Overcoming the world, the flesh, and the devil is an individual matter. WE must be overcomers. Overcoming refers to individuals, not to a group.

There is a peculiar sweetness to the promise given here: **“I give of the hidden manna.”**

In this verse, two times the Lord Jesus declares, **“I give.”**

Manna - and a white stone with a new name. In the Old Testament, manna is declared to be **“angels’ food”** (Psalm 78:25). John 6:33 speaks of manna as **“the bread of God.”** For 12,500 mornings, The Lord God rained down manna from Heaven for His people, Israel, on earth. The God of Israel is God, and He is even more to us in this day of grace than He was to them. This is the most glorious age ever known to man.

In the days when God fed Israel with manna, as a memorial of God's grace to His chosen people, a pot of the manna was laid up before the Lord (Exodus 16:13). Paul informs us that it was placed in a golden pot (Hebrews 9:4).

For approximately five hundred years, this hidden manna spoke of Christ in His humiliation; but the message was to God alone - it was not made for man. While hidden in the ark (the most sacred of all vessels), this manna was put away from the gaze of the people.

Now to the overcomers at Pergamos Christ says, **"I give of the hidden manna."**

Of course, the reward will be given in the future when the final struggle is over. The manna of old was rained down from Heaven for blessing and to satisfy the hunger of the people of God on earth. The hidden manna referred to here is to be given to the overcomers in Heaven. Not only will Christ give the hidden manna to the overcomer, but He also promises, **"I will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."** What are we to understand by the white stone and the secret name?

During the time in which John wrote, a white stone was used in social life and judicial customs. Days of great festivals were noted by a white stone, days of great calamity were noted by a black stone. If a host had a special guest whom he greatly appreciated, the guest was given a white stone with a name or a message written on it, directed only to the guest - not to be shared by any other. In the courts, a white stone meant acquittal. If the prisoner at the bar was given a black stone, that meant condemnation. In our Scripture, Christ promises to the overcomer a white stone, which means victory and final acquittal. We will enter God's glory without spot or wrinkle, without anything at all against us, completely free from any and all sin. The overcomer will have a new name written on the white stone. No one will know the name but the happy person who receives it.

In this expression the Lord Jesus is pointing out His interest in each and every individual overcomer. There are those who say if God is as great as we say He is, He would have no time for poor, finite creatures such as we are; but they are dead wrong. The Lord is concerned about each of His children. He has time for each of us, and He will personally present each overcomer with a white stone, with a message on the stone that no one can appreciate but the one who receives it.

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO THYATIRA

Revelation 2:18-29:

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

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

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

21. **And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.**
22. **Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.**
23. **And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.**
24. **But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.**
25. **But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.**
26. **And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:**
27. **And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.**
28. **And I will give him the morning star.**
29. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

The city of Thyatira lay southeast from Pergamos, but is much less outstanding than Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos. However, it has been said that the road from Thyatira to Pergamos is one of the most beautiful in all the world, and this city is identified with Paul's missionary journeys and his labors in Europe.

Paul's first convert was a woman of Thyatira - Lydia, who was a merchant, dealing in purple and fine linen (Acts 16:14). In that day the city was famous for its **"guild of dyers,"** and the goods used in many cities were dyed in Thyatira and shipped out from there. The industry of dying goods was the number one industry of the city, and even until this day the brilliant scarlet cloth dyed in Thyatira is largely used throughout Asia and parts of Europe. Today, Thyatira is a flourishing little town with a population of about 20,000. The church at Thyatira represents the years between 500 and 1500 A. D.

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass."

In Chapter One of our study, in the vision of the Lord Jesus in all of His glory, His eyes were described as a flame of fire, and His feet **"as if they burned in a furnace."** The Spirit assures the assembly at Thyatira that it is the Son of God, the head of the Church, the One who stands in the midst of the assemblies, who is speaking and directing this message to them.

This is the only church in the seven where a woman is mentioned - Jezebel, the wicked wife of the apostate King Ahab, who was nothing more than a tool in her hands. The king was king in name only. The ungodly idolatress and murderess ran the kingdom. She was a very clever and determined woman. She is the prominent person named in the address to Thyatira. It is not just a coincidence that the Holy Spirit mentions a woman in connection with Thyatira.

In Acts 16 we learn of Lydia, whom we have already mentioned as Paul's first convert. However, there is a striking contrast between Lydia and Paul, and the woman Jezebel and Elijah.

Read the account in Acts 16, and then read the comparison in I Kings, chapters 18 and 19.

Of course, after Paul preached the Gospel to Lydia she was converted and invited Paul into her home and became a faithful friend and supporter of the Gospel. On the contrary, Jezebel sought to destroy God's prophet, Elijah.

The message to the church at Thyatira is the longest of the seven messages to the assemblies.

This fourth message is the beginning of the second group. The seven messages are divided into two groups. The first three churches make up one group, and the last four describe the Church minutely from this present day on until the Rapture takes place. The message to the assembly at Thyatira presents the hopeless, helpless, corrupt condition of the local assembly, a condition out of which the local church cannot and will not emerge, a condition that is absolutely incapable of being improved. The message here is to be distinguished from the three previous messages in that here corrupt teachers are permitted to teach corruption, and children are born . . . **"her children"** . . . the children of wicked, adulterous, murderous Jezebel.

What a terrible commentary on the local assembly!

Another thing to be noted here is that a remnant is recognized and addressed separately: **"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden"** (verse 24).

Here the Holy Spirit distinctly points out a group **"as many as have not this doctrine,"** referring to the doctrine taught by Jezebel. She called herself a prophetess, but she was an adulteress, a fornicator and a murderess. In pointing out this remnant, the Holy Spirit distinguishes between the mass in the local assembly, and a faithful company of true believers. I would like for you to notice that in the messages to Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos, the call to **"HEAR what the Spirit saith,"** PRECEDES the promise to **"him that overcometh."** But in the message to Thyatira, the call to hear is found AFTER the promises. In the messages to the first three churches, it is the church that is called to hear what the Spirit has to say; but in the last four churches, beginning with Thyatira, the message is in relation to individuals who hear the words and who overcome.

An outstanding feature of the message to the church at Thyatira is the introduction of the divine speaker by name - The Son of God. This title of personal and divine relationship is used here for the first and last time in the book of Revelation. **"These things saith the Son of God."**

Many believers do not distinguish between the names of Jesus. He is called Jesus; He is called Christ; He is referred to as Lord, as the Lord Jesus Christ, and as the Son of God - and all of these names have a significance. Before Christ was born, Isaiah prophesied, **"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"** (Isaiah 9:6).

We have not time and space to go into all of these names, but they each have a very definite spiritual significance.

- The humanity of the Lord, His relationship to mankind, is conveyed in the title “**Son of Man.**”
- His deity and relationship to Almighty God are conveyed in the title “**Son of God.**”
- His glory and His relationship to the churches, as witnessed by John, were as “**Son of Man**” (Revelation 1:13).

Why then is the divine title, “**Son of God.**” used by the Holy Spirit here in verse 18, and in no other place in the Revelation? The answer can be found only in the Word of God.

Historically, Thyatira covers the period known as the dark ages, and in the message to that church we see in brief the picture of the Roman system of worship and religion . . . the worst system ever to disgrace the earth God created for His people. During the dark ages, Popery was in power. In Popery, every true thought of the New Testament Church is denied and lost.

Certainly Rome boasts loudly of “unity” - but it is her own kind of unity, enforced by the sword, fire, and the dungeon, so unlike DIVINE UNITY which is effected by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 12:13). In the New Testament Church of which Jesus is the head, there IS unity. Popery completely shuts Christ out as the head of the New Testament Church.

Since the church at Thyatira represents the age when Rome took over the reins of religion on earth, we have the statement, “**These things saith the Son of God**” . . . no, not Peter, but the Son of God, the Foundation of the New Testament Church (Matthew 16:16-18). In our present verse the Spirit further identifies the Speaker by saying, “**He that hath His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass.**” This is part of the detailed description of the glorified Son of Man in chapter 1:14, 15.

We should always bear in mind that He to whom all judgment is committed, He who will execute His own judgment, is not only man (John 5:22-27), but He is God as well. He who will judge the quick and the dead is divine as well as human. His eyes “**as a flame of fire**” symbolize His moral hatred and intolerance of evil. He will search out sin and discover all hidden iniquity. Who would even entertain the idea of escaping those eyes as a flame of fire?

What His eyes discover, “**His feet as fine brass**” shall tread upon in judgment. Brass symbolizes judgment.

Every system of evil that bears the Christian name (verse 22) must be utterly and totally destroyed. When the Lord Jesus comes in person to make good His sovereign right to the whole world, His feet are likened unto “**pillars of fire**” (Revelation 10:1,2). Fire is the symbol of judgment (Mark 9:43, Luke 16:24, II Thessalonians 1:8).

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

But the faithful are also commended for their love their service, their faith, and their patience. The word works occurs twice in this commendation to the church at Thyatira. The angel at Ephesus had decreased in love, whereas the angel at Thyatira had increased in works.

The darker the night, the more devoted and zealous were the godly company; their **“last works more than the first”** - more numerous, and more pure. Love is mentioned first (Galatians 5:22) because love is the first and greatest of all Christian graces (I Corinthians 13:13).

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

The general state and picture of the church in the middle ages is represented by Thyatira and the condoning of the evil that was present in the very assembly itself.

Why do you suppose the Holy Spirit chose Jezebel to be used as an illustration concerning the doctrine that was being set up and taught in the church at Thyatira? The only way to know the right answer is to compare spiritual things with spiritual.

- Jezebel was a woman,
- Jezebel was a queen,
- Jezebel was an idolatress.
- She was a persecutor and she was the virtual ruler and director of the government of Israel.

Her husband, King Ahab, was nothing more than a puppet in her hands. Read I Kings, chapters 18 through 21. **ALL THIS AND MUCH MORE IS SET FORTH IN THE JEZEBEL OF THE REVELATION.**

Here in Thyatira, her teaching, her doctrine, is certainly the beginning of the Papal system (read carefully Revelation 17 and 18). She (Jezebel) assumed the title **“PROPHETESS.”** She professed in the assembly at Thyatira to teach with authority. And as she taught, she seduced the minds of the people and trained them to follow her instead of following Him who stands in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.

The Lord had a grave and serious indictment against the assembly at Thyatira. The church was permitting in its midst an evil more serious in character than any evil that had yet appeared in the local assemblies. The Papacy is certainly in the forefront of the message to the church at Thyatira. The supremacy of the Roman pope is simply the development in full of the dispute among the disciples as to **“Who shall be the greatest”** (Mark 9:33,34).

Of course, popery had a beginning - and it certainly did not begin with Peter, because Peter was not a pope; he was just an ordinary human being like all the rest of the disciples.

Today Rome cries out, **“Hear the mother church!”** Again, Rome proclaims, **“The church cannot err in faith and in morals!”** When Rome says **“the church”** she means the Papacy and the Roman system.

It has never been a secret that the Pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ, and boldly declares that the church of Rome is THE church and all other churches and denominations are not right, but are definitely error. Rome claims to be THE church THE authority - and furthermore, Rome claims to be infallible. She cannot err, she cannot do wrong. Rome dreads the light, Rome fears the Bible. "THE CHURCH TEACHES, the church interprets," so says Rome. But the Lord Jesus says, "**Look on the fields. They are white unto harvest. The laborers are few. Go make disciples. Evangelize . . . work while it is day-for the night cometh when no man can work.**"

The Protestant claims to be only a witness in a dark world. The church of Rome claims to be THE church, THE authority, infallible and without flaw. Whenever the church of Rome chooses to make changes in the Word of God to fit her religion, she does so with what she claims to be authority.

But in the last chapter of Revelation, the solemn warning is made clear concerning those who add to or take from the words of prophecy. According to the rules laid down by the Holy Ghost, both teaching and preaching are to be carried out by individuals who are given such gifts by the Lord (Ephesians 4:8-12).

In Revelation 2:20, the Spirit continues by saying, "(Jezebel) **leads my servants astray. She teaches them, and seduces them to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.**"

Today we know Rome has led a great mass of humanity to follow Mary instead of following Christ, to pray to Mary instead of to the one Mediator and Intercessor (I Timothy 2:5, Romans 8:34). Rome has led teeming millions to the Pope instead of to Christ.

Those of us who read, believe, and accept the Bible as God's final word to man, ask, "How can people be so blind?" There is but one God; there is but one Church; there is but one door to Heaven. Jesus said, "**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.**"

Paul dearly teaches that Jesus is the Mediator between God and men, and John plainly tells us that if we confess our sins (to Jesus) He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And yet millions confess their sins to men. God pity some poor religious leaders when they stand before the Righteous Judge, to receive their due reward!

FORNICATION and IDOLATRY were the two great errors in the assembly at Pergamos.

These two satanic deadly evils were taught, practiced and condoned in the assembly at Thyatira. Fornication, as used here, symbolizes the professing Christian living in the world, condoning the world, fellowshiping with the world. This terrible sin began with the reign of Constantine, and grew into the Papacy. Constantine was the first to bring church and state together. He bestowed expensive temples, crowns of gold and much wealth upon the professing church in his day, and the unholy union of church and state was perfected in the Papacy.

Such union is spiritual fornication, and certainly brings judgment. In the end, it will bring horrible and final judgment upon the systems of spiritual fornication.

The Roman system is one of baptized paganism. Most of its doctrines - its holy days, its rites, its dogmas, its ceremonies, its vestments, its titles - are definitely pagan in their origin. If you will study Bible history, you will find that statement to be one hundred percent true.

Jesus Christ is the head and the foundation of the New Testament Church. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is already laid - Jesus Christ, the Lord.

All worship, all prayer, all service and all gifts are to be in His name, to His honor and glory, and they are to be given and performed out of a heart of love - not from fear or necessity.

All religions on earth can be catalogued under two headings: (1) FEAR, and (2) LOVE.

Under fear, you can list every religion on earth except one - Christianity. IT can be listed only under love. It is sometimes referred to as "the Christian religion," but Christianity is much, much more than a religion. Christ is not second to Mary. Christ is not second to any bishop, preacher, evangelist, pope, or what-have-you. He is the head of the Church. He will judge the quick and the dead.

He pleased the Heavenly Father - and He is the One with whom we have to do. Through His shed blood and His broken body we enter boldly into the holy of holies. Through His death, burial and resurrection we are saved.

Through His power we are kept. We are commanded to do all that we do to the glory of God in Jesus' name.

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

From its beginning, the Papacy reigned as queen for more than one thousand years. Rome never repented. The Reformation came along, and for three hundred years now in many countries, Rome has been in the minority with Protestantism in the majority. But the Papacy is unchanged. It is as it was in the beginning. The Lord **"gave her space to repent."** There has been no repentance.

The Jezebel (the Papacy) of the last thirteen hundred years is the Babylon of Revelation. Read carefully Revelation 17 and 18 and you will have a clear picture of the progress, growth, power - and finally the destruction - of the Jezebel who first raised her head in Thyatira, announcing herself a prophetess.

God did not make that announcement, the church leaders did not make the announcement. Jezebel set herself up as a prophetess. Rome set herself up as the Vicar of God on earth - but that does not make it so. God has certainly been good in granting so many days of mercy. God has been longsuffering toward Rome - but the divine verdict is recorded in the holy Word: **"She will not repent of her fornication."**

It is not that she cannot repent, but the truth is she WILL not repent. The Papacy in Rome has always been the same. She has never changed. Her character is fixed, and, according to Revelation 17 and 18, her doom is certain.

Verses 22 and 23: **“Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto everyone of you according to your works.”**

In these two verses, three parties are named who will be judged. The first: Jezebel. The second: Those who commit fornication with her. Third: Her children . . . the offspring as a result of fornication.

Jezebel will not repent, her judgment is certain; and those who ally with her will be judged unless they repent of their wickedness committed with Jezebel. Her children will be killed with death . . . and frankly, I believe that goes further than physical death. I believe it means that they will be tormented forever and ever in the lake of fire, and will die eternally.

In verse 23 we find a very important statement: **“And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”**

One day every knee will bow, and every tongue shall confess to God (Romans 14:11). In that day, the masses will learn who is God’s Vicar, who is head of the Church.

They will learn who judges and who forgives. It is no secret that Rome claims to be the representative of God Almighty on this earth today. But beloved, God has but ONE representative on earth today - the Holy Ghost - and He (the Holy Ghost) is in the world, calling out a people who will make up the Bride, the New Testament Church.

- We are convicted through the power of the Spirit (John 16:7-9).
- We are born of the Spirit (John 3:5-7).
- We are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 12:12, 13).
- We are led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14).
- We are assured by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16).
- He indwells every believer (Romans 8:9),
- He seals every believer until the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

God’s Vicar on earth today is the Holy Ghost - not the pope.

No man or woman is God’s representative on earth in this - glorious Dispensation of The Church.

We are saved by God’s grace, through faith. Salvation is the gift of God - but all believers will be rewarded according to their works (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

The same is true concerning the wicked who die in their sin and open their eyes in hell, They will be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:11-15). Salvation depends upon whether or not we receive Jesus as Saviour. If we receive Him we are saved; if we reject Him we are lost. But our eternal reward, whether in Heaven or hell, will be determined by our labors. There will be degrees of rewards in Heaven. There will be degrees of torment in hell. Every person will be judged righteously - God cannot judge any other way.

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

The medieval church of the dark ages was not entirely corrupt. The Albigenses and the Waldenses who lived in the thirteenth century stood aloof from Jezebel, the mother of harlots. These dear people, along with others, were witnesses against the corruption of Rome and the Papacy. They were sound and true in their faith.

They had a positive testimony - and they gave it. They boldly denounced Rome, the errors of the Papacy, the heresies of the church and of the Papal system. They were mostly simple, poor, unlearned peasants and mountaineers. They were ignorant - but they were spiritual.

They had not stooped to the **“depths of Satan.”** They were spiritual in their thinking and in their practices of life.

The Lord promised not to place upon them any other burdens. You may rest assured that God will not permit more to come upon us than we are able to bear through His grace. He always furnishes sufficient grace for every trial.

Verse 25: **“But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.”**

What these dear people had, they were not to surrender. They were to hold fast, regardless of the wickedness and immorality of all others. They were to stand fast, they were to refuse to compromise, resting assured that one day Jesus would deliver them from the trial and suffering through which they were passing.

The admonition to all believers is to hold fast **“TILL I COME!”** Always bear in mind, Christian, we are pilgrims and strangers in a strange land. This world is not our home, and we cannot feel at home in this world. We are not OF the world, as Jesus was not of the world. If they hated Him they will hate us. If they persecuted Him they will persecute us. If they crucified Him, do not be surprised if they nail us to a cross. But we have the promise that one day the moment of deliverance will come - HE will come **“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”** We are to stand fast, occupy, and be faithful until He comes. Then we will receive a full reward for our faithful labor of love in the Lord.

I can assure you, my fellow Christian, if you begin to look at churches, church members, preachers and church leaders, you will find yourself ready to give up and quit.

But if you will turn your eyes upon Jesus and look full in His wonderful face, all else will grow strangely dim “in the light of His glory and grace!” Remember - we are serving the Lord Jesus - not man or men, not religions or churches. But we are serving the One who is head of the Church - the Lord Jesus.

It may be true that you have been disappointed in preachers, churches and church members; but you will never be disappointed in Jesus. God help those of us who claim to be followers of fundamental Christianity to be faithful, hold fast, and stand true until Jesus comes.

Personally, I believe His coming is at hand!

The statement “**My works**” here is in contrast with the works of Jezebel (verse 23).

The works of Jezebel were unholy, ungodly - while the works of Jesus are holy and godly. On one occasion Jesus made a statement to His own people. They said, “**We want to work the works of God. What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?**” Jesus answered in these words: “**This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent**” (John 6:29).

Verses 26 and 27: “**And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.**”

It is clearly taught in verse 26 that it is not enough to deny Jezebel, and refuse to fellowship with her and her works, doctrines and dogmas - but that we should go further: “**HE THAT KEEPETH MY WORKS UNTO THE END.**” That is the person who will be crowned. That is the person who will have power over the nations, and who will reign and rule with Jesus . . . some over five cities, some over ten cities. Certainly the true doctrine of the difference in rewards is taught here. All will be rewarded - but each one will receive the reward for his own labors.

Again we see that it is Jesus - not Mary, not the pope, not the priest, not the pastor, not the evangelist. I have just as much respect for the popery of Rome as I have for popery as practiced in the protestant denominations of the land. You need not travel to Rome to find a pope. We have popes in some of the protestant churches in the United States. Some preachers dare not preach anything that is not sanctioned by the church bosses in many of the big denominations of our land. When I refer to “popery” I am not only speaking of Rome - I am also talking about religious dictators in any religion, regardless of the brandname stamped on the group.

The promise in our present verse exceeds any promise thus far given to any of the churches - namely, “**authority (power) over the nations.**”

This is the goal of the Papal system. What are we hearing today? One world, one church - and you know as well as I know that in our time a gigantic system is being formed to bring all churches under one head.

The great church councils, the compromise among churchmen, the new revisions and translations of the Bible are breaking down the cardinal truths of fundamental Christianity. There is a powerful drive, energized by the devil himself, to put all religions under one head - and that one head is Rome. Any person who reads the papers and magazines and listens to the radio, knows that this gigantic movement is in progress this very moment. Surely the end must be upon us!

It has always been the ambition of Rome to rule the world - politically and religiously. That ambition will be realized for a short season, but her reign will be brief.

The very instruments of Rome's tyranny will become the means of her destruction. Study carefully Revelation 17:16,17.

The authority of the saints over the nations here on this earth will occur during the Millennium. Jesus will sit on the throne of David, and we will reign with Him for a period of one thousand glorious years. The overcomer shall rule and reign over the angry and rebellious nations with a rod of iron. Their stubborn will shall be broken, their pride shall be humbled, their glory shall be brought to the dust of the earth. All nations and all people will know that God is God, and that God sets in power and authority whom He will. One day all will own the eternal truth that God is sovereign. to that glorious day when evil will and righteousness will rule forever.

Notice the last words in verse 27: “. . . **even as I received of my Father.**” It is very interesting to notice that the grant of authority and power over the nations is made over to Christ, to give to whomsoever He Will. Study all of the second Psalm. But this authority to reign with Him will be given only to the overcomer. Read verse 27 and then compare it with Psalm 2:9. These two verses have much in common.

Verse 28: “**And I will give him the morning star.**” Not only will the Son of God give to the overcomer the authority to rule and reign over the nations, but a greater, richer promise is made to the overcomer . . . “**I will give him the morning star,**” a personal interest in Christ Himself.

Hear these precious words: “**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father! The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are THE CHILDREN OF God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together**” (Romans 8:14-17).

Here Paul reveals to us, through the Spirit, that we are the sons of God the Father, we are the children of God, we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ . . . that is, “**if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together.**” If we suffer with Jesus - If we overcome, if we bear the cross, we will share the crown. But if we deny the Cross we will be ashamed at His coming. Read Revelation 2:28, 22:16, and Malachi 4:2, and compare these verses. It will bless your heart.

Verse 29: “**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**”

This solemn admonition is directed to all the churches. The call to hear, in the preceding chapter, was given before the promise to the overcomer; but in this Epistle to the church at Thyatira, and in the following three, the admonition to hear what the Spirit saith is given after the promise is made to the overcomer.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER THREE

The Seven Churches: Continued

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO SARDIS

Revelation 3:1-6:

1. **And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.**
2. **Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.**
3. **Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.**
4. **Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.**
5. **He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.**
6. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

In the message to the angel of the church in Sardis, we have the general state or condition of the church after the Reformation. In the message to Thyatira, we have the condition of the church before the Reformation. I realize that these messages were actually directed to churches that existed in John's day - but as I have stated already, each church represents a period of time from Pentecost to the Rapture.

In Sardis, Protestantism is in power, whereas in the Thyatira assembly the Papacy (Rome) controlled. The one overlaps the other; but although there is not an abrupt break between the two, they do signify certain periods of time. The Reformation was a definite turning point in the history of Western Christianity. God used Martin Luther and others to open the eyes of the masses, and for the first time the Word of God was put into language the common man could understand. Down through the ages, Rome has done her best to keep the Word of God from the ordinary people, but it is God's will that every believer have access to His Word, and the Holy Spirit is our teacher (I John 2:27).

The city of Sardis lay about twenty-seven or twenty-eight miles south of Thyatira. The city was very wealthy, filled with pride. It was the capital of the Kingdom of Lydia. Sardis was conquered by Cyrus, and with its fall the Lydian monarchy came to an end. The once proud city of Sardis decayed entirely. History tells us that in 1850 not one human being was found living in Sardis.

The present name of the city is Sart.

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

This verse identifies the speaker . . . **“He that hath the seven Spirits of God.”** The seven Spirits of God is a perplexing statement to many Bible readers. Paul speaks of **“One Spirit”** in his Epistles, and certainly the Holy Spirit IS one Spirit. We are all baptized into one body by one Spirit, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit; but in Revelation the phrase **“seven Spirits”** is used to assure us of the completeness, the fulness, and the diversified actions and ministries of The One Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 11:2 enlightens us: **“And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”**

1. The Spirit of the Lord
2. The Spirit of wisdom
3. The Spirit of understanding
4. The Spirit of counsel
5. The Spirit of might
6. The Spirit of knowledge
7. The Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

The fulness of the Spirit is in Christ; and we can rest assured that whatever state the church may be in . . . it may have left its first love, it may be corrupt, it may be dead . . . but there is in Him who is in the midst of the golden candlesticks, adequate spiritual power to meet every need, regardless of what that need may be.

The speaker not only has the seven Spirits of God, but also the **“seven stars.”** The stars are the light-bearers of the local assemblies. Their responsibility is to shine for Christ, to reflect the light of Christ and of Heaven to the people in the assembly and the community who live in darkness . . . the darkness of this world.

Christ has both the **“seven Spirits”** and the **“seven stars.”** All light and all ministry proceed from Christ. Jesus gives to us the ministry we are capable of handling, and it will be a happy day in the lives of ministers and Christian workers when we are ready to recognize that God knows what He is doing when He places us in a particular ministry.

If we will faithfully discharge our duties and faithfully minister in the capacity He gives us, we will have our time so filled that we will have no time left to covet nor to criticize another man's ministry. Whatever may be the ministry in the church, if it is successful and as it should be, it proceeds from the Lord Jesus Christ in whom all fulness dwells, "**in whom ye are complete**" (Colossians 2:8-10).

Verse one closes with the same announcement made by the Spirit to all the churches: "**I know thy works.**" But the statement here goes further. Members of the church at Sardis had the name that they were alive - but the Lord is omniscient, He knows all things - and though

Sardis announced life, God knew, the church there was dead. Man looks upon the outward appearance, God looks on the heart. Many times when we pass a magnificent structure we say, "My! That is a great church! What a beautiful building!" While a little store-building on down the street, with the word Mission written across the door, may be a much greater church in the eyes of the Lord than the great edifice on Main Street.

Such was - and is - Protestantism in many places today. Many great Bible authorities regard the Reformation as the greatest blessing to Christianity, and declare the greatest curse to be the beginning of Rome (the Papacy).

We must distinguish between the Reformation and Protestantism. The Reformation was the divine work of the Holy Spirit. Protestantism is a human system, and many times is just as dead as dead can be. The reformers - Martin Luther and others - succeeded in breaking the chains and shackles of Rome, and Christianity flourished for a season. Some may have wondered, "Will this zeal continue? Will victory succeed victory? Will one victory lead to another?"

The devil has had a lot of experience. He is not asleep. He is on the job, walking about seeking whom he may devour. Thus, before long, the Reformation began to cool and lapse into formal, lifeless, cold Orthodoxy. The great reformers died - and those who replaced them led the church into "systems." Instead of searching the Scriptures, they drew up dogmas and followed tradition.

Spiritual power was gone, and the zealous lost their zeal.

Soon the church had a name that it was alive - but it was dead.

Protestantism did not produce the gross corruption and the horrible spiritual fornication produced in the Middle Ages; Protestantism produced spiritual slumber. The church was dead-asleep. It was alive in name only.

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

We are to occupy until He comes. We are not to sleep as others do . . . we are to be alert. Watching and praying go hand in hand as having to do with the Lord's return (Mark 13:33). Watching and praying are Siamese twins when it comes to winning in the Christian conflict, and being an overcomer (Ephesians 6:18).

I wonder how many Christians we have today who are alert - watching and praying - really looking and longing for the return of the Lord? There is no New Testament truth that will so stir a church and keep it clean, as will the truth of the Lord's return "**in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.**" They who believe in the imminent return of the Lord, live zealous, pure lives. "**And every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as He is pure**" (I John 3:1-3).

What little spirituality remained in Sardis was rapidly dying out, and that assembly was therefore admonished to "**strengthen the things which remain.**" The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23) still existed there, even though that fruit was undoubtedly very feeble; and it must be strengthened immediately, or else all true Christianity would vanish from Sardis.

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

To Ephesus the Spirit said, "**Remember**" (Revelation 2:5).

Again in this present verse the church is admonished to remember. Ephesus was admonished to remember their first love - the glorious experience they had had with Christ, the One who was standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks. In verse 3, Sardis is admonished to remember the golden age of the Reformation. (This church is after the Reformation - the time when spiritual power and exceeding joy flooded the hearts of the believers.) Therefore, the Spirit admonishes these people to remember that glorious era . . . remember men like Luther, Wesley and others. In this verse there is also a threat from the One who stands in the midst of the golden candlesticks. The church is to remember - hold fast and repent . . . and watch; and if they do not remember, repent, and watch, Jesus will come as a thief and judge them. (Read I Thessalonians chapter 5.) Unless they repent, He will come to them as a judge - unknown, unlooked for and unexpected.

I am afraid that Protestantism and the world have come to terms, and the great majority of church members today find more pleasure in the world than they do in the prayer meeting. They find more pleasure in the things of the world than in the things of the Spirit. Therefore, if the church and the world agree and walk together, they must suffer the same judgment, the same doom. The Lord Jesus will come to the Church as the Morning Star. To Israel He is the Sun of Righteousness. To the world and to professing Christendom, He will come in sudden surprise as "**a thief in the night.**"

The Papacy (Thyatira) and Protestantism (Sardis) are running on together, but in opposite lines; but great efforts are being made to heal the breach between Protestantism and Romanism. The differences between the two are becoming less and less, and the hour is fast approaching when all differences will be ended between them. As I dictate these lines, a great council is in progress to set the stage for the great world church which will be headed by the devil himself in the person of the Antichrist. The end of that church will be devastating judgment from Him who is the head of the True Church - the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

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

As I have previously stated, there was a very small remnant in Sardis who bore the fruits of the Spirit . . . very weak, but they were there. God has always had His true remnant here on earth, and always will have until the Rapture of the Church. As it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall appear. In Noah’s day, eight people were saved. In Lot’s day the number was cut from eight to three. As it was, so shall it be. The Word of God asks, **“When Jesus returns to this earth will He find faith?”**

More false prophets have risen in the last ten years than in any given period of time prior to that. Magazines have donated multi-millions of dollars worth of advertising for ministers who deny the deity of Christ, His shed blood, and the cardinal truths of Christianity. In this day, men are trying to strip the Lord Jesus of His deity and demote Him to the level of all men. Thank God that cannot, and it will not happen; but these things are a sign that Jesus is at the door. Surely, He will come quickly. Surely He cannot tarry much longer.

The remnant of true believers in Thyatira were referred to as **“the rest in Thyatira.”** How many “the rest” were, we do not know. But notice here in Sardis the Scripture says, **“a few names.”** There were a few - a very few - in Sardis, who were undefiled, who had not completely denied the Lord. They were truly born again, and had not defiled their garments with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The majority in Sardis had a name that they were alive, but only a few really were alive.

The few who had not denied His name and who were genuinely born again, had the promise, **“They shall walk with me in white.”** They had washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, and would therefore walk with the glorified Saviour in white robes.

The statement **“they are worthy”** could be made only about persons washed in the Blood, saved by the grace of God. Even though these few might be as **“a brand plucked from the fire,”** they would walk in white because there is no degree of redemption. There are degrees of reward - but when people are saved their sins are washed away and they are as white as snow. Even though these few were cold and indifferent, seemingly almost dead spiritually, they would walk with the Redeemer, dressed in white robes, in that glorious resurrection morning.

Overcomers will wear white. Their names will not be blotted out of the Book of Life. True life in Christ Jesus is proven by victorious living by those who possess His life (Colossians 1:27). True born again saints of God do overcome. Read carefully I Corinthians 10:13, I John 4:4, Romans 8:31-39, Ephesians 4:30.

We live victorious lives because **“greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world.”** In John 17, Jesus prayed to the Father, **“ . . . Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled”** (John 17:12). (The son of perdition here refers to Judas Iscariot, who still has a job to do here on this earth during the Tribulation period).

Judas hanged himself and “**went to his own place.**” He will return to this earth during the Tribulation period.

Judas Iscariot was the devil in flesh. In John 6:70 Jesus said, “**Have I not chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil?**” It is true he was a member of the disciple band, but he fell from apostleship. Judas always referred to Jesus as “**Master,**” never as Lord, or Saviour. Jesus IS Master, even of the devil. Judas “had a name that thou livest,” but he was dead. His name was on the disciple register, but not in “**THE LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE**” (Revelation 21:27). (Those who are interested in this subject may order my book on *The Antichrist*. It is available through the Gospel Hour ministry).

There is a difference between “**the Book of Life**” referred to in our Scripture here, and “**the Lamb’s Book of Life**” mentioned in Revelation 21:27. Sardis “**had a name that thou livest,**” but in reality the assembly was dead. There were a few believers there, however, who had been truly born again. They were in the minority, they were not zealous and alert, but they were alive.

Let me remind you that there is a difference between redemption and rewards. It is altogether possible for a true believer to lose his reward. Read II John. Study it carefully. The same John who wrote Revelation uses the entire second Epistle of John to warn Christians concerning the truth, “**that we might receive a full reward.**” It is possible for a real believer to be snatched as a brand from the burning . . . to be saved “**so as by fire.**”

This passage in Revelation does not contradict what Jesus said in Matthew 10:32,33: “**Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.**” In Revelation 3:5 we read, “**But I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels.**” These few had not denied the name of Jesus.

They had confessed Him and had sincerely put their trust in Him. They were genuinely saved - while the masses were professors, not possessors. The professors had joined the local assembly, but they were not born into the family of God.

In Acts 2:47 we learn how we become a member of the New Testament Church. When we are saved, the Lord adds us to the Church. The moment we are saved we are added to the Church through the baptism of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12, 13).

Verse 6: “**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**”

The message to the angel of the church in Sardis closes with the admonition to “**hear the message of the Spirit to the churches.**” God help us to be again reminded that we are individually responsible to the Lord God Almighty. We are to hear what the Spirit says - not what man says or teaches.

Let me point out that in Sardis, the admonition to “hear” comes after the promise of reward to the individual overcomer. The entire assembly at Sardis was not an overcoming church. The overcomers there were only the few who had not bowed to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO PHILADELPHIA

Revelation 3:7-13:

7. **And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;**
8. **I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.**
9. **Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to Come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.**
10. **Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.**
11. **Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.**
12. **Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.**
13. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

The message to the church at Philadelphia is the message to the True Church in the professing church . . . the true believers among the many members. The city of Philadelphia was twenty-five miles south of Sardis. It was named for its founder, Attalus Philadelphus, who was king of Pergamos. Today the city is named Allah Shehr, meaning "*City of God*," and is populated largely by Greeks (there are approximately fifteen thousand there). The remains of early Christian influences are more clearly seen today in this city than in any of the other cities in Asia where the seven churches were located. The ruins of twenty-five churches can be found there, and marble pillars - the remains of great churches - can be plainly seen. No doubt these marble columns are the remains of pillars that were there even in John's day or shortly thereafter.

The city of Philadelphia continued longer than any of the other cities named by John, and was the last Christian city to surrender to the Turks. The name "**Philadelphia**" means *brotherly love*. Brotherly love is a distinct characteristic of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). Jesus said, "**By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another**" (John 13:35).

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

The Messenger to the church in Philadelphia identifies Himself by saying, "**These things saith He that is Holy, He that is True.**" These are divine attributes. Read Hosea 11:9, Jeremiah 10:10, Revelation 4:8, I Thessalonians 1:9, Isaiah 6:3, I John 5:20. Deity is delivering the message to the church of brotherly love.

The Messenger is further identified by the words, **“He that hath the key of David.”** Jesus is the One who has the key of David (Isaiah 22:22). Jesus is also the One who holds the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:18).

Jesus gave to Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and Peter used those keys to open the Kingdom of Heaven to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). He again used the keys to open the door of salvation by grace to the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). Peter left these doors open - therefore the keys of the Kingdom are mentioned no more. Since the door of the Kingdom has not been closed, it does not need to be opened in these modern days by a pope, a priest, a bishop, a preacher nor an evangelist. The door is open to **“whosoever will.”**

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

The One delivering the message to the church in Philadelphia is the One who opens - and no man shuts; shuts - and no man opens. This is the door of service, not of salvation. **“Behold, I have set before you an open door.”** Read Acts 14:27, I Corinthians 16:9, II Corinthians 2:12. Jesus has the key that opens the door of service. Who would dare question His authority to open that door - or to close it? His authority is final and irresistible.

The door of service was open to the church in Philadelphia because the assembly there had (1) kept His Word, and (2) had not denied His name.

The church in Sardis walked hand in hand with the world, and therefore God had no alternative but that Sardis must suffer the judgment of a holy God. God cannot condone sin. Whatsoever is sown by a man, a family, a church or a nation, that shall they also reap. **“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever”** (I John 2:15-17). The future of the saints at Philadelphia was bright because they kept His Word and confessed His name. They did not deny the Lord before a wicked and perverse generation.

No man can shut the door which is open to those who honor the Word of God and the precious name of Jesus. Many times in the New Testament, the Spirit opened and closed doors to the apostles. One such case is found in Acts 16:6-7. The Holy Spirit definitely shut the door to certain cities, forbidding the apostles to preach there. When the blind man was brought to Jesus in the city of Bethsaida, He took him outside the city, opened his blind eyes and then instructed him to go home.

He commanded him not to return to the city, nor tell any person in the city who had opened his eyes. **“And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town”** (Mark 8:26). Read verses 22 through 26 to get the complete story. God commands certain men to go to certain places and carry on certain ministries, but He also commands some ministers NOT to go to certain cities and peoples. It is God who opens and closes the door of service.

In I Corinthians 16:9 the Holy Spirit opened a great door to a mighty preacher - the Apostle Paul.

We ministers would be much better off if we would commit our ways unto the Lord and ask Him to open doors for us, instead of attempting to open them through political schemes and religious string-pulling. Some ministers go to certain denominational schools so they will be sure to be called into a pastorate when they obtain their degree.

You may rest assured that God Almighty does not call a surplus of preachers. Whom God calls, God ordains, and whom God calls and ordains, God also provides with a pulpit. **“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”** (Romans 8:14).

If we are led of the Spirit, we will be led in the right path, to the right city, to the right pulpit - and, as in the case of Philip, to the right person. Philip left a great revival, and followed the Spirit to the chariot of one man who needed the Lord - and what a victory he won!

Philadelphia is the second of the seven churches without reproof or rebuke. Smyrna is the other church not rebuked or reproved by the Spirit. Smyrna was the suffering church, the persecuted church, the church that underwent a blood bath. Philadelphia, the weak but faithful church, is not rebuked, but on the contrary is commended because she kept the Word and did not deny the name that is above every name.

The period represented by the church at Philadelphia covers approximately from 1750 through the period just after World War II. However, the church at Philadelphia and the Laodicean church will coexist until the True Church is caught out and the lukewarm church is spewed out. When I say these two churches will coexist, I do not mean in the spiritual aspect. I mean insofar as both remaining on the earth.

The revival that brought the church of brotherly love out of the few names left in Sardis, began with the great preachers such as Whitfield, Wesley, Finney, and Moody. What giants of evangelism they were! Would to God we had a Moody or a Finney on the scene today! It is true we have great men of God on the field today, but not like those men. The revival fires once swept through the open doors around the world.

Sad, sad, sad! But most of those doors are closed today, and others are in the process of being closed. Communism has closed many doors that were open in the days of Moody.

As I dictate these words, I think of the beautiful island of Cuba. I personally made three missionary trips to that island. I preached the Gospel in many, many places there. I witnessed a modern miracle in the work of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Willy at Pinar Del Rio, in the Bible School. I had the opportunity of speaking many times in that Bible School. But where is Cuba today? That door was open a few years ago; now it is closed. And as the end approaches we will see more and more doors closed.

God could have kept them open - but He permitted them to be closed because of the unfaithfulness of believers.

The church in America spends millions for movies, cosmetics, cigarettes, soft drinks, televisions and automobiles - and sends the left-over pennies to missions! God pity America when this country stands before God! “To whom much is given, of the same shall much be required.”

Oh, God! Have mercy on us to whom so much has been given!

There was a “**little strength**” left, there were a “**few names**” left, and through the little strength and the few names, great battles of righteousness were won by the dear men of God - spiritual giants who wielded the sharp two-edged sword of the Word without fear or favor, the Holy Spirit honoring their faithfulness, using these men and a few others like them to turn millions’ to the Lord Jesus, thus bringing into being the church at Philadelphia - the church of brotherly love, the church that kept the Word and confessed the Name in which salvation is found - the only name through which sinners can be saved (Acts 4:12).

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

We meet with the same party here as in the address to Smyrna. The character of opposition may not be the same in both church periods, for Satan varies in his methods of attacks, but in both the opposition is termed the “**synagogue of Satan.**” Those referred to are not necessarily of Jewish nationality, but just as the Jews claim to be God’s chosen people here on earth and that to the exclusion of all others on earth, so here we have a church order which assumes the same position.

No doubt they demonstrated the spirit of hyper-Calvinism. But just remember that nothing misses the all-seeing eyes of Jesus . . . those eyes like “**flames of fire.**” The Son of God assures the true believers that He will set them straight; so He exposes the true character of these people and declares them to be “**the synagogue of Satan.**”

When Jesus was here on earth, He looked a group of His own people in the face and said, “**Ye are of your father, the devil!**” (John 8:44). You note that from the time He walked on earth until He stood in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks delivering the message as John penned it down, He did not change His message.

I have been preaching the Gospel many years, and I am preaching the same Gospel message today that I preached when I first began preaching. God’s minister does not change his Gospel, he does not change his message. The reason is clear: The Gospel never changes. “**Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever**” (Hebrews 13:8) - and, of course, Jesus is the Gospel.

Jesus assures the true believers in Philadelphia that He will make the pretenders, the counterfeit church members, those who profess but do not possess, to come and worship at the feet of the true Church. God is jealous for the Church. The Church is the Bride of Christ. He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28), and those who counterfeit the true Church will pay for their deadly evil.

Verse 10: **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”** What a promise!

Two things are pointed out here.

First, **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience . . .”** By this the Spirit means, “Because you have been true to the pure Word of God.” Until we reach Heaven we will never know the importance of God’s holy Word.

Dear friend, did you know that if the devil could discredit the Word of God, the foundation of Christianity would crumble and hell would destroy the Church of the living God? But that will never happen. The Word of God is the solid Rock of Gibraltar, spiritually speaking. **“In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God.”** If the devil could destroy the Word, the devil could destroy God, because God and His Word are synonymous. If the devil could discredit the Word of God, the devil would look God in the face and brand Him a liar.

But hallelujah! **“Thy Word, O Lord, is forever settled in Heaven!”** I thank God that the bishops, the translators and revisers cannot get their crooked, demented hands on God’s holy, pure, complete, protected, living Word. Praise His Holy Name!

Secondly - they had not only kept the Word, but they had also kept His name. They had not denied, but had lifted up the name that is lifted up in the Word - the name at the sound of which every knee shall bow in Heaven, in earth, and things under the earth (Philippians 2:10).

“I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.”

There are many ideas, doctrines and dogmas concerning The Church and the Great Tribulation period that shall come upon the earth during the reign of the Antichrist. Some teach that The Church will go through the first half of the Tribulation. Some teach that The Church will go through all of the Tribulation. There are those who teach that The Church will be raptured in mid-Tribulation. And then - there are those who preach the truth: That The Church will be raptured before the appearing of Antichrist, before the beginning of the Tribulation, **“the hour of temptation that shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.”**

You may rest assured that the born again children of God will not enter or go through any portion of the Tribulation period that will come upon this earth. True believers keep the Word. True believers confess the name of Jesus. And the promise to the believers in Philadelphia is, **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation that will come upon all the earth.”**

All outstanding, fundamental, evangelistic, Bible-believing teachers and preachers believe and teach that “the hour of temptation” mentioned here is the Great Tribulation known in the Old Testament as **“the time of Jacob’s trouble.”**

True believers will not go through any part of the Great Tribulation. Proof: **“FOR GOD HATH NOT APPOINTED US TO WRATH, BUT TO OBTAIN SALVATION BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST”** (I Thessalonians 5:9).

Born again believers are not saved to go through wrath.

We are saved and delivered from the wrath of God; therefore, as members of the body of Christ, we are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain complete and full salvation.

- Jesus died on the Cross to redeem the soul.
- He lives to deliver us daily from the power of sin, the world, the flesh and the devil.
- He is coming in the Rapture to deliver us from corruption as having to do with the mortal body.

This mortal must put on immortality, and this great miracle will take place when Jesus comes in the Rapture. Read the entire fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians.

Read I John 3:1-3. But hear this! **“THE LORD KNOWETH HOW TO DELIVER THE GODLY OUT OF TEMPTATIONS** (meaning here the Great Tribulation that will come upon all the earth), **AND TO RESERVE THE UNJUST UNTO THE DAY OF JUDGMENT TO BE PUNISHED”** (II Peter 2:9).

When the flood came, not one drop of water fell until Noah and his family were safe within the ark **“and the Lord shut them in”** (Genesis 7:1 and 16). When Sodom was destroyed, not one spark of fire and brimstone fell on that city until Lot was safe outside, beyond the danger of the fire. Read Genesis 19:12-22 and you will discover that God said, “Lot, get out! I cannot destroy the city until you are on the outside!” II Peter 2:8 tells us that Lot was a righteous man, though **“vexed with the filthy conversation”** of Sodom.

Do not be angry with me - I did not write that. I am just reading it from God’s holy Word and giving it to you in this message. It cannot be denied that the New Testament declares that Lot was a righteous man. He lost his family - with the exception of two daughters who later disgraced him. He lost all of his possessions . . . everything he had - but he was a righteous man, and God saw to it that he was safe outside the city before the fire fell.

God certainly loves The Church - the Bride of His only begotten Son - as much as He loved Noah and Lot.

So let no one tell you that The Church will go through any part of the reign of the Antichrist. You may rest assured that God did not save us to be buffeted and persecuted by the Antichrist. The Church is looking for Christ the Lord - not for the Antichrist.

In II Peter 2:9, the judgment has to do with the end time. The wicked will be judged through the great plagues and the horrible things that will occur as recorded in the book of Revelation, after the Rapture of The Church.

These terrible plagues and judgments will come upon the inhabitants of the earth during the Tribulation, after The Church has been taken out of the earth to meet the Lord in the air. The righteous will be delivered from these terrible plagues, and from the horrible deluge of fire, blood, and demon monstrosities that will invade this earth after the Rapture.

Just as God could not touch Sodom until Lot was out of the city (Genesis 19:22), God will not touch this earth in judgment and great tribulation until the Bride of Christ (the New Testament Church) is seated with the Lord Jesus in the air, at the marriage supper of the Lamb (I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Revelation 19:7-10).

Cheer up, child of God - take courage! When all hell breaks loose on this earth and the Blood runs like a river for two hundred miles, ten feet deep; when sinners beg God to let the rocks and mountains fall on them and hide them from the face of Jesus; when men chew their tongues and beg God to let them drop dead (and yet they cannot die) - we born again believers will have a ringside seat in the sky! Did you know, dear believer, that the Rapture may take place today? It could take place this very moment! No man knows the day nor the hour, no man knows the moment - but the coming of Jesus is imminent. If you are born again, cheer up! Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look for Him. Pray for Him to hasten His coming.

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

Verse eleven contains an announcement and good sound advice. **“Behold, I come quickly.”** When Jesus comes for The Church it will all be over in the twinkling of an eye. Believers are admonished to **“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”** This does not say, “Hold fast to your salvation, let no man steal your salvation.” Oh, no! It says “crown.” Crowns are rewards. I will name them for you in just a few moments.

Verses 12 and 13: **“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”**

Without a doubt, the Philadelphia church is The Church that will be raptured out of this earth at the same time the Laodiceans will be spewed out. It is true that in John’s day there was a city named Philadelphia, and there was a church there. But the message goes much further than the local assembly in Philadelphia. Each of the seven churches is identical to a period of church history behind us, up to the church at Philadelphia. We are now living in the time corresponding to the church at Philadelphia and the church of the Laodiceans.

The church at Philadelphia is a picture of The True Church, just before the Rapture. We are now living in the very hour of the coming of the Son of God for The Church. Every minute detail of prophecy having to do with the coming of the Lord has been fulfilled, or is being fulfilled today before our very eyes! So many things have happened in the past ten years, one almost becomes dizzy when comparing current events with prophecy.

Things prophesied centuries ago have been fulfilled in our day. One of these glorious days, the Rapture will take place - and it will all be over “**in the twinkling of an eye**” (I Corinthians 15:51, 52).

Are you, dear believer, “**holding fast what thou hast**”?

We preachers need more than ever to preach faithfulness to God in this hour. If ever there was a day when God’s people need to be faithful and stand up to be counted for Jesus, it is today. There are many saved people who will be ashamed at the coming of the Lord. Salvation is God’s gift. Rewards are earned through faithful stewardship (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

Yes, a believer can lose his reward; but Jesus is our salvation. When by faith we place our hand in His precious nail-scarred hand, He is able to keep us through His mighty power.

We are warned to hold fast that which we have, that we lose not our crown - but certainly a crown is not our salvation.

There are five crowns mentioned in the New Testament which can be earned by a believer through faithful stewardship:

1. The incorruptible crown (I Corinthians 9:25).
2. The crown of rejoicing (I Thessalonians 2:19).
3. The crown of righteousness (II Timothy 4:8).
4. The crown of life (James 1:12).
5. The crown of glory (I Peter 5:4).

If you will study each of these Scriptures, you will find clearly stated the requirements for coming into possession of one (or all five) of these crowns.

Some believers will receive a full reward. Others will lose their reward, and their works will be burned.

The outstanding danger among believers today is unfaithfulness to the pure Gospel. Please read and carefully study the Second Epistle of John, and hear what the Spirit is saying to you in that passage. No born again person should attend a church that is not true to the pure Gospel nor support a preacher who denies the faith. When I say “**the faith**,” I am speaking of THE FAITH once delivered to the saints, as referred to in the first three verses of Jude.

“**Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? SO RUN, THAT YE MAY OBTAIN**” (I Corinthians 9:24). Personally, I want some trophies to lay at His feet when we crown Him Lord of all.

I want some trophies to lay at His feet when we crown Him King of Kings. By God’s grace, I will be true and faithful to His Word. Will you join me in these closing days of the Age of Grace? Let us be faithful!

Overcomers will become pillars in the temple of God.

- There will be no liberal temples in the Pearly white City (Revelation 21:22).
- There will be no liberal temples here on earth during the judgments and during the Millennium (Revelation 11:1,2 and Acts 15:12-18).

The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb shall be the temple in the Pearly white City. Overcomers will be the pillars (the members) of that great temple of God. True believers are pushed around by the worldly element in the local assemblies. True believers and true Bible preachers are many times put out of the local church. But thanks be unto God, true believers and true preachers will not be put out of that holy temple in the New Jerusalem. **“HE SHALL GO NO MORE OUT!”**

When God’s saints reach Heaven they will not be pushed around anymore. They will not be called fanatics and religious crackpots. Thousands of dear Christians today have been put out of churches they helped to build. Many believers sacrificed to build churches in the years gone by. But when the old saint of God, the minister of the Gospel, passed on to be with the Lord, a streamlined, seminary-manufactured denominational preacher took over and changed all the old ideas. He brought in “the new frontier” in religion. The mourner’s bench was junked, the prayer room was outlawed, and a social gospel was substituted for the pure Gospel of God’s marvelous grace.

Handshaking and card signing took the place of the real, old-fashioned “experience by grace through faith in the shed blood.” Many dear ministers have been put out of churches they started and pastored for many months without a salary. But they have had to step aside and allow the streamlined preacher to take over. It will not be thus, thank God, in the by-and-by.

There is no danger of missing the identity of these true-blue, consecrated overcomers. Jesus tells us that He will identify them by writing on them the name of the City of God, and “MY NEW NAME.”

Again we hear the Spirit saying, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith.”** In these **“last days”** we need as never before to hear the Spirit as He speaks to us. If we walk in the Spirit, fellowship with the Spirit and listen to the Spirit, we will not become discouraged in these trying hours. We will not hear the rumbling of the terrible judgments that hang heavily over this earth. While I dictate these words there is not one solitary prophecy remaining to be fulfilled before the Rapture of the Church. The Rapture could take place any second. I pray, **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus”** (Revelation 22:20).

Are you ready for the Rapture, dear friend? If you are reading these lines and you are not born again, do not put it off another moment. Bow your head and confess Your sins, ask the Lord Jesus to come into your heart and He will save you this very moment.

THE SPIRIT’S MESSAGE TO LAODICEA

Revelation 3:14-19:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The message to the church at Laodicea is the message to the church in its final state of apostasy. Laodicea was located about forty miles east of Ephesus.

Its name was derived from Laodice, the wife of Antiochus II, the Syrian who ruled in the early days of the city.

Laodicea was a wealthy city, so much so that In spite of the fact that an earthquake destroyed it during the reign of Nero, A. D. 62, it quickly recovered from that terrible disaster, and from its own resources soon regained all the glory and wealth lost during the great earthquake. At the time John wrote the message to the local assembly there, Laodicea was again a magnificent and wealthy city.

From the account In Revelation, the wealth of the city greatly affected the church. It seems strange to most people that riches and sorrow go together. It is the love of money that is the root of all evil. Most of the time, riches produce rotten living. There are a few rich people who serve God, and there are a few rich churches that are spiritual; but the general rule is that riches bring sorrow.

Jesus said, **“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!”** That does not mean that God cannot or will not save a rich man - He can, and He will. But the sad fact is that riches and spirituality somehow do not seem to walk together.

The assembly at Laodicea was **“rich and increased with goods.”** Luxury, self-satisfaction, pride and plenty were the ruin of the assembly there. Today the pride of that Laodicea has been brought down to the ground. Its wealth has been scattered. Its splendor lies in the dust of the earth. The site where that great city once flourished is now the scene of ruin and desolation.

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

There was a local assembly at Laodicea, and even in Paul’s day some thirty years before John was exiled to Patmos, the condition of that assembly troubled Paul tremendously (Colossians 2:1). Seemingly the ruin of that church was pride, material wealth and self-satisfaction among the people. They did not need God - they had everything.

They gloried in things - not in the Lord. Since each church in Revelation represents a period in history between the beginning of the Church and the Rapture, we recognize that we are now living in a church age symbolized by the spirit of the Laodiceans of John's day - pride, wealth, and self-satisfaction.

Note the titles of the divine Speaker: "**These things saith the Amen.**" This title is a Hebrew word signifying both the true unchangeable nature of the Speaker, and the unchanging message of God's Word. Authorities on the original languages of the Bible tell us that the Hebrew word for "**Amen**" is literally "*truth*," or "*believe*." In the New Testament, the Greek word for "**amen**" can be translated "*verily*," which is another way of saying, "*truth*." So the Speaker addressing the Laodiceans is "**The Truth**," and certainly that is Jesus (John 14:6, John 17:17).

Notice the second title given to the One who is addressing the Laodiceans: "**The faithful and the true witness.**" From Adam to this present time, every witness except this One has failed in one way or another. Who is this One? The Lord Jesus Christ! He is the only One who faithfully obeyed the commands, wishes and desires of the Heavenly Father in every minute detail.

- Has the church been a faithful witness? (I am referring to the local church on earth.)
- Has the church been a true witness to the treasures of His divine grace?
- Has the church been a true witness to the character of God?
- Is the living expression of God in Christ visible in the lives of the members of the local assembly?
- Is the church the light-bearer God intended it to be today?

Many churches have completely shut Him out, and He is standing at the door-knocking. Many local assemblies today are saying - in effect, if not in words - "We have need of nothing . . . we do not need the old-fashioned Word of God. We do not even need Jesus! We do not need the message of Calvary, stained with blood." (Precious blood, so divine!)

Jesus has been insulted and pushed out - but in spite of it all, He lingers at the door, He is knocking, and He cries, "**Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man, just one man, will open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me!**"

To the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has been committed the most grand and glorious opportunity any group on this earth has ever had. But it seems that the visible local church has failed as no other group has ever failed.

Schools in America that were founded by God-fearing saints only a few years ago, now deny the God who gave Jesus to shed His blood for the remission of sins! In these institutions - built with the sacrificial dollars of hard working saints of yesteryear - is taught every heresy that hell ever dreamed of - and some heresies that even the devil must be ashamed of! God pity a two-legged human being who will deny the God who gives him air to breathe, and who will accuse God's Christ of being an illegitimate conceived out of wedlock, the offspring of lust - or a character of mythology, when in Bible truth, He is the Son of Almighty God, conceived by the Holy Ghost . . . God in flesh!

In schools and seminaries that bear the name of Christian over their halls of learning, Christ is denied and slandered by the professors who are teaching the young men and women who will be tomorrow's preachers and missionaries if Jesus should tarry. I do not believe He WILL tarry. I believe the Lord is on the verge of spewing the Laodicean group out of His mouth. The next tremendous event for the church is the catching out of the true saints, and the spewing out of the Laodiceans.

Notice the third title given the Speaker: **"The beginning of the creation of God."**

The creation that began with Adam, the creation of which he was the head - whether ecclesiastical, social, political or whatever - has gradually gone down, down, down - from bad to worse. If I believed in evolution, I would believe in evolution in reverse, because we are certainly far from what Adam was, and he was the father of all living. So if man is evolving, he is going backward, not upward!

And now the visible assemblies of Christendom are getting a little closer together, gradually rubbing out the line of separation and demarcation, and we hear the words "coexist . . . be brothers . . . we are all striving for the same place," and other unscriptural terms. The systems of this world are ready to be taken over by the last world rulers.

Ritualism in our churches is bringing Rome and Protestantism closer together, and the pope is crying for unity. He has decreed that Protestants are no longer heretics, but brethren who have erred from the faith . . . the faith (to him) being the church of Rome. Rationalism in our Protestant churches is leading toward infidelity and we have hundreds of infidels preaching in Protestant pulpits all over the world.

The former system (Popery) will head up - not under the pope, but under the man of sin, the Antichrist; while rationalism and infidelity will finally head up under the Beast, who will be a brute, a blasphemer, a murderer, the greatest persecutor of righteousness and righteous men who ever lived on this earth. He will be inspired, energized, and empowered by Satan himself. So far as we know, these two men may be alive today. They may be walking the streets of earth today.

Enemies locked arms and crucified Jesus - the Jews and Gentiles allied together and nailed Him to a Cross. Pilate and Herod were enemies, but they got together and condemned Jesus! It seems reasonable and altogether possible that the forces of ritualism and the forces of rationalism will unite to destroy the real, true faith and the true Church on earth - If such destruction were possible.

Verses 15 and 16: **"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."**

Again the solemn words, **"I know thy works!"** This statement is made seven times in the messages to the seven churches. Omniscience is a divine attribute, and Jesus Christ is divine - just as divine as is God the Father.

To the church at Philadelphia Jesus said, **“I know thy works.”** He then went on to say, **“For thou hast a little strength.”** He knew the weakness of the church at Philadelphia, He knew the lukewarm spirit of the Laodiceans - and He knows the spirit existing in your church, whatever that spirit may be. This last phase of the church is the worst, by all means.

Notice the use of the terms “COLD” and “HOT” - not “DEAD” and “ALIVE.” The Laodiceans were in the most dangerous state possible. They were not referred to as being spiritually dead, nor as being spiritually alive . . . they were indifferent. They were lost, of course, for had they been born again they would not have been spued out of the mouth of Him who is the Head of the Church. Total indifference to Christ - not hatred - is the condition of the Laodiceans.

The coldness and death of Sardis, mixed with the weakness - YET A LITTLE WARMTH - of Philadelphia, had produced the feeble, lukewarm condition in the Laodicean assembly. Had the church been totally cold, there would have been a possibility of reviving the coldness, and the church might have become warm again. Had it been hot, the Lord could have blessed. But it was neither cold NOR hot.

The church at Laodicea was a group of undecided, neutral members who would not take a stand one way or the other toward Christ or the truth, and this is the most hateful, disgusting spirit possible to display against God’s Christ, God’s Word, and God’s Church. Such a condition must be dealt with immediately, and gotten rid of quickly. The last condition of the church is the worst by far. Total indifference is damning more people today than the liquor traffic, the dope traffic, and all other species of sin combined. **“How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”** **“He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”**

It is not gross sins such as drinking, doping, murder and adultery that damn the soul . . . it is indifference. Procrastination - putting off receiving Jesus - is the sin that damns the soul.

The believers in the church at Philadelphia were greatly encouraged with the promise, **“I come quickly.”**

Laodicea is threatened with imminent judgment. Jesus says, in effect, “I am about to spue thee out of my mouth.” The spirit that existed and the spiritual condition seen in the messages to the last four churches run concurrently to the end of the church age - the time when the Rapture will take place. The majority of the members of the assemblies in Thyatira and Sardis are responsible for the doom that finally comes upon Laodicea, and the true believers in these churches are those who share the blessing promised Philadelphia - **“Behold, I come quickly!”** When He comes, the true believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

The Lord’s coming is not mentioned in the message to the Laodiceans. Only judgment is mentioned - they will be spued out, all of them. Not even a remnant will be spared. The church is totally lukewarm. The believers in Philadelphia will be caught out, and the lukewarm church at Laodicea will be spued out at the same time.

The two events take place when the Lord comes in the air. When the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ shall rise, living believers shall be changed - and the lukewarm professors will be spued out. All this will occur in the same **“twinkling of an eye.”**

Christendom began its history under the brightest promise and the most glorious events known to this world. Christendom will climax under the darkest cloud ever to rest upon the course of mankind. The Utopia the politicians talk about will never come to pass as long as the devil is loose; but when Jesus personally places him in the pit and sets a seal upon him, we will have Utopia (the 1,000 years reign of Christ here on earth which we call the Millennium). Until that glorious hour, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse. The days of Noah and Lot will be repeated, and things will become darker and darker until the bright and Morning Star appears in the sky.

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

You will notice the believers in Philadelphia have not one word to say for themselves. They make no boasts nor brags. The Laodiceans testify in their own behalf: **“Thou sayest”** In Laodicea, there was not only a self-satisfied condition in the assembly - but also pride.

The church boasted openly, **“I am rich!”** It is true that the city of Laodicea was materially rich, but the church had no right to boast in riches, nor to sell out to the riches of the secular city. Jesus said, **“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”** I am sure the church at Laodicea could have matched some of our big churches today - in members, social influence, gifts, showy buildings, robed choirs, intellectual leaders - and probably a banquet hall second to none even in this day.

But any church - whether in Laodicea or in your home town - is headed for ruin when it puts “things” ahead of Jesus. **“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you”** (Matthew 6:33). Wealth (things) at the expense of spirituality is a tragedy and a curse.

Hear the Laodiceans testify further: **“And have need of nothing.”** These people had absolutely no place for the Lord Jesus Christ in their program. They did not need anything He had; they were completely satisfied. Even in the very face of judgment (verse 16) they continued to boast.

They did not believe in a God of judgment. They believed what the liberals and modernists are preaching today - “the goodness of God, the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man.” They did not believe in a God who is a consuming fire, a God who is angry with the wicked every day, a God who judges in righteousness. The condition of the Laodicean church described here could be front-page news of any religious paper in this hour. All who will face facts and agree to the truth must confess the same.

The last part of verse 17 is bursting with prophetic truth: **“. . . AND KNOWEST NOT that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked!”**

These people did not know their spiritual condition. They were so totally indifferent to the truth, to the Word of God, to the Gospel and to Christ Himself, that they were calloused (“**their conscience seared with a hot iron**”). They were past feeling, and deep down in their own sinful hearts they thought they were sitting on top of the world religiously. In reality, they were on top of the world religiously - but spiritually they were wretched, they were miserable - and yet their blind hearts could not see nor feel their misery.

They were poor, they were blind, they were naked.

Why did I say this part of the verse is bursting with prophetic truth? In Matthew 24:37-39 we have the answer:

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, AND KNEW NOT until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

In the days of Noah people were eating (it takes riches to eat and become gluttons). They were drinking (it costs money to drink). They were marrying and giving in marriage (it takes money to marry and divorce). This went on until the flood came and took them all away.

Why? Because they KNEW NOT. They were ignorant of the spiritual judgment that hung heavily over their heads, although they were wise in the things of this earth.

Read Genesis 4:16-26 and you will see that the people in Noah’s day were not stupid, ignorant people; they were learned men. They built cities. They were business men. They were instructors in iron and brass.

They were musicians - and they practiced wholesale killing! They continued to do these things until God took Noah and his family out from among them, placed them safely in the ark and shut them in. Then the flood came, and ALL were destroyed - except Noah and his family, who were safe in the ark.

Jesus is our Ark, and when judgment strikes on this earth we will be safe with Him in the sky. All the Laodiceans will be spued out - not one will be kept. Surely we are living in the very hour of the Laodiceans. We can sum up the condition of that church in one sentence: Its actual spiritual condition before the Lord God, the Head of the Church, was totally unknown to the assembly.

They did not know.

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

The characteristics of the Laodiceans are summed up by the Spirit in three words: Poverty - nakedness blindness! The Lord does not command the Laodiceans to repent - He counsels with them and offers to take care of their poverty, their nakedness, and their blindness. We find Him standing at the door, knocking - pleading for just one man to open the door and let Him in - but to no avail. Notice the counsel He gives: **“Buy of ME gold tried in the fire.”**

The riches of Christ are unknowable, inexhaustible. He has gold tried in the fire, and to buy from Him is no problem. Isaiah instructed, **“Buy without money.”** You do not need gold as man knows gold, in order to buy at the Lord’s great Supermarket. **“Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk WITHOUT MONEY and WITHOUT PRICE”** (Isaiah 55:1).

Gold, purified by fire, points to the divine righteousness of God - and Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (I Corinthians 1:30). Without the riches of His grace, we are of all men most miserable. We are the poorest of all men - but in Christ we are the richest of all men; Heaven is at our disposal, in Christ.

White garments are the righteousness of the saints (Revelation 19:8). To be clothed in righteousness is to be free from the shame of nakedness.

Eyesalve is for spiritual discernment. Unless our eyes are opened by the Lord, we cannot discern spiritual matters. **“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”** (I Corinthians 2:14).

Unless the Lord opens the eyes of our understanding we will never know the truth that makes us free.

Verse 19: **“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”**

This passage does not apply to any particular group, but to ALL the children of God throughout all ages. This verse is very enlightening, and needs to be preached in churches today. From the beginning of creation, the Lord God has rebuked and chastened those whom He loves - His own children (Proverbs 3:11,12; Hebrews 12:5,6). In Romans 11:22 Paul cries out, **“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God.”**

The Word of God speaks for itself. The Scriptures carry their own light. Scriptures unlock themselves when we allow the Spirit to compare spiritual things with spiritual; therefore, hear these words:

“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? BUT IF YE BE WITHOUT CHASTISEMENT, WHEREOF ALL ARE PARTAKERS, THEN ARE YE BASTARDS, AND NOT SONS” (Hebrews 12:6-8).

Any person who can live in sin, prosper in sin, be happy in sin and continue in sin without the chastening hand of God being placed upon him, has never been a son. He may have made a profession, but was not truly born again. Whom the Lord loves, He whips!

We chasten our children when they get out of line. When they disobey, we whip them, and God loves us a million times more than we could ever love our children, and He is a million times more interested in our spiritual success than we are. **“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake”** (Psalm 23). God does not lead me in paths of righteousness that I might boast or brag; He leads me in paths of right living because I am His son and if I fall into disgrace the reproach falls on Jesus. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens; and if you can practice sin and prosper and enjoy it without the chastening of the Lord, you are illegitimate, religiously speaking. You have never been truly born again.

Such was true in the case of the Laodiceans. Instead of rebuking them, God spued them out - but not before He warned, **“Be zealous therefore, and repent!”** When people are past feeling, when they know God but refuse to glorify Him as God, when they change the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, when they do not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gives them up. Please study the first chapter of Romans very carefully and you will see the picture of a host of people who knew God but refused to serve Him.

The Laodiceans were neither for nor against God. They were middle-of-the-roaders, lukewarm. They were neither hot nor cold. They could not repent, they could not be zealous, because they were past feeling. They had lukewarm hearts.

THE POSITION OF JESUS AS HAVING TO DO WITH THE CHURCH AT THE END OF THE CHURCH AGE

Revelation 3:20-22:

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

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

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

This last picture of the church is sad. At the beginning (at Ephesus) we found the Lord Jesus standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks . . . standing in the midst of the assembly . . . while in Laodicea He is standing at the door, on the outside, knocking.

This tender, touching call of the Master has been the call of ministers down through the centuries, appealing to individuals to open the door and let the Lord Jesus in.

In this Scripture, Jesus is appealing to ANY (even ONE) individual, but He is knocking at the door of the Laodicean church - not the door of an individual heart. However, if one individual will open the door, His promise is, **“I WILL come in and sup with him, and he with me.”**

“Behold, I stand at the door.”

Thus the, Lord is pushed out. He is not within the assembly at Laodicea; He is outside, knocking and speaking. Here we have a true display of the grace of God, even when the church has stooped to the lowest degree and has pushed the Lord Jesus out.

Please notice, the Lord Jesus does not command the Laodiceans to buy (verse 18), nor does He force entrance (verse 20). **“I stand . . . I knock.”** You may rest assured that the Lord Jesus will never force Himself upon any home, any church, or any nation. He loves all, He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He is searching for the unsaved - but He will never force Himself upon anyone. The Lord will never intrude where He is not wanted.

When Jesus walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, **“He made as though He would have gone further”** (Luke 24:28). I am sure, had they not invited Him to go in with them, He would have continued His journey.

Jesus does not force His company upon anyone. **“They constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went into tarry with them”** (Luke 24:29),

“If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.” We are saved by grace, through faith. **“So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”** (Romans 10:17).

If we hear the voice of Jesus, believe on Him and invite Him into our heart, He saves us; but we must invite Him, we must believe, we must receive.

Since the resurrection, Jesus knocks - He calls, but He does not force Himself upon any individual. In this day of grace, **“whosoever will”** may drink of the water of life freely - but they must desire the water, they must be thirsty, they must will themselves to drink.

To the unsaved Jesus is saying, **“I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved”** (John 10:9).

The door of salvation is always open to sinners - they need not knock. But the church door of the Laodicean assembly was closed in the face of Jesus, and He stood on the outside, knocking. His invitation in the closing days of this dispensation is, **“If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come to him and will sup with him, and he with me.”**

Remember - as it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man. Eight souls were saved in the days of Noah; three souls were saved in the days of Lot.

And Jesus Himself asked, **“When He comes, will He find faith on the earth?”** Surely we are living in the hour of the lukewarm, professing church. I am sure if the Rapture should take place between 11:00 and 12:00 on Sunday morning, some churches in the midst of a service would not be disturbed, and from the preacher on down, not one would be taken from that congregation.

That assembly would not know anything had happened until the service dismissed and the people returned to their homes or neighborhood, to find some of their friends and loved ones missing. Yes, there are churches on earth today - local assemblies - where there is not one born again child of God in the group.

Verse 21: **“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.”** This verse is bursting with truth and glorious revelation. How did Jesus come into the authority to sit with the Father in the Father’s throne? It is true that from the standpoint of deity He had a perfect right to sit there - but bear in mind that He humbled Himself, took upon Himself the form of man, and became obedient unto death. In Hebrews 1:1-3 we are told that He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father; and when Stephen looked into Heaven, he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God the Father.

I believe Hebrews 12:1-2 will clear up this question: **“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: WHO FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME, AND IS SET DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF God.”**

“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” (Hebrews 5:7,8).

By His life of patience and sacrifice, and by His death - the horrible death He died for His Father’s glory - Jesus sits in an exalted position at the right hand of God the Father. He said, **“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father”** (John 10:17, 18).

Jesus testified, **“My Father loves me because I lay my life down.”** No man killed Jesus. He willingly and voluntarily laid His life down because of the command of the Heavenly Father. He laid His life down in obedience to the Father’s will. (In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, **“Not my will, but Thine be done.”**)

The conqueror’s path of victory and reward lies open to every believer. Bear in mind that Jesus has never asked one of His children to travel a path He did not travel before us. The footprints of Jesus are our guide.

If we walk in the footsteps of Jesus, if we suffer with Him, we will reign with Him. The reward of the overcomer will be glorious; but it is not cheaply earned. Salvation is free - but discipleship and victory are earned at a tremendous price, and many times at the cost of suffering beyond the description of human words.

The throne of Jesus will be in Jerusalem (Luke 1:32,33; Matthew 19:28; Acts 2:30-35; Acts 15:14-16). However, the kingdom will be universal - that is, throughout the earth. Read Psalm 72:8, Zechariah 14:9, and Psalm 8. The kingdom will be filled with righteousness.

Read Psalm 72:1-7, Psalm 45:7, and Isaiah 32:1. Just as surely as Caesar had a throne, Jesus has a throne. He will sit on the throne of David, and we, the Bride of Christ, the New Testament Church, will reign with Jesus for one thousand glorious years right here on this earth (Revelation 20:1-5).

There are some Christians who say, "If I reach Heaven, that is good enough for me." Let me hasten to say, that is not good enough for ME. It is true that I want to be in that number when the saints go marching in, but I also want some trophies to lay at His feet when we crown Him Lord of all. And when He reigns, I want to reign with Him. I want to sit with Him in His throne.

I do not want to be bringing up the rear; I do not want to be in the background. I want to be near Jesus, like John when they ate the Last Supper and John lay his head on the bosom of Jesus. I know I shall not be worthy, but I do want to be faithful, I want to be an overcomer and a good steward for His honor and glory.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER FOUR

The Throne of Jesus in Heaven; The Elders; The Living Creatures

“THINGS THAT SHALL BE HEREAFTER”

The first division of Revelation was the vision of the glorified Lord (Chapter One). The second division consists of the letters to the churches (chapters two and three). The third division begins with chapter four and closes with chapter twenty-two, verse five. This comprises the prophetic portion of Revelation, although prophetic action does not begin until chapter six.

The scenes in Heaven, recorded in chapters four and five, introduce the first series of judgments, about which we read in chapter six. Throughout the church age there has been a conflict between good and evil, between righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness. The battle between God and Satan, the Holy Spirit and evil spirits, has been raging since the Church was born, and will continue until the Church is safely seated in the Heavens with the Lord Jesus.

After the Church is raptured, and the Holy Spirit will not be here to restrain the forces of evil, this earth will become a literal hell. However, the Church WILL BE raptured out of the earth before these terrible judgments begin to fall. After the Rapture the systems of this earth will be committed entirely to the devil and he will rule in the person of the Beast (politically) and in the person of the Antichrist (religiously). The Rapture takes place between chapters three and four - the overcomers will be caught up, and the masses will be spued out.

It is true that John does not record the facts concerning the Rapture; but Paul, to whom the mystery of the Church was revealed in full, unfolds to us the events during and immediately following the Rapture. We will be caught out and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:15-18).

I realize that some of you who read these lines have been taught that the Church will go through the first half of the Tribulation. But I declare, according to the Scriptures, the Church will not go through any part of the Tribulation. I make this statement because:

1. In the first three chapters of Revelation, the word church or churches occurs about twenty times. However, beginning with chapter four, up to the seventeenth verse of chapter twenty-two, the Church is not mentioned one time.

The Church has no part in the prophetic visions given to John after chapter three. Therefore, if we compare spiritual things with spiritual, and if we “**come now and reason together,**” we must conclude that the Church is not on earth from chapter four through chapter twenty-two, verse five. The Church is in the air with Jesus, looking down upon the horrible judgments here on earth.

2. The second reason I emphatically state that the Church will not be here during any part of the Tribulation period, is the statement in Revelation 1:19 - the key that unlocks the book. John was commanded to write:

First, “**The things which thou hast seen**”; secondly, “**The things which are**”; and third, “**The things which shall be after these things.**” These three divisions do not run concurrently. They do not occur at the same time.

John saw the vision of the glorified Lord, and that was the end of it. Then he saw the churches in Asia Minor, he wrote the messages delivered to the churches, and that brings that division to a definite close. The True Church is caught out, the lukewarm church is spued out - and then John records the things that happen AFTER the Laodiceans are spued out: “**AFTER THIS I LOOKED, AND, BEHOLD, A DOOR WAS OPENED IN HEAVEN**” (Revelation 4:1). Therefore we conclude, according to the Word of God - comparing spiritual things with spiritual, Scripture with Scripture - that chapter four and the following chapters record the things AFTER the Church is raptured.

3. The whole picture changes after chapter three. We do not see the Lord in the midst of the candlesticks any more. We do not see the Lord on earth any more; but we see a throne set in Heaven, and the Lord Jesus is sitting upon that throne.

There is a rainbow round about the throne, and we see the saints (the four and twenty elders) in Heaven, where they remain until chapter nineteen, at which time they come with the Lord out of Heaven, riding on white horses in judgment against this earth. When you forget your religious ideas - what you have heard, what you have been taught by preachers, religions and denominations - and let the Word of God speak; when you listen instead of interpreting, you will have no trouble understanding Revelation.

The only way to understand Revelation is to let it speak, while you keep silent and let the Spirit teach you, because this book contains the deep things of God and there is a special promise to those who read it and hear it - not to those who read and interpret it, nor to those who read it and say what they think about it. If you read the book, hear what the book has to say, and keep the things written therein, you are blessed; but whosoever adds to or takes from this book has the curse of God upon him.

4. According to Revelation 3:10, the Church will not enter nor go through any part of the Great Tribulation period: “**Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come UPON ALL THE WORLD, TO TRY THEM THAT DWELL UPON THE EARTH.**”

This verse could have been in the message to Ephesus. It could have been in the message to Pergamos. It could have been in the message to Sardis . . . but it is not. It is in the message to the church at Philadelphia - the church of brotherly love . . . the True Church. The Bride of Christ is not to be tried upon the earth. The Bride of Christ will not be tried! We will be rewarded for our stewardship, and we will either gain or lose, so far as rewards are concerned.

But the Church, the Bride, will not be tried upon the earth nor any place else. The great “hour of temptation” that is coming upon the earth to try them that dwell upon the earth is the Great Tribulation, the “**time of Jacob’s trouble.**” That is the time when the Antichrist will reign and this earth will be hell on earth. The Church will not be here.

5. According to the testimony of the Apostle Paul (who wrote inspired of God), we will not enter nor go through any part of the Great Tribulation: “**For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ**” (I Thessalonians 5:9). According to this Scripture, the Church is not appointed to wrath, the Church is not appointed to judgment. The Church will not face either the wrath of God or the judgment of God, but will be caught up to meet Jesus in the clouds in the air. Then the judgment of Almighty God will fall upon this earth as described in Revelation six and following. The stage is set in Revelation 4 and 5, and the judgments break at the beginning of chapter six.

THE THRONE OF JESUS IN HEAVEN

Revelation 4:1-3:

- 1. After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.**
- 2. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was Set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.**
- 3. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.**

The entire situation changes here. Up to this point, John is seen here on earth, and events recorded in chapters two and three took place right here on this earth. But the command of the Voice now is, “**Come up hither.**” Therefore, John leaves the earth and is caught up into Heaven to witness and record the visions that remain in the book of Revelation. Chapters four and five describe scenes and events that are beyond man’s imagination.

In our present Scripture, the history of the Church on earth has been written. The overcomers have been translated to meet the Lord in the air. The guilty multitudes of earth have been spued out. The removal of the True Church sets the stage for the devil to take over. This he will do, as we will see in chapter six.

Verse 1: “**After this** (after the Church has run its course and all things concerning the Church have been fulfilled) **I looked . . . and behold, a door was opened in heaven.**” (John 10:9) tells us that Jesus is that door.

After His resurrection He ascended to Heaven, and called John (in the spirit) up to where He is. He opened the door - and John stepped into Heaven to witness the events that were to follow. This is a true picture of the Rapture. John experienced in the spirit what we will literally experience when the Rapture takes place (I Thessalonians 4:14-18).

When the Rapture occurs, the trumpet will sound, and the voice of the archangel will call the saints up.

Jesus will not come to this earth when He comes in the Rapture . . . the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air; but when He comes in judgment, He will come to the earth, and will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4).

“And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me.” This statement does not mean that John heard this voice for the first time after he was caught up into Heaven . . . it means the first voice he heard (Revelation 1:10). He heard that voice here on earth, and now the same voice is speaking in Heaven. It is the voice of none other than the Lord Jesus Himself, as the trumpet summons John to come up from the earth to Heaven.

Verses 2 and 3: **“And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.”**

The voice of Jesus said, **“Come up hither,”** . . . and **“immediately I was in the spirit.”** There was no delay - not one split second. John was not actually caught up into Heaven bodily, for all this was part of John’s vision.

The expression **“in the spirit”** indicates that John’s spirit for the moment left his body, and his spirit alone was caught away into Heaven to behold his glorified Lord. John’s body was not yet glorified, and no man can behold the beauty and majesty of our glorified Lord in an unredeemed and mortal body.

The next statement, **“A throne was set in Heaven,”** definitely and precisely fixes the seat of royal rule and authority. What a contrast to the thrones of earth - thrones that have risen and fallen - down through the centuries.

But in this Scripture we have a throne that is eternal. The throne was actually the first vision after John Was translated in the spirit from earth to Heaven. The throne is the center of the heavenly scene, and is a symbol of the Lord’s universal government. He who sits upon the throne is not named, but is described significantly in the stones that are used to symbolize His appearance:

“And He that sat was to look upon like a JASPER, and a SARDINE stone.” The two precious stones named here symbolize the glory and the majesty of God. His glory cannot be communicated, even to the most exalted of creatures. The Lord God is light unapproachable. Paul describes it thus:

“Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling IN THE LIGHT WHICH NO MAN CAN APPROACH UNTO; WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, NOR CAN SEE: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (I Timothy 6:15,16).

The Jasper and the Sardine (or Sardius) stones are mentioned in the list of precious stones set in the breastplate of the high priest (Exodus 28:17 -20). Please read these Scriptures, for time and space will not permit me to give you the text of all the references used in this study. These same stones also are mentioned among those describing the glory of the king of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:13). We find them mentioned again in the description of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:19,20).

The Holy Spirit uses these two stones to symbolize the brilliant glory and unsurpassed splendor of the Lord God insofar as His glory can be displayed and symbolized to mortal man. The brilliance of the Jasper stone symbolizes the pure holiness of God, and the deep red of the Sardius symbolizes the Blood atonement demanded by God for the remission of sins.

John tells us **“The light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a Jasper stone, CLEAR AS CRYSTAL”** (Revelation 21:11). Note: Clear as crystal. God’s holiness is untouched, unmarred, unscarred - perfect holiness! Without a doubt, Jesus was the One whom John saw sitting upon the throne.

In the fourth chapter of Revelation, Jesus is described as a Jasper and a Sardine stone. The Jasper stone was clear - clear as crystal. The Sardine (or Sardius) was blood-red . . . the Bloody stone.

In Exodus 28, we read of these stones on the breastplate of the high priest. The Sardius. (the blood-red) stone having to do with Reuben is mentioned first, and the Jasper stone last. Revelation 4 speaks first of the Jasper stone - the clear white stone of Benjamin. This is not to be taken lightly. There is a definite reason for reversing of the stones, putting the first last, and the last first.

The Sardius was blood-red, speaking of the sacrifice of blood, pointing to the Cross and the first coming of Jesus to shed His blood for the remission of sin. The name is derived from two Hebrew words meaning **“behold the Son.”** It pointed to the Person of whom John the Baptist said, **“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29). It also tells us that He (the Lord Jesus) was the first born of every creature, and the first begotten - the ONLY begotten - Son of God (John 3:16).

The Jasper, the last stone in the Old Testament breastplate, represented Benjamin. This was a clear stone, speaking of total victory. On the Jasper stone Was Benjamin’s name, which is a combination of two Hebrew words (ben and jamin), so scholars tell us, meaning **“the son of my right hand”** . . . or, as one authority puts it, “the son of my power.” The first and the last stones pointed forward to the first and second coming of the Great High Priest - none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, here in Revelation 4, the order of the stones is reversed. John the Beloved sees Him (Jesus) first as the Jasper, and second as the Sardius. The reason is clear: In the Old Testament the saints looked forward to the day when the Lamb would come. They looked forward to the cross, and therefore saw the Sardius . . . the Blood-red stone . . . first. They looked beyond that and saw the Jasper, the clear white stone representing His power and His rule at His second coming to set up the kingdom. However, when John had the experience we are now studying, he was on this side of Calvary and the Rapture, and was looking back. John saw, first of all, the Jasper stone, the clear one - and then the red stone, the Cross and sacrifice.

Jesus is the same today, yesterday, and forever. He has not changed. He that keepeth Israel never slumbers nor sleeps. Today that same Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. He ever lives to make intercession for us. When we shall see the Lord Jesus, we shall be like Him (I John 3:1-3).

The beloved disciple next saw a rainbow round about the throne, **“in sight like unto an emerald.”** The emerald was Judah’s stone, and was green, denoting eternal freshness and eternal endurance. It was the wedding stone of ancient oriental times. The throne was encircled with a rainbow. This unbroken circle symbolizes the absolute sovereignty of God . . . the unbroken power of God, the unbroken love and mercy of God. The rainbow around the throne is to remind all of God’s creatures of the goodness, mercy, and longsuffering of God toward His creatures. **“His mercy endureth forever.”** God’s mercy is unbroken.

You will recall that in Old Testament days, God made a covenant with Noah, and placed the rainbow in the sky to assure Noah that He would not forget that covenant (Genesis 9:9-17). Instead of the usual combination of colors we witness in the rainbow today, the bow John saw around the throne was like in appearance to an emerald, which in color is one of the most pleasant to the human eye.

It was not just an accident that God created the vegetable kingdom in the only color which never tires the eye. So since God is about to deal with the earth, and deliver the earth from the curse and the reign of Satan, the circle around the throne in the form of a rainbow is not mingled colors, but the pleasant color of earth’s vegetation. The glorified saints of God will have constantly before their eyes the rainbow in the beautiful color of green, the remembrance of God’s grace to the earth even when He is about to deal with the race in judgment. And we born again believers will meet Jesus under the rainbow of mercy to receive the reward for our labors while here on earth (II Corinthians 5:10, I Corinthians 3:11-15, II John 8).

*Order my book on *The Most Beautiful Sight in Heaven*. In this book there is a complete study of the rainbow as it is mentioned throughout the Scriptures.

Let me warn you - you will either meet the Lord Jesus at the throne encircled by the rainbow of mercy, or at the Great white Throne where there is no mercy, but only the blazing white of the holiness of God Almighty. Read Revelation 20:11-15. In closing this particular portion of the Scripture, let me assure you that not one word is put in the Bible to fill up space. Every word has a distinct and definite meaning - names, cities, stones, or whatever. Thus, the stones mentioned in our present Scripture are not to be passed over lightly, because they have a deep spiritual meaning. God help us to study, and to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Revelation 4:4-5:

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

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

The twenty-four elders sitting on individual thrones (the word “**seats**” means “*thrones*”) represent the Church, the redeemed, the glorified saints after they have been caught out of the earth to meet the Lord in the air. The number twenty-four occurs six times, pertaining to the elders. Read I Chronicles, chapters 24 and 25. The saints are royal priests . . . “**a royal priesthood**” (I Peter 2:5-10). Peter is definitely referring to the Gentile believers here.

Some have suggested that this has to do with Jews, but not so. It has to do with all born again Jews and Gentiles who make up the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12,13; Ephesians 5:30). The crowns of gold worn by the elders set forth royal dignity. The white garments they wear denote the righteousness and the holiness of God (Revelation 19:8). The twenty-four elders seen here play an important part in the scenes recorded and visions beheld from chapter 4 to chapter 19, verse 4.

After Revelation 19:4 the elders are not mentioned again as elders.

There is no doubt that the twenty-four elders John saw sitting on individual thrones represent the Church after it has been caught out to meet the Lord in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

There are some who disagree with this truth, but the vast majority of outstanding Bible teachers of the past agree that these elders represent the royal priesthood of believers.

The seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which John saw, are the seven Spirits of God. Earlier in this message I referred you to Isaiah 11, the first verses of the chapter, and gave you a list of the seven Spirits, which denote spiritual perfection. Jesus was spiritual perfection! He who purchased our sins is second to no person in Heaven, in earth, or under the earth.

Jesus is the “**Faithful Witness**” (John 18:37).

Jesus is begotten from the dead (I Corinthians 15:20-23).

Jesus is the Prince of the kings of earth (Matthew 6:13).

Jesus is the One who loved us (I John 4:9).

Jesus is the One who washed us from our sins in His own blood (I John 1:7, I Peter 1:18-20, Colossians 1:20, Revelation 1:5).

John saw this ONE standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks at the beginning of Revelation. Now, the seven golden candlesticks - that is, the born again ones in the assemblies represented by the candlesticks have been caught out of earth up into the air with Jesus, and He is seen there in the symbols of the seven lamps burning before the throne. The Word of God assures us that He who is the Head of the New Testament Church will never for one moment leave the Church He purchased with His own precious blood.

Revelation 4:6-8:

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

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

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

The voices, lightning and thunder coming from the throne denote the power of God in judgment . . . He is about to judge the world. But notice there is a sea of glass “**like unto crystal**” . . . clear and calm. The sea of glass seen here does not look like the sea as we know it on earth today - driven by wind, storms, tempests - never calm. (The Old Testament writer tells us that the wicked are like the troubled sea.) But John witnessed a crystal sea - calm and peaceful, symbolizing an eternity of perfect peace. In connection with the sea of glass, read I Kings 7:23-45. It is a glorious passage, and will shed light on the subject.

Also, John saw in the midst of the throne and round about the throne, four beasts - or, “**four living creatures.**” These living creatures were full of eyes before and behind, and John describes them as resembling a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle.

The lion denotes majesty and power among the animal kingdom - he is king of all the beasts (Genesis 49:9, Daniel 7:4, Amos 3:8).

The second beast John saw was like a calf or an ox. The cow, whether a calf or an ox, denotes humility and patience, and is a beast of labor (read I Corinthians 9:9,10; Proverbs 14:4).

The third beast John saw had the face of a man - and man is the highest of God’s creation, denoting wisdom, reason and intelligence (Isaiah 1:18, Job 9:24, Ezra 9:6, I Corinthians 2:11).

The fourth beast was a flying eagle. The eagle is the wisest of all birds. He flies the highest, is keenest of sight and is swift of action (Deuteronomy 28:49, Job 9:26, Hebrews 1:8, Job 39:27-30).

These characteristics combined express the character of God’s throne in relation to earth. Jesus is the all-powerful One, yet He is the most humble One who ever lived in a body like ours. He is perfect in wisdom - and certainly nothing misses His all-seeing eye. Yes, Jesus, with whom we have to do, is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent.

These four living creatures are not the same as the four and twenty elders. These are creatures especially created by God for a specific and singular ministry - they never cease to praise God day and night. They are continually crying out, **“Holy, holy, holy!”**

These four creatures know that He to whom they sing praises night and day has been, is, and always will be. And not only is He the past, present, and future, but He is **“THE ALMIGHTY!”**

Revelation 4:9-11:

9. **And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,**
10. **The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,**
11. **Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**

In these verses, the four beasts AND the four and twenty elders worship Him who sits upon the throne. They give Him praise, honor and adoration, because He is worthy. At last, after many centuries of groaning and travailing in pain, the thing is about to happen that all creation has waited for:

“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:20-23).

Jesus came into the world more than nineteen centuries ago, took a body, and in that body was tempted in all points as we are, yet was without sin. He took the sinner’s place. What the Law could not do, He did; and He paid the sin-debt that was made by Adam, which moved upon all men **“through the disobedience of one man”** (the first Adam). Jesus (the second Adam) purchased redemption for the sinner when He died on the cross; but God’s plan of redemption does not only include the soul, but also the whole creation.

When Adam sinned, the whole creation was cursed (read Genesis 3), and God promised deliverance. What God promises, God does. So - one day the whole creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption that came with the curse six thousand years ago!

God created the earth and all that is therein. Then God created Adam and gave him dominion over all other creation. Adam was the ruler of everything on earth, in the sea, and in the air. But Adam sub-leased the earth to the devil. By that I mean, what belongs to God cannot be given away by one of the Lord’s creatures. **“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof”** (Psalm 24:1).

God gave Adam dominion over the earth - but the earth still belongs to God. God created it for the meek (“**The meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace**”). So when Adam sinned, he actually sub-leased the earth to the devil until Adam’s lease runs out, and then God will take over. And when God takes over He will boot the devil off the earth. The devil will be placed in the bottomless pit and all creation will be delivered - the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, the solar system - all creation - will be set free in that glad and glorious hour. Jesus (the second Adam) will redeem everything the first Adam lost. The earth and all creation will be redeemed and delivered from the curse.

The four living creatures and the four and twenty elders know that this redemption is about to occur. Therefore, they are exceedingly glad, and they praise Him who is about to judge in righteousness.

The terms of redemption concerning the earth and the animal kingdom are contained in the little book seen in Revelation five. **This book has caused confusion among some Bible teachers. However, when we compare spiritual things with spiritual, we will clearly see that this little book contains redemption terms which must be met before the earth can be delivered from the curse, and the god of this age (the devil) is dealt with in final judgment.** It is an absolute necessity to understand chapter five, if we hope to understand the rest of Revelation.

So we will carefully study chapter five, and look to the Spirit to reveal to us the terms in the seven-sealed book.

But you may rest assured that eventually the earth, the starry Heavens, the animal kingdom, and all creation will be totally and entirely delivered from the curse. “**The meek shall inherit the earth**” (Matthew 5:5). “**Such as be blessed of Him shall inherit the earth**” (Psalm 37:22).

“**For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters now cover the sea**” (Isaiah 11:9).

The best is yet to come! The devil will be put down - once for all, forever! Evil will be erased from the earth! Utopia is coming - but not on the terms politicians advocate.

It will not be the result of Communism nor any other ism. It will be the result of the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords. One day this earth will be one great Garden of Eden . . . “**the garden of pleasure.**” “**For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created**” (Revelation 4:11).

Before closing this chapter) may I ask you, dear reader, if you are prepared to reign with Jesus here on the earth (Revelation 20:5,6)? Or when the New Testament Church reigns with Christ, will you be “roasting” instead of reigning? Will you be in hell, begging for a drop of water to cool your parched tongue? Did I hear you say you do not believe in roasting, and fire and torment? Is that what you said? If you said that, please let me remind you that what you think, what you have heard, what you say, does not change the Word of God. It is forever settled in Heaven! And the hottest sermon ever preached on hell fire was preached by Jesus Christ (Mark 9:42-47).

If you are reading these words now and you do not know you are saved as surely as you know your name, please bow your head and ask God to have mercy on you and save you. God will save you, for Jesus' sake.

Open your Bible, read carefully John 5:24, John 3:18, John 1:12-13, Romans 10:9-10. (These are the verses that transformed me from a gutter drunk into a child of God. These verses took me out of the gutter and put my name in the Lamb's book of life - and in the pulpit to preach God's Word. Read them - they will do the same for you.) Now read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 10:13.

Do exactly what Romans 10:13 tells you to do, and "**THOU SHALT BE SAVED**" (Acts 16:31). Give your heart to Jesus. Don't be here when all hell breaks out. Be saved today - tomorrow may be too late.

~ end of chapter 4 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER FIVE

The Seven-Sealed Book

Revelation 5:1-7:

- 1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.**
- 2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?**
- 3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.**
- 4. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.**
- 5. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.**
- 6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.**
- 7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.**

Because of the tremendous importance of rightly understanding the remaining chapters of Revelation, one great Bible scholar said, "The little seven-sealed book in the hand of the one on the throne, mentioned in Revelation chapter five, contains the secret of the chapters which follow, and is the key which opens the entire book of the Revelation."

If we make a mistake here, we cannot rightly understand the rest of the book. The right understanding of this mysterious little book will give to us a right understanding of the rest of Revelation. As we study these verses, I promise you to faithfully set before you a plain teaching of God's Holy Word, comparing spiritual things with spiritual as we study the scroll in the hand of the Christ who is worthy to remove the seven seals - (and He is the ONLY one who is worthy). In Chapter One of Revelation, we saw the vision of the glorified Christ, in the majesty and glory of His second coming. As we studied chapters two and three, we not only saw the seven local churches in Asia Minor, but we also discovered that these messages contain the history of the professing church, pre-written by the Holy Spirit, penned down by John the Beloved. Each of these churches, from Ephesus to Laodicea, represents a period of time in the history of the church, from Pentecost to the Rapture.

When the Laodicean church has run its course, the True Church is caught out (Revelation 4:1-3), and John is caught up in the spirit into Heaven, and there experiences what we will literally experience as recorded in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. At the beginning of chapter four, John is caught away into Heaven and sees, first, Christ on the throne in all of His glory. Then, he hears Heaven's song of praise and adoration by the host of Heaven, the elders, representing the saints of all ages, and the four living creatures.

Chapter five is actually a continuation of chapter four. It begins with a conjunction (“**and**”), thus linking the two chapters. Remember, man (not the Holy Spirit) divided the Bible into chapters and verses. I do not object to this, but I do believe some chapters are divided at the wrong place. Personally, I am happy that godly men divided the books of the Bible into chapters and verses, but because of the connecting word used here I do not believe there should be a chapter division.

What we will study in chapter five takes place in Heaven, where John was caught up in the spirit to meet the Lord, and where he saw Christ sitting on the throne . . . a throne encircled by the rainbow. At first John saw nothing but Christ . . . he was completely occupied by the splendor of the vision of his Lord.

You can imagine how the sight of the glorified Lord swept John into another realm. Gazing upon the majesty of Jesus on the throne, nothing else caught his eye for a period of time that is undetermined here. And then he sees Someone he has not seen before. He notices another sitting on the throne - and in HIS hand, the little book. That other One is God the Father, the Great I AM, the Lord. The Greek word used here for “book” has the technical meaning of a *scroll* . . . a roll of parchment sealed with seven seals. Heaven comes to a standstill. A diligent search is made in an effort to find someone who is worthy to break the seal, open the book, and read the message.

Until that person is found, nothing further can be revealed. Everything hinges and depends upon finding one who is worthy to remove the seven seals and make known the message of the book.

In this little book (or scroll) is contained the Revelation and the account of all that is to follow, as having to do with God's last dealings with man, angels, saints, Israel . . . ALL of His creation. In this seven-sealed scroll is contained what is to be known concerning the blowing of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven vials of the wrath of Almighty God.

The little book sealed with seven seals contains the redemption terms for the earth. Jesus redeemed the soul at Calvary (I Peter 1:18-23). He will redeem the body at the Rapture (I John 3:1, 2). Jesus will redeem the earth and all creation during the time of the removal of the seven seals from the scroll (Romans 8:18-23).

To understand the seven-sealed book, we must go back to the Old Testament. There is no Scripture but that there is a verse somewhere in the Word of God which sheds light on any other verse, no matter how hard it may be to understand. There are many laws, and regulations in the system of laws, concerning Israel and their dealings with God. Among these laws are three concerning redemption:

1. The law of redemption concerning a wife. If the husband died, leaving no children, the husband's brother was to take his widow, so that his name would not die. But he must first be able to support the brother's widow. If he were not financially able to care for the woman, he had no right to take her. Jesus, with His own blood (Acts 20:28) redeemed the Bride (the Church). Jesus was able, He was the only one who could redeem man.

2. The law of redemption concerning a slave. If a man lost all he had, and could not pay his bills, his creditors could take him as a slave. (Adam lost all when he sinned, and we thus became slaves to sin . . . **"by nature the children of wrath."**) When he served six years as a slave he was automatically free. During the time of creation, God worked six days. On the seventh day God rested from all of His labor. II Peter 3:8 tells us that a day is as a thousand years with the Lord, and a thousand years as one day.

We have had nearly six thousand years of human history, and according to the Bible Time-Table given to us in this verse of Scripture, these six thousand years add up to about six days. Therefore, it must be about time, by God's great time clock, for the day of peace and rest to begin (Revelation 20:6). Man has been a slave to sin and the devil for almost six thousand years. The devil is the god of this age, he is the prince of the power of the air, the whole world lieth in the lap of the wicked one. But the devil's day is about over. His time is fast running out and it will not be long until the sons of Adam (as having to do with the flesh) will go free, because the second Adam paid the ransom note with His own blood.

3. The law of redemption concerning land. Leviticus 25:23-25: **"The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold."**

The first Adam sold out to the devil; the second Adam bought back with His blood what the first Adam lost. The method of redeeming the land was as follows: If a man lost his property, he was then taken before the judges, and a document was prepared, stating that the land had passed from the one who owed the debt; to the one to whom the debt was owed. The man who owned the land gave a paper to his creditor, making the land the possession of that creditor. However, this was not a permanent transfer of the land. When the year of Jubilee came, the land then automatically reverted to the original owner; but at any time before the year of Jubilee, the land could be redeemed by the original owner. It could be redeemed in either of two ways:

a. *The owner himself could pay the redemption price* - but how could he ever pay the debt? He was a slave because of the debt, and being a slave he could never earn enough money to payoff the debt. Remember, when God cursed Adam, He cursed all creation - man, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom - ALL creation. Man tried to cover his guilt by his own devising, but God rejected the fig-leaf covering. It was insufficient, superficial, man-made (Genesis 3). But since He had also cursed the ground, the animal kingdom and all creation, this curse must also be lifted and the land bought back.

b. *A near kinsman could redeem the land and pay the debt while the original owner was in slavery.*

When a man lost his property and became a slave, two scrolls were prepared. On these two scrolls the terms of the redemption were written. One scroll was left open in the temple for all to read if they so desired.

The other was rolled up, sealed with seven seals, and placed in the temple to be brought out only when the kinsman redeemer gave proof that he was able and willing to redeem the land lost, by his kinsman. When the kinsman read the open scroll and proved that he was able to pay the debt, the priest brought out the sealed scroll, read the sealed demands, and the kinsman having met the payment of the debt, the land then reverted to the owner and he was no longer a slave because his debt was paid—paid by a near kinsman. In later years, the two scrolls were discarded and only one was used. The terms of redemption were recorded on both sides of the parchment; then one was sealed - and one was exposed, when the scroll was rolled together.

This is a perfect picture of Revelation 5:9-10: **“And they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”**

In the law of Israel, the scroll had to do with the redeeming of land only. There was no scroll used in the terms having to do with redeeming a wife . . . there were no drawn up, sealed documents. There was no document having to do with the redemption of a slave; but there was a scroll used in the process of redeeming land.

At the beginning of chapter 5, two of these redemptions have been literally fulfilled. The wife has been redeemed, the slave has been redeemed:

1. The wife - the New Testament Church bought with His precious blood (Revelation 1:5). Jesus redeemed the Church in His death on the cross. **“It is finished.”**
2. He will redeem us from the slavery of sinful bodies in the Rapture - but in reality this is already accomplished because we rest in hope, knowing that when He appears, we shall be like Him (Revelation 4:1, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, I Corinthians 15:51-53).

The only redemption not yet accomplished, in the law of redemption in Israel, is the land. Jesus will redeem the land when He comes with His saints. This will take place approximately seven years after the Rapture (Jude 14, 15; I Thessalonians 1:5-10). Today the land groans and travails under the curse of sin. All creation groans and travails, awaiting the redemption that will be brought about when Jesus comes to lift the curse and put Satan in the bottomless pit.

Adam was the head of all terrestrial creation; therefore, when Adam fell, ALL fell. **“Cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the field”** (Genesis 3:17, 18).

Here is what we have:

- (1) Sorrow
- (2) Thistles
- (3) Thorns

There is the picture that sin's curse brought to the earth. The ground became desert-barren wasteland. The vegetable creation bore thorns and thistles. The serpent was cursed and doomed to crawl on his belly and eat dust all the days of his life (Genesis 3:14). The whole creation became a groaning, travailing wilderness (Romans 8:22).

The book sealed with seven seals concerns the terms on which Adam's lost estate (the whole creation) may be redeemed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb slain but raised, the Lamb with seven horns, seven eyes, yes, the second Adam **“who came to give His life a ransom (buy back His own) for many.”** I have pointed out that Jesus redeemed the Bride at Calvary. He redeemed us from the slavery of sin through His sinless life. He ever lives to make intercession for us. He will redeem the piece of ground (the earth) when He comes again. We learn in the book of Leviticus that a near kinsman could redeem the property of a relative if he were able - but three definite conditions had to be met:

1. He must be a near kinsman of the one who lost the property. He could not be a distant relative; he must be a NEAR kinsman.
2. He must be willing to act as redeemer. He must do it of his own free will; he could not be forced, paid or bribed to do it. It must be done out of a heart of love and willingness.
3. He must have the financial backing to prove that he was able to redeem the lost possession. If such a person came to the priest on behalf of his kinsman, the priest was forced to bring out the scroll and make known the terms of redemption. Here is a true picture of such a transaction, recorded in Jeremiah 32:6-15:

“And Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it. So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances. So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open: And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

“And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.”

Please notice carefully that Jeremiah met the Scriptural conditions of the near-kinsman redeemer:

1. He was a relative of the one who lost the property.
 2. He was willing - he wanted to redeem the property. He obeyed the Lord.
 3. He was able - he had the money. He presented the price to pay the demand of redemption.
- Therefore, the priest was forced to permit the transaction.

With this scriptural background, I hope you will see clearly the interpretation of the seven-sealed scroll in the hand of the One who sat upon the throne . . . the One who is holding the book as we begin the study of Revelation 5.

God holds the scroll containing the price and conditions for redeeming the land (the earth) and is here returning it to those who lost it six thousand years ago because of Adam's sin. The entire creation has been under the curse ever since that time. In our present Scripture the Church has already been raptured, the saints are with Jesus in the air (prophetically) and will soon be ready to reign with Jesus here on earth. The meek will inherit the earth . . . the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.

The saints at the time of John's writing (prophetically) would soon be ready to reign with Jesus, but the earth is still under the curse. Sin is ruling - the devil is the prince of the power of the air, the god of this age. The whole world lieth in the lap of the wicked one. Someone must be found who is willing, worthy, and able to meet the redemption terms listed under the seals on the scroll. Therefore an all-out search was made. John wept much because no man was found worthy to open and read the book, nor to look upon it.

Verse three tells us that a search was made in Heaven, in the earth and under the earth, and no one was found worthy to open the book. John's heart was broken because he knew that everything depended upon his finding someone who is worthy to be the kinsman redeemer, to open the seven seals. John knew what the book contained, and he knew that if that book were never opened, if the seals could not be removed . . .

1. All Old Testament prophecies would be void concerning the reign of Jesus upon this earth (Isaiah 9:6,7; Isaiah 11:1-16).
2. All creatures would remain under the curse (Romans 8:22).
3. Israel would never be restored (Romans 11:1-36).
4. The Bible would be untrue (Matthew 5:18).

All this would mean that God had made a promise which He could not fulfill. No wonder John wept sorely when no one could be found worthy to open the seals.

Then one of the elders spoke to John saying, **“Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof”** (Revelation 5:5).

John’s attention is called to the one, the only One, kinsman redeemer who is worthy, able and willing to open the book: The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David. In the book of Genesis it was prophesied that out of Judah the Redeemer would come. He (Jesus) is also called the Root of David. What a wonderful statement! What a wonderful picture of the deity and the humanity of Jesus! As a man, He is the offspring of Judah. As God, He is the Root of David. The One on the throne is the Root - the origin, the Creator of David: **“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star”** (Revelation 22:16).

The Lord Jesus is not only **“the Root”** (the Creator), but He is also the offspring of Judah; therefore, He is worthy to open the seals.

1. Jesus, the Root of David, was a near kinsman of Adam. Adam was the one who lost the right to reign over the earth. God made him steward of the universe, but he lost that right. He became the slave of sin and the devil. Jesus took upon Himself the form of a man (Romans 8:1-3, Hebrews 2:9, Hebrews 2:14). He was the Son of man, and He was also the Son of God (Hebrews 2:9-14, Matthew 3:17, Matthew 17:1-6).

2. Jesus was willing to pay the redemption price. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. He came to lay His life down. He said, **“My Father loves me because I lay down my life for the sheep. I have the power to lay it down, I have the power to take it again”** (John 10:17, 18).

Jesus prayed, drenched in perspiration stained with blood, **“Not my will, but thine be done.”** Just before He marched into the Garden of Gethsemane, He said, **“Father, I have finished the work you sent me to do.”** He was willing (**“Of His own will begat He us through the Word”**).

3. Jesus was able to pay the price, and He was the only one able to pay what redemption demanded:

“I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again” (John 10:18). Therefore, Jesus met all the requirements **“FOR ALL REDEMPTION”** (I Peter 1:18-23).

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” . . . the Redeemer . . . the Saviour (Isaiah 7:14).

In the fulness of time (Galatians 4:4) Jesus came, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem them that are under the Law. Jesus Christ fulfilled every demand concerning a kinsman redeemer. He was very willing, very able, and certainly equal with God - and yet He was our brother in the flesh. Born of a virgin, conceived of the Holy Ghost . . . God - yet man.

Verses 6 and 7: **“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.”**

In the midst of the heavenly scene stood a Lamb as slain. The memories of Calvary are treasured in Heaven.

John the Baptist first pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God. Now, John the Beloved beholds Him in the same character on high. But how different the position - there wounded and slain (Isaiah 53); here the center of Heaven's strength and glory, yet bearing in His body the marks and scars of the Cross.

- Jesus, the Lamb of God, fulfilled every demand of God the Father.
- Jesus left the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), took the body of a man (Romans 8:1-3, Hebrews 2:9, 14).
- Jesus came into the world and on the devil's own territory He met the devil and defeated him.

Jesus came to John to be baptized, and immediately after His baptism the Holy Ghost led Jesus into the wilderness to meet the devil. A personal Jesus met a personal devil. The devil tried every temptation hell afforded. He tempted Jesus through the lust of the flesh (**“Change these stones into bread”**); the lust of the eye (**“I will give you all the kingdoms of the world if you will fall down and worship me”**); the pride of life (**“He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou shalt dash thy foot against a stone”**).

Yes, Satan tempted Jesus through the three avenues of temptation - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Read I John 2:15-17.

But in spite of all hell hurled at Jesus, He conquered the world, the flesh and the devil, death, hell and the grave, and He has the keys of death and of hell. Read Matthew 3:13 through Matthew 4:11 and you will find the account of the baptism and the temptation of Jesus. After the devil had exhausted every avenue of temptation, he departed. And angels came to strengthen our wonderful Saviour who had just defeated the devil on his own home front.

Revelation 5:8-10:

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

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

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

“When Jesus had by Himself purged our sins, He ascended and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3). Jesus is sitting on the throne with God the Father.

In verse 7 of our present chapter, we see the Lamb taking the book out of the hand of the One sitting on the throne with Him - The Lord God.

In verse 8, all the beasts and the elders fell down before the Lamb (that term “**Lamb**” is used 28 times in Revelation, the term “**Lion**” is used only once).

The beasts and the elders all have harps and golden vials full of precious odors which are the prayers of the saints. Did you know, dear Christian, that God bottles up prayers, and these prayers are sweet perfume in God’s nostrils? Did you know that true prayers are sweet odors to the nostrils of God?

According to this verse in Revelation, the prayers of the saints will be used in worshipping the Lamb after He is declared worthy to open the seals on the scroll. I wonder how many prayers you have sent up to be bottled? I wonder how large a vial God will need to hold my true prayers?

In verse 9, the heavenly host bursts forth in singing “**a new song.**”

That song announced that Jesus was worthy to open the book that contained the seven seals. He is worthy - first, because He was slain; secondly, because He has redeemed us to God; thirdly, this redemption was purchased at the tremendous price of His own blood. Fourth, the redemption He purchased with His blood is for every kindred, tongue, people and nation.

YES, I AGREE, SO DO YOU, HE IS WORTHY!

There is no song recorded in the book of Genesis.

The Patriarchs were men of seriousness and deep thought.

The first song on earth of which we have any record, is found in Exodus 15. The deliverance which had been wrought for Israel (Exodus 14) formed the theme and material for the song (Exodus 15:1-19) and the refrain (Exodus 15:21). The old song is God’s celebrated song of creation (Job 38:7). The song here in Revelation is termed “a new song” because its theme, Redemption, when fully accomplished, will create “**all things new.**” In the end, all things will be new, all evil and old things as a result of sin will be put down, put away, totally destroyed.

There is no song mentioned in chapter four of Revelation, and it is noteworthy that the Scripture does not say that angels sing. It is the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (Revelation 15:3). The song celebrates God’s past ways with Israel and His present grace through the Lamb slain. Grand as might have been the song of Israel when sung on the eastern bank of the Red Sea, this song in its character and the occasion when it is sung, is incomparably greater. There is no comparison between the old song of Israel and this new song of Redemption.

THE REDEEMED (Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor) SING OF HIM AND TO HIM! They sing, “**Thou art worthy to take the book and to open its seals.**”

Here the Lion gives place to the Lamb.

It is remarkable how the introduction of the Lamb slain shuts out all else. The Lamb slain absorbs the attention of all Heaven's creatures. The Lion steps aside, the Lamb is the center of attention. Had the Lion of the tribe of Judah always remained the Lion, the book could never have been opened. It was not the Lion who opened the book, but the Lamb. The title "Lion" denotes might and power. Yes, He will defend the cause of Israel and He will give total victory to the people to whom He made "perpetual promise." But at this particular moment, when the most important thing to John and to the heavenly host is the removing of the seals, the powerful Lion gives way to the slain Lamb. And the Lamb is all the glory in Heaven and in earth at that particular moment.

Of course, the power of the Lion will be demonstrated when Jesus comes with multiplied millions of the saints riding upon white horses (Revelation 19:1-11). Here His worthiness to make known the counsels of God is celebrated by Heaven and earth. The seals must be removed and the demands must be made known before redemption can be carried out . . . that is, having to do with the earth.

As the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He acts in power and authority. As the Lamb, He was slain. **"Because thou hast been slain,"** testifies that He (the Lamb) accomplished God's demands concerning or having to do with redemption. Without the cross, Jesus would have entered into glory alone. **"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."**

Without the Cross there could have been no redemption for sinners. The Cross of Jesus is the grandest counsel of all eternity, and the Cross of Jesus is the grandest fact of all time. The Cross of Jesus is the grandest, most glorious display of love Heaven or earth ever gazed upon. The Cross is the undeniable, the immovable basis on which rest the blessings of Israel, creation and the formation of the Bride, the New Testament Church. Without the Cross there could be no redemption concerning the wife, the slave, or the land.

Verse 10: **"And hath made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."**

Because He purchased redemption through His precious blood, we have been made kings and priests (I Peter 2:9, Revelation 20:5,6). **AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH.** Let me urge you to keep in mind this fact: You are somebody if you are born again. Through the Blood of Jesus Christ you are a royal priest, you are a king, and you need not bow before any two-legged human being and confess your sins to him. There is ONE Mediator between God and men - the Man Christ Jesus - and you may rest assured that He will mediate between you and God the Father. Because of His shed blood, because of the redemption that is in His blood, we are kings and priests:

- We are now the sons of God,
- We are now hid with Christ in God,
- We now sit together with Him in heavenly places (I John 1:1-3; Romans 8:1-3; I Peter 2:9; Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 2:6,7).

Since One has been found worthy to open the seals and make known the redemption terms of the earth, John announces that WE will reign right here upon this earth. Oh, yes . . . there will be a literal kingdom (Luke 1:30 ff.).

Jesus will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem and reign, and we will reign with Him. Read carefully the following Scriptures: Romans 8:19-22, Isaiah 35:1-7, Amos 9:13, Hosea 2:18, Ezekiel 34:27, Isaiah 65:25. When you finish reading these Scriptures, you will say with me, “No wonder there was singing and rejoicing among the heavenly hosts! There was something to sing about!”

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof” (Psalm 24:1). And one day Jesus will take complete possession of this earth and we will reign with Him.

This earth and all things were **“CREATED BY HIM AND FOR HIS PLEASURE”** (Revelation 4:11). When the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters now cover the sea, then we who have been faithful (Romans 8:18) will share the crown of glory. But if we deny the Cross we will not share the crown. If we are faithful in very little, He will make us ruler over much - some five cities, some ten cities, depending upon the faithfulness of our stewardship.

This poor old earth groans, travails and rumbles, and sometimes tumbles when mighty earthquakes shake the universe! All of this is because of the curse placed upon the earth when Adam sinned; but one glorious daybreak, all creation will be delivered from the curse, and the entire universe will become the garden of God’s pleasure and will be presented to God’s Son, who will share it with the Bride, the Church. WE will reign with Jesus.

Jerusalem will become the capital seat of government here on earth during the blessed coming era (Jeremiah 3:17). The Jewish people (then, of course, all Jews will be saved) will be the head of the nations (Ezekiel 48:15-35, Isaiah 52:1-10 and Psalm 47). But the saints will reign OVER the earth.

The kingdom of the Father and the kingdom of the Son (Matthew 13:41-43) point to different spheres of blessing. Israel and the saved nations will inherit earthly promises during the Millennium, while the Church is a heavenly people with heavenly promises. All the saints who die and all the saints who will be changed when Jesus comes (I Thessalonians 4:15, I Corinthians 15:51, 52) will reign over the earth in blessed association with the Lord Jesus Christ. We will not be reigned over; we will reign with Him over the earth. The Church will not be subjects of the kingdom.

We are kings, not subjects. We are in royal positions having to do with the reign over the earth (Revelation 20:4). The best is yet to come. Let me put it this way: The best is just ahead. Believers, we have much to look forward to, and not anything to worry about if we believe (Romans 8:28, Romans 8:31). **“All things work together for good to them that love the Lord, to them who are called according to His purpose . . . If God be for us, who can be against us?”**

Therefore, we know we are on the winning side, and all the glories of Heaven are just ahead. It cannot be long, it must be soon!

Revelation 5:11-14:

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

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

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

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

Verse 11 opens with the words, **“And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne.”**

The terms **“I saw”** and **“I heard”** denote undivided attention on the part of the beloved disciple. The statement **“I saw”** occurs forty-four times in Revelation, and **“I heard”** occurs twenty-seven times.

As John closes the book of Revelation, he assures us that he knows whereof he speaks: **“ . . . I John saw these things, and heard them!”** (Revelation 22:8).

Beloved, the book of Revelation is not history, it is not fiction. It is revealed fact, verbally inspired, written by John the beloved disciple. John testifies to the fact that these visions were actually seen and that the various sounds and voices were actually heard by him personally.

Angels are introduced here.

Remember they announced the birth of Jesus and praised God in words we will never forget (Luke 2:8-14). An angel ministered to Him in the garden as the dismal shadow of the Cross with its agony rested heavily upon Him. He prayed so earnestly that His perspiration became as blood, and it was an angel - not Peter, James or John - who strengthened Him (Luke 22:43).

Two angels witnessed to the resurrection of Jesus, while His disciples were hiding behind closed doors (John 20:12, 13).

Two angels testified of His ascension (Acts 1:10, 11).

“Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles believed on in this world, received up into glory” (I Timothy 3:16).

To the heavenly host, the whole system of Christianity is a matter of questions: **“Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into”** (I Peter 1:12).

Angels ask questions about our glorious redemption and salvation. Angels delight to serve the heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14), and it will be their joy to serve the heirs of salvation in glory (Revelation 21:12). The angels accompany the Lord in numbers that are beyond our wildest imagination. They will accompany Him in His victorious entry into this world when He comes in the Revelation (Matthew 25:31, Hebrews 1:6).

See this magnificent picture: In the center stands the Lamb of God, slain. Around the throne are the living ones and the redeemed ones. The outer circle is made up of angels whose number is far beyond human imagination. The Spirit simply says here, **“The number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”**

Angels are present at this glorious meeting, saying (notice the angels are not singing - they simply say), **“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”**

Angels never knew the joy that our salvation brings. Jesus did not die for angels. Angels are special creations of God, they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. He died for us. No place in the Bible are we told that He died for angels. The angels “say,” but we, the redeemed, SING! However, the beast, the elders, the living creatures, the host of angels, saying with a loud voice praises and honor to the Lamb, does not reach the full tide of praise that rolls on, gathering force and momentum until the whole universe is praising the Christ:

“And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!” (“Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.”)

Verse 14: **“AND THE FOUR BEASTS SAID, AMEN! And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.”**

Yes, the living creatures add their **“Amen!”** The elders fall down and worship Him. The praise is never ceasing . . . unto the ages of ages. Through the Millennium, the eternal ages that roll on, the slain Lamb is the object of praise and adoration, because it was the Lamb who redeemed us with His blood.

It was the Lamb who said, **“Not my will, but thine be done.”** And because He was willing to say this to The Lord God, the Heavenly Father, He climaxed His earthly ministry by saying, **“It is accomplished!”** He fulfilled every jot and every tittle of the Law. He satisfied every demand of the Heavenly Father. He purchased redemption for **“whosoever will.”** He is coming again to make good every promise He ever made! Yes, He is worthy. Amen!

Before entering chapter six, let me again point out that Paradise was lost in the first chapters of Genesis.

There is no song recorded in all the fifty chapters of that book. Exodus 15 records earth's first song. In chapter 14 of Exodus, Israel had been delivered, and that deliverance furnished the reason and the material for the song.

Why did the Holy Spirit refer to the Revelation song as a "**new song**"? The answer? The old song was sung at creation (Job 38:7). The song here in Revelation is termed "a new song" because its theme is redemption.

It is sung in Heaven on the eve of coming Millennial joy.

All songs of all ages must give way to the song which praises the Lamb, the Redeemer of all creation. The redeemed sing only of Him and to Him, the Lamb slain!

~ end of chapter 5 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER SIX

The Opening of The Seven Seals

The church age - this present dispensation - closes with the Lord's repudiation of all which publicly bears the name Christian. Please notice I said, "which bears the name Christian."

Keep in mind that as it was in the days of Noah (eight souls were saved), as it was in the days of Lot (three souls were saved), so will it be when Jesus comes. The question is asked in the Word of God, "**Will He find faith on the earth?**" Therefore, the local assembly that advertises the name Christian will be repudiated by the Lord at the end of the church age. Read Romans 11:21-22, Revelation 3:16.

The church age ends with the "spewing out" of the visible assembly and the gathering-out of all born again saints. The saints who have died will be raised, and together the raised saints and the living saints will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18, II Thessalonians 2:1).

The position of the Lord Jesus today is walking in the midst of the churches. He is the chief shepherd, the overseer of the Church. And in this dispensation the chief shepherd guides the sheep, leads the sheep, seals the sheep through the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost. Oftentimes this age is referred to as the dispensation of the Holy Ghost.

The Rapture takes place near the end of the third chapter of Revelation. Chapter four opens with "**AFTER these things.**" These words occur twice in verse one of the fourth chapter. The verse opens with "**After this, I looked . . .**" and closes with "**. . . and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.**" The term is also used in Revelation 7:9, Revelation 15:5 and Revelation 19:1. In connection with this, read Genesis 15:1 and 22:1.

The words "**after these things**" form a connecting link between a series of events that are already past, and a series of events that are to follow. Therefore, the obvious inference is that the history of the church on earth as recorded in chapters two and three, and beheld by John in his vision, is PAST, and that a NEW series of events is about to be unfolded. Anyone with an open mind can see this clearly. The only persons who cannot see it are those who are married to religions, and they have more respect for their doctrine than they do for the Word of God.

Immediately after the Rapture (Revelation 4:1-3) we see the four and twenty elders clothed in white raiment, wearing crowns of gold. These four and twenty elders around the throne signify the redeemed in Heaven. They represent the Church, caught up out of the earth into Heaven to be with the Lord. Therefore, in chapter four of Revelation, the Rapture has already taken place, the redeemed are already in Heaven.

Later, in chapter nineteen, verses 11-14, John sees the redeemed coming out of Heaven, following the Christ who is riding on a beautiful white horse. The saints are also riding white horses. Since these facts are clearly set before us, in what part of Revelation can the Rapture be placed except between the close of chapter three and the beginning of chapter four?

Chapter three closes one series of events, chapter four opens a new series of events. Therefore, we look for the fulfillment of the words in John 14:3 and the words in I Thessalonians 4:13-18, between chapters three and four of Revelation. Unless we admit this fact, an intelligent understanding of the book of Revelation is impossible.

It is a Biblical fact that the Church is not on the earth during the judgments . . . the “**time of Jacob’s trouble,**” the Great Tribulation.

We first see the elders (who represent the redeemed) in Revelation 4:4, and the last mention of them is in Revelation 19:4. They are not mentioned between these two chapters. Heaven is their home. The elders are not mentioned in connection with the series of events here on earth. According to Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual (I Corinthians 2:13), the Church will not enter nor go through any part - not one day or one hour - of the Tribulation period.

Any minister who teaches that the Church will go through any of the Tribulation period is not rightly dividing the Word.

Beginning with chapter six, we will study the prophetic part of Revelation. As we enter this prophetic part of the book, keep in mind the fact that the three different series of judgments . . . the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the vials of the wrath of God . . . will take place between the gathering of the Church to the Lord, and the time when He comes with the Church. These judgments will take place during Daniel’s seventieth week of prophecy . . . a period of seven years.

The first half of this period will be mild, but the last half will be known as the Great Tribulation - a time of blood, death, torment and suffering on this earth such as has never been known, nor ever will be known again after the Tribulation.

THE FIRST SEAL

Revelation 6:1-2:

- 1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.**
- 2. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.**

The judgments under the seals and the judgments under the trumpets do not occur at the same time. One follows the other. The judgments under the seals cover a larger area than the judgments under the trumpets; but the trumpet judgments are much more severe. Also, note that the Lamb is connected with the judgments under the seals, but the angels are connected with the trumpet judgments and Almighty God is connected with the vials (or bowls) of God's wrath.

John wants us to know that he was an eyewitness to what he is writing about: "**And I SAW. . .**" (Revelation 6:1). "**And I saw. . .**" (Revelation 6:2). "**And I heard . . .**" (Revelation 6:1). John both heard and saw these things, he was there, he knows firsthand, he was an eyewitness.

The first four of the seven seals are characterized by living creatures and living horses; however, the last three of the seven seals do not mention either horses or creatures. The voice that summons John to witness the opening of the first seal was as the voice of thunder - so there is no doubt as to whom the voice belongs: It is none other than Jesus. John immediately responded to the call, "**Come and see,**" and he saw "**a white horse, and him that sat upon it.**" This is a mighty war horse.

There is much discussion concerning the rider of this horse, but the rider is not the Lord Jesus Christ. This rider is not the King of kings and Lord of lords riding forth in mighty conquest. Psalm 45 and Revelation 19:11 show us that this rider could not be the Lord Jesus Christ.

These Scriptures prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the rider of the white horse in Revelation 6:2 is certainly someone else besides The Christ. The Psalmist and John declare that when Jesus rides out of the sky in great conquest, He will sit on the throne, He will assume the sovereignty of the world; but when this seal is opened there are many, many years before the kingdom of the Lord Jesus is set up in power. Therefore, this rider could not be the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus rides out of the sky it will be on a mighty, white horse - but with Him will be a host of other riders clothed in white and riding upon white horses (Revelation 19:1-11).

This rider is none other than the counterfeit Christ, known in the Bible as the man of sin, the Antichrist. This is not an antichrist - John tells us in his Epistle that even in his day there were many antichrists (plural) - but this is the man of sin, the devil in flesh.

For everything The Lord God has that is great and wonderful, the devil has a cheap counterfeit. The prefix "anti" - means "*opposite*" - and this is the Antichrist (the lie), whereas Jesus was the Truth and the Light of the world. The Antichrist will ride a white horse, and in Revelation 19 The Christ will ride a white horse. So you see, the personality in verse 2 is a counterfeit - he counterfeits everything Jesus has.

This rider of the white horse goes forth in mighty conquest and he is victorious - the white horse is a symbol of victory; but he is victorious without bloodshed or slaughter. This rider has a BOW . . . but no arrow. In the Bible, when war was fought with a bow and arrow, the arrow was specifically mentioned. Read Numbers 24:8, Psalm 45, Zechariah 9:14. But in the account of this rider on the white horse, not one word is said about the arrow, which is the deadly part of the bow and arrow. This rider has only a bow, denoting bloodless victory.

Look at the world today. What do we hear? What is the cry of Nikita Khrushchev today? He cries, "Peace! Peace! Peace!" - and he is advocating peace without bloodshed. As I write these lines in January 1963, the newspapers have just carried headlines that Khrushchev is the emblem of peace because he settled the Cuban crisis between the USSR and the USA without bloodshed. He pulled out enough missiles to almost completely destroy the principal cities of the USA. He removed his bombers and thousands of troops, to prevent bloodshed.

Nikita Khrushchev, the head of Communism, is the forerunner of the Antichrist. HE is not the Antichrist, but he is a type as was Pharaoh, and others. They were not THE man of sin, but they are types and forerunners of that man of sin.

"A crown was given to him." Notice here that this crown is presented before victory, and is therefore not a victorious crown. This crown denotes that royal dignity and imperial power is bestowed upon this distinguished rider of the white horse, who offers to the world peace without bloodshed; and during the first three-and-a-half years of the reign of the Antichrist, there will BE no bloodshed. Those years will be a time of peace and prosperity. He will make a covenant with the Jews in their own land, and all will be peace - until three-and-a-half years have gone by, and then all hell will break loose!

"He went forth conquering, and to conquer." That is, victory after victory, conquest after conquest was his without defeat. His reign was marked with victory on every hand, and of course he became the idol of the nations who had rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Naturally, he was worshipped as the one who had finally brought world peace. Any person who reads the Word of God, listens to the radio and keeps up with current events, knows that the world is looking for a super-human to lead the nations into world peace, and into the Utopia that has been so much talked about in recent times.

But Peter tells us that when they say, **"Peace and safety,"** sudden destruction **"cometh upon them."** According to the signs all around us, we surely must be very near the Rapture - the time when Jesus will take out the Bride so that He can turn loose the judgments that are sure to come upon ungodly men.

THE SECOND SEAL

Revelation 6:3-4:

3. **And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.**
4. **And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth: and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.**

In all seven seals the statement is made, **"I saw"** (or "I beheld"), except the second seal. Here, John says, **"I heard."** He does not say he saw it, but that does not mean that he was not an eyewitness. The second beast said to John, **"Come and see,"** and verse 4 simply states, **"There went out another horse that was red."**

Instead of the word “**behold**,” the word “**another**” is used. The use of the word “**another**” instead of “**I saw**” may seem very trivial and unimportant to the average reader; but I BELIEVE IN THE VERBAL INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE. I believe every word in the Bible is inspired. I do not believe there is one word in it to fill up space, nor do I believe there is one word out of place. Perhaps I am a fool - but I say in the words of the Apostle Paul, “**We are fools for Christ’s sake.**”

To me, the reason words: “**I saw**” and the word “**behold**” are used in connection with the first seal and omitted in connection with the second seal, is that the seals are opened one after the other, and the white horse and the red horse do not appear at the same moment. The events did not all occur at the same time. The red horse could have appeared months after the white horse. Thus we have “**I saw . . . and behold . . . another . . . a red horse.**”

For me to dogmatically set a period of time in which the rider of the white horse rode with a bow but no arrow conquering without blood, is impossible. I cannot see a number of weeks or months; but when the white horse had completed his mission, the red horse immediately rode out. The summons from the Speaker was, “**Come**,” and when John looked, there was a red horse. Why is the second horse red? The white horse denotes peaceful victory. The red horse denotes slaughter and rivers of blood (Isaiah 63:2, Revelation 12:3). Again, the rider is not named. However, the pronoun “**him**” is used, and we know the rider is a man permitted by God to ride the red horse of blood. “**TO HIM IT WAS GIVEN**,” signifying that the man was appointed by God for that specific purpose. God used Pharaoh, and He has used others in like manner, and in this hour of judgment God will use appointed men to carry out His appointed program.

Someone may be asking, “**WHY?**” Let me answer in Bible language: “**What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. FOR THE SCRIPTURES SAITH UNTO PHARAOH, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE DECLARED THROUGHOUT ALL THE EARTH. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will, He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, WHY DOTHE HE YET FIND FAULT? For who hath resisted His will? NAY BUT, O MAN, WHO ART THOU THAT REPLIEST AGAINST God? SHALL THE THING FORMED SAY TO HIM THAT FORMED IT, WHY HAST THOU MADE ME THUS? . . . What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory**” (Romans 9:14-23).

Moses declared, “**The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but the things which are revealed belong unto us and unto our children forever . . .**” (Deuteronomy 29:29). Therefore, I say in love, if we mind our own business and if we watch our own ways, we have our hands full. So suppose we let God take care of His part, and suppose we take care of our part, and there will be no conflict between us and God’s Word.

“In the beginning God. . .” (Genesis 1:1).

And since God was and is the beginning and the ending, then far be it from me to question God. There are many things I do not understand about prophecy. God’s ways are not our ways, and I confess I do not fully understand many things in the Bible. But there is one thing I DO understand: God so loved the whole wide world that He gave Jesus to die for sinners. And according to the precious Bible, Jesus died for sinners, and the invitation is to **“whosoever will.”**

Salvation is a gift - by grace through faith, the gift of God, **“not of works, lest any man should boast.”**

I can understand that God loved me, gave Jesus to die for me. Salvation is mine for the receiving. So I will follow what I can understand, and those things that are too deep for me I will wait until I sit at the feet of Jesus and hear Him explain them in words I can easily understand!

Notice - in verse 4: **“There went out another horse that was red: AND POWER WAS GIVEN TO HIM THAT SAT THEREON TO TAKE PEACE FROM THE EARTH, AND THAT THEY SHOULD KILL ONE ANOTHER: AND THERE WAS GIVEN UNTO HIM A GREAT SWORD.”**

Let me point out here that the power possessed by the red horseman was given to him - he did not have power within himself, nor did he merit the power he demonstrated. The power was given to him by another.

Jesus said, **“ALL POWER is given unto me in heaven and in earth”** (Matthew 28:18). Therefore the devil, nor anyone of his cohorts could have any power except it were permitted by God. When Jesus was on trial, Pilate asked Him a question, and then reminded Him that he (Pilate) had the power to either crucify or release Him. Jesus answered, **“Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above!”** (John 19:11).

There will be a period of peace and progress here on earth immediately following the Rapture; and it will last approximately three-and-a-half years. It will be a time when there will be little, if any, bloodshed, from the standpoint of war. But the mighty conqueror who will ride the red horse will be a bloody conqueror. He will not go forth with a bow minus the arrow. Power will be granted to him - and also **“a great sword.”** His conflict against mankind will be unchecked, and blood will run like rivers! This rider of the red horse is commanded to take peace from the earth, and he has the power to cause **“that they should kill one another.”** He will have the ability to stir up angry passions in men; they will crave blood - and blood will be shed.

We are living in a day of hatred, a day of madmen - dictators who do not value human life even as much as most of us value the life of an animal. Jesus asked, **“What is man?”** If we should ask that question of some of the modern dictators, if they answered with the truth of their hearts, they would say, “Man is a living creature, to be destroyed or annihilated if he gets in my way!” Only the Lord Jesus values man with a true sense of value of the personality created in the image of Almighty God. Jesus said, **“What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”** (Matthew 16:26).

After the Rapture, the devil will be loose on this earth, and truly nation will rise against nation. The wild passions of wild men will be let loose. There will be a time of wholesale slaughter.

War is surely, at all times, deplorable, and certainly thinking men do not desire war. But this is a different type of slaughter. It will be a state of open, armed, civil rebellion - man against man, fellow against his fellowman, brother against brother, sister against sister, pouring out their vengeance upon each other and spilling each other's blood as water runs from a faucet. Certainly this is the worst state of war, and it is hard for us to conceive of such a conflict. Yet, that is exactly what will happen when the rider of the red horse rides through the earth during the Great Tribulation period.

THE THIRD SEAL

Revelation 6:5-6:

5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and 10 a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

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

The white horse, we learned, is the symbol of power and victory without bloodshed . . . the rider carried only a bow - no arrow. The red horse denotes power in wholesale bloodshed such as this world has never known.

The rider has a command to take peace from the earth, and this rider carries a great sword. The black horse is a symbol of lamentation and mourning. Here, as in the book of Zechariah, the black horse follows the red (Zechariah 6:2). The weeping prophet laments, "Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine" (Lamentations 5:10). Also read Jeremiah 4:28 and Jude 13.

The rider of the black horse holds a balance in his hand. Wheat and barley - the two grains which constitute the staff of life - are to be rationed . . . doled out by careful weight and sold for fabulous prices. Barley produces black bread, and in Bible days was eaten only by slaves and the very poor. It was much cheaper than white bread, and slaves and poor people could buy more of it for their meager earnings.

The English word "penny" mentioned here, in that day was one day's wages for a soldier or for a laboring man. Read Matthew 20:2.

One Bible commentator tells us that in the day of John, eight measures of wheat could be purchased for a penny. So you see, here the price of wheat will be eight times the normal price. For the sake of comparison, let us compare a candy bar. If you now pay ten cents for a chocolate bar, when this rider rides out, the same chocolate bar would sell for eighty cents . . . prices will jump to eight times their normal rate. Certainly there will be much hunger, suffering and death during the time of the riding of the black horse.

The statement “**See thou hurt not the oil and the wine,**” signifies that the rich will be excluded from this famine. Oil and wine were regarded as luxuries, and were to be found only on the tables of the rich. (Read carefully Proverbs 21:17, Jeremiah 31:12, Psalm 104:15.) The chastisement under the seal that produces the black horse falls on the working classes, the poor people.

The rich, governing classes will be exempt from this suffering; but they shall not escape. Under the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12-17) judgment is meted out to all alike - from the king down to the slave. So the rich will not escape, even though they do escape hunger when the black horse rides out.

THE FOURTH SEAL

Revelation 6:7-8:

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

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

Here another power is summoned. The judgments are increasing in severity. In the three preceding seals, the riders are not named. Here, the name of the horseman is Death. Hell follows alongside. The Greek word here does not mean that Hell comes along behind - but that Hell follows along with the rider of the pale horse. These two - Death and Hell - are the custodians of the bodies and souls of the men butchered during these terrible days. At the close of the thousand-year reign of Christ, they will give up their prisoners and they themselves will be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:14).

Again we are reminded of the fact that these judgments in sequence, in character, in duration and in severity have their source in the throne of the eternal God. Authority was given to him (Death).” The authority to kill and to destroy was not his, but was given to him.

Death, by which they are carried off, is most prominently represented, and Hell followed along with Death to receive those cut off by Death, acting as Death’s hearse, on which account no separate horse is assigned to him. Death deals with the living; Hell with the souls of the dead.

Under the three previous seals, we note one instrument of judgment under each seal; but here there are four instruments of judgment.

It is very interesting to note that the four judgments named here are the same four with which the Lord threatened guilty Jerusalem of old:

“For thus saith the Lord God; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?” (Ezekiel 14:21).

The word “Death” in Revelation 6:8 means “*pestilence*.” The sword named under the second seal, and hunger named under the third seal, are here reproduced, coupled with two others - pestilence and the beasts of the earth.

The Bloody sword in the hand of the rider of the second horse will not be withdrawn until the divinely appointed task is finished. Hunger will not be withdrawn until its deadly work and painful death has come to completion. Many times hunger brings a much more painful death than the sword. Pestilence will reap its harvest - and last, but by no -means least, the beasts of the earth will rush in upon the poor victims, to finish the ghastly destruction of the enemies of Jesus Christ!

When the Rapture of the Church takes place, it stands to reason that percentage wise, more farmers and working people will be taken than will be those of the rich class.

When the farmers who produce food are taken there will be a scarcity of food, and when the red horse rides out with the sword, no doubt the farmers will be using a sword instead of a plowshare. They will be so busy protecting their lives, they will not have time to till the ground.

We refer, of course, to farmers who will be left when the Rapture takes place. All born again farmers will go in the Rapture. Those who are not born again will be left behind. There will be few to till the ground - and the few who are left under the second, third, and fourth seals will be so busy protecting their lives that they will have no time to grow crops and produce food. There will therefore be a time of terrible famine and starvation.

A little later in Revelation we will study the mark of the beast. No man will be allowed to buy or sell without that mark, and those who receive the mark will have committed the unpardonable sin . . . they cannot be forgiven. To receive the mark of the beast is to be damned. This will take place after the Rapture of the Church. The unpardonable sin now is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Matthew 12:31,32); but when the Holy Ghost is gone with the Church, the unpardonable sin will be to receive the mark of the beast.

THE FIFTH SEAL

Revelation 6:9-11:

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

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

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

Let me point out here that when the fifth seal is removed, the scene changes completely. Each of the first four seals is characterized by a living creature and a horse, neither of which appears under the last three seals. Thus the first four seals are set apart from the last three.

Matthew 5:13 tells us that born again believers are the “**salt of the earth.**” Matthew 5:14 tells us they are also the “**light of the world.**” The presence of the Church in the world preserves the earth, wards off corruption and holds back the terrible judgment of Almighty God.

Regardless of how unworthy and faulty we may be as believers, we are the salt that keeps civilization from rotting on its feet. But when God’s patience runs out and He removes the salt and the light, corruption and moral darkness will then engulf this earth (Isaiah 60:2).

When the Rapture takes place, the salt and the light will be taken out. The Holy Ghost will also go out with the Church, because the Church is the home of the Spirit on earth (I Corinthians 3:16).

When the Rapture takes place the Church will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air and will be presented by Christ to Himself in glory (Ephesians 5:27). “**Only He who now letteth will let until He be taken out of the way**” (II Thessalonians 2:7). The Spirit will go out with the Church, and will then work from Heaven to earth as He did in the Old Testament era. In those days the Holy Ghost came upon men, and then left them; but since Pentecost He has been in the world to stay. He has not departed for one moment.

After the Rapture of the Church, there will be persons converted by no known human agency. The first witnesses on earth after the Rapture will go through the Roman world preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 24:14). The result of their preaching is made known in Matthew 25:31-48. These first preachers of the Gospel of the Kingdom will be chiefly converted Jews. “**These my brethren**” in Matthew 25:40 refers to the Jewish brethren of our Lord according to the flesh.

The first believers after the Rapture will be severely persecuted. They will be butchered . . . “**slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held.**” The Word of God, faithfully declared, brings persecution from the world and the devil.

When these first preachers deliver their message, there will be very few on earth who will listen, because those who have been exposed to the Truth as we hear the Truth today, will be sent strong delusions. They will believe the Lie - (the Antichrist) - and they will all be damned because “**they believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**” Read carefully II Thessalonians 2:1-12 . . . study those verses very carefully . . . and you will see that when the Rapture takes place and the Holy Spirit leaves the world, those who hear the Gospel of the grace of God and refuse to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, will not listen to any message. They will be sent “strong delusion,” they will believe the message of the Antichrist - and they will all be damned!

The persons saved after the Rapture will be the multitudes who have never heard a message of the Gospel of the grace of God. Naturally there will be bitter, severe persecution, and many will be martyred because of their testimony. This earth will be literally hell on earth after the Rapture. Now the Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit, bridles the passions of ungodly men; but when the presence of the power of the Holy Ghost is withdrawn, the devil will have full sway in the hearts and lives of the masses left when the true Church is taken out.

“**The testimony which they held**” is not the testimony that you and I give today in this Age of Grace.

WE testify to the saving grace of God and to the gift of God - the Lord Jesus Christ. These people will testify to the coming Kingdom. They will preach that Jesus is coming to set up a literal kingdom on earth, and that testimony will cause unheard - of persecution. When Antichrist and his followers hear these fanatical preachers declare that One is coming to set up a kingdom, they will be furious - and persecution will be meted out as never before on the face of this earth.

Their testimony concerning the coming kingdom, concerning the Christ who will sit on the throne, and Concerning the kingdom rights of Christ and His followers (Matthew 24:14) will be trampled under foot, and the witnesses who declare this message will be cruelly, brutally slain.

Please notice the sacrificial word slain is used here instead of killed, which appears in verse 11. The first group referred to is composed of Jews, the latter group of “their fellow servants and their brethren,” both Jews and Gentiles. The word “slain” is used in keeping with the special character of these witnesses, probably all Jews. The second company referred to will be killed under the beast (Revelation 13:7 and 11).

The altar referred to here is no doubt the altar of burnt offering which stood in the court of the tabernacle and the temple. This altar was made of brass, typifying the endurance of divine judgment. You will also notice the altar in chapter 11:1, chapter 14:18, chapter 16:7. The golden altar of intercession comes into view - twice in these scenes - chapter 8, the latter part of verse 3, and chapter 9:13. The first altar mentioned in verse 3 and the altar in verse 5 of chapter 8 refers to the brazen altar. Brass symbolizes the judgment of Almighty God.

John saw the souls under the altar . . . the altar upon which they had been sacrificed by their persecutors.

John heard the cry from the souls of these martyrs, crying aloud for vengeance on their enemies. Do you notice anything unusual here?

These martyrs who had sealed their testimony with their life’s blood, did not pray as Jesus prayed, “**Father, forgive them for they know not what they do**” (Luke 23:34). They did not pray as Stephen prayed, “**Lord, lay not this sin to their charge**” (Acts 7:60).

The change of dispensation changes the character of the Lord’s dealings with ungodly men. Law was the principle on which God dealt with wicked men in the Old Testament era. Grace is the principle on which God deals in this present dispensation. Grace goes the second mile. If one takes your coat, give him your overcoat. These martyrs are crying out in another dispensation. Grace is past. They are crying in keeping with Psalm 94: “**O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?**” (Psalm 94:1-3).

The judgment of sin on the cross, when Jesus laid down His life willingly, is the foundation on which securely rests our glory in Heaven, our peace with God the Father.

The judgment of sin on the ungodly and the wicked that will be on earth after the Rapture, is imperative. It must be, in order to clear the earth from evil and to make it a fit dwelling place for God's earthly people. "**The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.**" It was created for the meek, and the meek shall inherit the earth in due time. No one can deny the presence of a new Heaven, a new earth, and the Pearly white City. No one can deny the Bride, the New Testament Church, Israel the nation, and the saved nations, Gentiles, that will be on earth after the consummation of all things.

John did not see these martyrs in life. He did not witness the brutality of their persecution and martyrdom.

It is all over when he sees them "**underneath the altar.**" He hears them cry with a loud voice, "**How long?**" This cry is well known among the suffering Jews, and will be better known during the coming hour of unparalleled sorrow and persecution upon the Jews. Read carefully Psalm 74:9,10; Psalm 79:5; Psalm 89:46; Psalm 94:3,4.

The appeal of these martyrs is to God. They are crying to the sovereign ruler of all creation - the One who has the right and the power to avenge the Blood shed by the enemies of the Lord God. These martyrs are crying out to God to pour out vengeance "**upon them that dwell upon the earth.**" God does not answer by pouring out vengeance at that moment. Their cry for vengeance is heard, but the answer is delayed.

Christians pray for those who despitely use them. They do not pray for God to destroy their enemies. Today, we are to return good for evil. This is the age of Grace. God declares, "**MY grace is sufficient for thee.**" And He promises no temptation beyond that which we can bear. But those who had been martyred as these Jews had been, under Law, had a perfect right to cry out that vengeance be poured out upon their enemies.

When the Lord gives to each of these martyrs a white robe, He stamps His approval upon their request. He did not rebuke them when they begged that vengeance be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth. He did not shame them. He gave to each of them a white robe. In this day of Grace, if we return evil for evil, if we do good only to those who do good to us, we do not receive a reward, but rather a rebuke. But here, Grace is over.

This is another dispensation. These martyrs are instructed to "rest yet for a little season," until another company of "**fellow servants and brethren**" should be killed as they were killed. And when this second company has been martyred, then vengeance from Almighty God will be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth.

We must bear in mind that neither the Old Testament martyrs, from Abel, nor the Christian martyrs, from Stephen, are referred to here. But these two companies of martyrs are killed after the Rapture - they seal their testimony with their blood after the saints have been caught out of this earth into Heaven.

THE SIXTH SEAL

Revelation 6:12-17:

12. **And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;**
13. **And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.**
14. **And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.**
15. **And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;**
16. **And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**
17. **For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**

There are those who symbolize these verses, but to me they are just as real as are the souls under the altar in verses 9-11.

When the sixth seal is removed, there is a great earthquake. I believe exactly what verse 12 says. I know what an earthquake is; I know what the sun is; I know what black is - **“the sun became as black as sackcloth of hair.”** Sackcloth was a coarse black cloth made of hair - and as black as soot. When the sixth seal is removed the earth will go into convulsions . . . it will reel and rock. The sun will turn black, the moon will become as blood. Stars will fall from their sockets down to the earth. If God did not mean earth, then why did He not make it clear so we could understand it? The stars are in the Heaven above the earth, they will fall to the earth **“as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs”** (faulty, dried up figs), when a mighty wind shakes the tree.

I was reared on the farm, and I know what that verse means. I have seen faulty apples, pears, peaches and pecans fall to the ground when a mighty wind blew. Many times when I was a lad I would go out under the apple tree after a fierce wind and there would be many faulty apples on the ground. The good sound apples would stay in place, the faulty ones would fall. I believe verse 13 says what it means and means what it says, regardless of the doctors who would spiritualize it. I believe Heaven will split wide open and roll back like a scroll. I believe the mountains and islands will literally turn loose and move around like checkers on a checkerboard!

I believe mountains will rush to the sea like ships driven by atomic power; I believe they will roll across the terrain like mighty tanks built by man. And when the stars begin to fall, when the moon becomes as blood, when the sun is as black as soot, when islands are dashing through the ocean and mountains are rolling around like apples and balls on the floor, then there will be a prayer meeting well attended!

Kings will be there, great men will be there, millionaires will be there, chief captains will be there. Mighty men will be there - and, of course, bondmen, free men, slaves . . . , ALL men will be there.

They will hide themselves in dens and rocks, in crevices and mountains, and will beg the mountains and the rocks to fall on them. They want to be hidden from . . . hidden from what? From the Antichrist? The beast? The devil? No! **“FROM THE FACE OF HIM THAT SITTETH ON THE THRONE! AND FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB!”**

These people see the face of Jesus, and it is an hour of mortal fear. Remember Revelation 1:7: **“Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.”** Suppose, dear friend, YOU are not saved. Think it over. Are you born again? Are you washed in the Blood?

I did not ask you if you belong to some church or if you embrace some religion. Only the born again will go in the Rapture, and if you are not born again you will be left behind; and if the Rapture should take place right now (and it could), if the Rapture should occur as you read these lines, and you are not saved, you would be left to go through the reign of the Antichrist, and you could very well be alive when this terrible time comes upon the earth.

These kings and great men, rulers and captains, bondmen and free men, millionaires and paupers, white men and black men, red men and yellow men - ALL men - will beg God to cover them and hide them from the face of Jesus - the Lamb of God. Why? “The great day of His wrath is come - and who shall be able to stand?”

- That does not sound like the lovely, grandfatherly God who sits in an armchair away over yonder in Heaven some place and winks at the wickedness of men, and chuckles at their ungodliness!

- That does not sound like the great, grandfatherly God who will give all men a second chance, does it? Face it!

- That does not sound like the God the liberals and the modernists talk about.

But this is the God the BIBLE talks about. Oh, yes - I believe God is love (I John 4:8) and I preach the love of God; but I do not preach a one-sided Gospel. I believe we should preach it all. I preach the love of God, the tenderness of God, the longsuffering of God; but I also preach occasionally from this text:

“See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me: I KILL, and I make alive; I WOUND, and I heal: NEITHER IS THERE ANY THAT CAN DELIVER OUT OF MY HAND! For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.

I WILL MAKE MINE ARROWS DRUNK WITH BLOOD AND MY SWORD SHALL DEVOUR FLESH; and that with the Blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: for He will avenge the Blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land, and to His people” (Deuteronomy 32:39-43).

Yes, I preach that God is love, God is merciful and kind; but I also preach from Paul’s text:

“FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE” (Hebrews 12:29). And I always preach, **“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, VENGEANCE BELONGETH UNTO ME, I WILL RECOMPENSE, SAITH THE LORD. And again, THE LORD SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE. IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING God!”** (Hebrews 10:28-31).

Someone may suggest that such a catastrophe is not feasible. God would not send such judgment upon this earth.

Have you forgotten the great darkness that for three days covered Egypt in the days before the exodus of God’s people (Exodus 10:21-23)? Have you forgotten the total darkness, the darkness of death itself, that settled over Jerusalem and the entire universe when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:45)?

The prophet Zechariah speaks of the day that shall not be clear or dark, and Zechariah associates this day with an earthquake at the time when the Lord returns to this earth in judgment (Zechariah 14:1-7).

In the prophecy of Joel we read, **“And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come”** (Joel 2:30, 31).

Isaiah tells us, **“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine”** (Isaiah 13:9,10). **“And all the host of heaven (the stars, the moon, the sun) shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree”** (Isaiah 34:4).

We see here the picture of earth’s pains of travail as mother earth labors just before bringing forth the new creation. Jesus refers to this time: **“In those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken”** (Matthew 24:29).

Before closing chapter six, let me point out that the hand of Almighty God will shake this earth into a giant convulsion. When the day of the judgment of Almighty God becomes a reality, the peoples of earth in their fear and terror will hide in the dens and rocks, and cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Jesus, from the Lamb. Note: Instead of repenting and crying for mercy and salvation, they pray for the mountains and rocks to bury them and hide them from the face of the Lamb of God, sitting on the throne. My dear reader, are you ready for that judgment day?

If you are not, in the words of Amos, **“Prepare to meet thy God!”** The way to prepare is to simply trust Him by faith. **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but IS passed from death unto life”** (John 5:24).

Believe it, receive it, and live!

~ end of chapter 6 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER SEVEN

Israel's Remnant Sealed

Revelation 7:1-8:

1. **And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four comers of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.**
2. **And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,**
3. **Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.**
4. **And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.**
5. **Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.**
6. **Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.**
7. **Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.**
8. **Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.**

God called and commissioned a group of believers to go into Jerusalem and tarry until the day of Pentecost, and they obeyed. They went into an upper room and with one accord waited until the day had fully come. Pentecost means “*fifty*,” and the day of Pentecost was fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus. He appeared to men for forty days, and when He ascended He instructed the disciples to tarry until the day of Pentecost had fully come.

Ten days later, on the fiftieth day, Pentecost came.

The Holy Spirit came as promised. He (the Holy Spirit) came upon each of them, cloven tongues “**like as of fire**” sat upon each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues.

The Bible speaks of the “**unknown tongue**” - but here there were no unknown tongues. These disciples spoke with “**other tongues**.” They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. That day there were people in Jerusalem from every known nation on earth, and they all heard the Gospel in their own language. The multitude was amazed.

They could not understand how Jews were speaking in so many languages. All the ministers on the day of Pentecost were Jews, and yet they spoke in every known language of that day. Pentecost was God’s miracle. Everyone heard the Gospel in his own language, and thereby could return to his own people and tell the good news that the Lamb of God had shed His Blood for the remission of sins, that He had been buried, was risen again, and had ascended back to the Father.

Some thought the disciples were full of new wine, but Peter declared unto them that they were witnessing the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32; that the disciples were not drunk as some supposed. The second chapter of Joel was only partially fulfilled at this time. The signs, the fire, and other parts of the prophecy will be fulfilled when Jesus comes in the Revelation.

Peter preached unto them the Gospel of the good news - the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. He admonished them to repent and be baptized. His sermon lasted perhaps five minutes - certainly not more than ten. (Read his sermon . . . you can read it in five minutes.) Yet, three thousand souls were saved that day! Peter had more souls saved in five minutes than some precious preachers have in a life time.

Peter did not preach the message John the Baptist preached . . . “**Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.**” They had crucified the King, the Kingdom had been postponed (set aside) for a season. John the Baptist had preached, “**The kingdom of Heaven is at hand.**” Jesus preached, “**The kingdom of Heaven is at hand.**” The disciples preached, “**The kingdom of Heaven is at hand.**”

But Israel rejected the King, and therefore the kingdom was set aside until God’s appointed time. On the day of Pentecost and later, Peter preached, “**Repent! repent . . . repent!**” but he did not promise the kingdom at hand. He clearly told the Jews they had crucified the King of Glory.

The apostles preached during the transition period . . . the period when Law was fading out and Grace was moving in. Their ministry was followed with many signs and wonders. Jesus came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to them that believe (Romans 10:4). When Jesus died, was buried and rose again, that brought an end to the Dispensation of Law, but there had to be a transition period. Then one day, a young Jew named Saul of Tarsus, having persecuted the church in Jerusalem, was traveling to Damascus to persecute the Christians there. As he neared the city gate, God rolled back the clouds in the sky and Jesus looked down. The brightness of His face caused Saul to fall to the ground in conviction beyond the description of words. Read Acts, chapter 9.

This young Jew later said, “**I saw the Lord, as one born out of due time**” (I Corinthians 15:8). Paul saw Jesus on the Damascus road. God saved Saul of Tarsus and he became Paul the preacher, a minister to the Gentiles.

God called him, ordained him, and sent him to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). Since the day of Pentecost, God has been calling out a Gentile Bride. Jew, Gentile . . . whosoever will can be saved today. The Church is made up of all born again believers. Acts 15:13-18 is a blueprint of the present dispensation. After this dispensation, God will set up the Kingdom and build again the temple in Jerusalem.

In Galatians 1:10 through 2:14 Paul affirms that the Gospel he preached was a revelation from God and was not after the traditions of men. Paul did not go up to Jerusalem and converse with the apostles to ask them what to preach - God revealed to him from Heaven the message he was to give to the world.

In Ephesians 3:1-12 Paul tells us that the mystery of the Church was revealed to him through divine revelation. Paul did not preach a coming kingdom; he preached the Cross. His message was, **“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross.”** He preached, **“By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”**

This is the age of the preaching of the grace of God. This is the Age of Grace. This is the Dispensation of the Holy Ghost - the Church Age. The Holy Spirit is calling out a people for His name - a people from all nationalities and all classes.

THERE ARE FOUR FORMS OF THE GOSPEL

mentioned in the New Testament. The word “Gospel” means “*good news.*” If we are to **“rightly divide the word of truth”** then we must understand and distinguish between the four forms of Gospel.

1. THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD

The message we preach today is the message of Grace - unmerited favor - salvation through faith in the finished work of Jesus. The Gospel of Grace is the good news that Jesus died, was buried, rose again and conquered the world, the flesh, the devil, death, hell and the grave.

In I Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul clearly outlines the message of Grace. He preached the grace of God to the Corinthians; they believed and were saved. Romans 1:1 announces the message of grace. In Romans 1:16 we are told that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. The Kingdom was announced to the Jews only. **“Go not in the way of the Gentiles”** was the message to the twelve and to the seventy. Jesus said to a Gentile woman, **“I came not to give the children’s bread to dogs.”** She replied, **“I am willing to take the crumbs that fall from the master’s table.”**

When the Jews crucified Jesus, He turned to the Gentiles through the preacher Paul, and the grace of God has been preached ever since (II Corinthians 10:14, Acts 20:24, I Timothy 1:11, II Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:1-15, Romans 1:16, Romans 10:9-10, Titus 3:5). The message we preach today is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus **“ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.”**

Grace will be preached until the Rapture. Grace will finally complete the Bride of Christ, the true Church. Jesus is the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23). Every born again person since Pentecost is a member of the Church (Ephesians 5:30, I Corinthians 12:12-15). When the Church is raptured out of this earth, every believer will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air, the saints who have died will be raised incorruptible, the spirit that went to be with the Lord at the death of the believer will reunite with the glorified body, and we will all be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air!

One day the Dispensation of Grace will close. When the Church is complete there will be the end of the preaching of “salvation by grace through faith in the shed Blood of Jesus - plus nothing!”

2. THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

The “**everlasting Gospel**” is mentioned in Revelation 14:6. It will be preached at the very close of the Great Tribulation period . . . the closing days of the seven years of the reign of the Antichrist.

The message of the “**everlasting Gospel**” is judgment; but even the message of judgment will be good news to earth’s dwellers at that time. They will have gone through almost seven years of hell on earth - especially the last three-and-a-half years of the reign of the Antichrist. To the nations who have rejected Antichrist and refused to receive his mark, and the people of Israel (those who have not been butchered or beheaded), the message of swift judgment and holy fury against the Antichrist and his armies will be good news indeed. The announcement of the everlasting Gospel will be to those who have been saved during the Tribulation period (Revelation 7:9-17, Luke 21:28, Psalm 96:11-13, Isaiah 35:4-10).

In Matthew 24:22 we read, “**And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s (Israel’s) sake, those days shall be shortened.**”

In my heart, I believe the message of the everlasting Gospel is the message to Israel, that final judgment is about to be meted out to the Antichrist and his henchmen, and the days will be shortened assuring them that judgment will come upon their enemies before those enemies are allowed to annihilate the elect of God.

3. PAUL REFERS TO “MY GOSPEL”

Romans 2:16: “**In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to MY GOSPEL.**”

Paul was a preacher of the grace of God to the Gentiles, to be sure. He preached salvation by grace; he preached rewards according to faithful stewardship on the part of the believer. Everyone of us will be judged according to our faithful stewardship . . . not as to whether we are saved or lost. Believers will not stand before the judgment to determine whether or not they are saved; but they will appear to receive their just rewards (I Corinthians 3:11-15). Study that passage carefully.

“**My Gospel**” to which Paul refers is the Gospel of the grace of God in its fullest development and includes the revelation of the result of that Gospel in the out-calling of the Church, her relationships, positions, privileges and responsibilities.

Paul determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He begged the Galatians to reject the gospel which he called “**another gospel**” (and then declared it was NOT a gospel), referring to those who mixed Law and Grace . . . the legalizers.

After Paul preached the grace of God for salvation, he begged the believers to present their bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1, I Corinthians 10:31), knowing that to receive a full reward we must be dedicated - soul, spirit, and body - to the Lord God.

In Galatians 1:6 and II Corinthians 11:4 Paul mentions the “**other gospel**,” but declared that it was not really a gospel. Paul cried out that anyone, even an angel, preaching any gospel other than the Gospel HE preached, should be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9; Galatians 5:12).

4. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the good news that a kingdom of righteousness will be set up right here on this earth . . . a kingdom was promised to Abraham and David, and the promise will be kept (II Samuel 7:16, Isaiah 11:1-16, Luke 1:30-33, Isaiah 9:6,7).

In Matthew 3:1 John preached, “**The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!**” His message was strictly the announcement that a kingdom was to be set up and the King was coming. He preached, “**Make His path straight!**” But the people said, “**We will not have this man to reign over us. Let His Blood be upon us and upon our children.**” They have had a blood-bath ever since, and they continue to have a blood-bath even today. They rejected the King and the message of the Kingdom . . . and God turned to a people who are not a people - namely, the Gentiles. Read carefully Romans, chapter 11. Study it.

The Jews are set aside - but only for a season. The natural branches have been cut off, the wild olive branch has been grafted in. But God has not forsaken His people, and the Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached again right here upon this earth.

After the Rapture of the Church, after the Holy Spirit is taken back to Heaven with the Church and the Gentile Bride is complete, the announcement of the Kingdom on earth will be resumed. Here in Revelation chapter 7, 144,000 missionaries out of Israel - 12,000 from each tribe - are sealed, commissioned, and ordained to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.

In Matthew 24:14 we read: “**And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.**” Many have used this verse of Scripture to suggest that Jesus cannot come until the Gospel has been preached to every nation. This is certainly wrongly dividing the Word, because today we are not preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. WE are preaching the Gospel of the grace of God.

This is the Age of Grace, not the age of the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. This is not the day of the King. This is the day of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt in my mind that the 144,000 will have the same gifts received by the 120 on the day of Pentecost. I believe the 144,000 missionaries out of Israel will have the gift of tongues and will speak in every language and dialect on the face of the earth. There are thousands of dialects and languages that have not been reduced to writing, but these missionaries, sealed of God and sent by God, will announce the coming Kingdom to every tribe and every kindred on the face of the earth who have never heard the Gospel of the grace of God. Those who hear the message and receive it will make up the number in Revelation 7:9 and following . . . the great multitude that no man can number.

Those who refuse to believe the message of the 144,000 and who follow the Antichrist instead, will receive the mark of the Beast and will be damned (II Thessalonians 2:1-12). The unpardonable sin after the Rapture will be the mark of the Beast. (Today the unpardonable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.) The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom will continue throughout the seven-year period . . . the reign of the Antichrist.

At the close of the Tribulation, the battle of Armageddon will be fought. After the battle of Armageddon the glorious Kingdom will be ushered in, Jesus will sit on the throne in Jerusalem in the temple, and will reign for one thousand years. We, the born again, will reign with Him (Revelation 20:1-6).

The 144,000 sealed missionaries out of Israel are special messengers of God to fulfill a mission during a specific time. They are especially called, commissioned, ordained, sent and sealed. They will be delivered from the devil and from the enemies of God. They will be protected. The devil cannot destroy them.

Chapter 7 of Revelation is parenthetical. In this chapter we look away from the breaking of the seven seals, in order that the Spirit might enlighten us concerning the sealing of a chosen group of evangelists to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to the teeming millions who never heard the Gospel of the grace of God. After the Rapture, these 144,000 will do what the Church should have done during this Dispensation of Grace. God has never been without a witness on the earth, and He never Will be.

During the days of Elijah, God reserved 7,000 who did not bow their knee to Baal nor to Ahab (I Kings 19:18), God reserved Daniel and the three Hebrew children in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. God has always had His faithful witness, and He always will, even during the Bloody reign of the Antichrist.

There will be “**a remnant according to the election of grace**” (Romans 11:4-6). The 144,000 sealed ones out of Israel will be God’s remnant of true ministers who will refuse to bow their knees to Antichrist.

During the Dispensation of the grace of God:

- every born again person is sealed by the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 4:30).
- Every born again person is baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 12:12-15).
- Every born again believer possesses the Holy Ghost and is led by the Holy Ghost (Romans 8:9, 14, 16).

But when the Church is Raptured, the Holy Ghost will go out with the Church.

The 144,000 will not be sealed with the Holy Ghost as we are, but they will have a seal in their foreheads:

“And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect (Israel) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31). The seal will be in their foreheads (Revelation 9:4, Revelation 14:1). They will be known by all and sundry with whom they come in contact, for the mark of God will be upon them, visible in their foreheads. All hell can not stop them nor destroy them.

The devil will counterfeit God’s seal, and he will seal his followers also. He will cause all of his followers to receive a mark in their foreheads or in their hands; and if they refuse to receive this mark they will be killed.

We will study the mark of the Beast when we reach chapter 13; but remember, everything God has that is good, the devil has a cheap counterfeit for it.

The 144,000 will be out of the tribes of the children of Israel. There will not be one Gentile in the group - not one! There are groups on earth today who claim to be the 144,000, but they are not. The Bible is clear on that subject. Some of these cults will be forced to revise their figures, because they have overshot the 144,000 number. Where the lost ten tribes are I do not know - nor does any other man on the face of the earth know. Their identity is lost. But God knows where they are, scattered among the nations today. When God is ready for them, He can find them. We need not worry about the lost ten tribes. We need to be concerned about lost sinners, and go after them with the Gospel of the marvelous grace of God.

Verse 2 tells us that the angel making the announcement concerning the 144,000 appears out of the east.

This angel cries out, **“Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads!”** Note: “. . . till WE have sealed . . .” The angel from the east seems to be the leader of a band of angels who will seal the 144,000. The angel appears out of the sunrise - **“Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in His wings”** (Malachi 4:2).

If you will notice, the listing of the names of the 12 tribes here in Revelation 7 is different from the original listing in Genesis 35 and Genesis 46. The names in Genesis are thus: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali.

In Deuteronomy 29:18-21 we read that the man, woman, family or tribe who should introduce idolatry into Israel should have their names “**blotted out**” from under Heaven, and that they would be separated out of the tribes of Israel. The tribes of Dan and Ephraim allowed Jeroboam to set up golden calves to be worshipped. One of these was set up in the tribe of Dan and the other at Bethel (I Kings 12:25-30). So the name of Dan is left out of the list of the twelve tribes in Revelation 7.

The mentioning of the sealing of the 144,000 in chapter 7 does not mean that they were sealed between the sixth and seventh seals. There is no date or time mentioned. When they were sealed, we do not know. They were probably sealed immediately after the Rapture. The Scripture does not enlighten us here; therefore, it is not for us to know the date or the exact time.

These sealed ones will no doubt preach throughout the years of Daniel’s 70th week of prophecy, the Tribulation period (approximately 7 years). Even in the midst of Satan’s kingdom, where all hell is loose on earth, the power of the Gospel will reach millions; yea, a great company that no man can number (Revelation 7:9).

Verse 1 tells us that four angels stand on the four corners of the earth. This has confused some, but there is no need for confusion. This does not mean that the earth is square, as some have suggested. The expression “**the four corners**” simply refers to the four points of direction - east, west, north and south. The Bible refers to “**the east wind,**” etc.

The angels were holding the four winds, that they should not blow. This seems to suggest that the winds were angry and desired to blow and destroy. But the mighty angels held them, forbidding them to blow.

Verse 2: John sees another angel ascend from the East. This angel has the seal of God. The angel cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea.

Verse 3: The angel said to the four angels - “**Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.**”

It seems that some power, or force, of the enemy tries to hinder the sealing of these servants. But judgment is stayed until they are sealed.

In verse 4 the sealing begins. There were sealed 12,000 out of each of the twelve tribes - 144,000 in all.

Verses 5-8 name each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and declare that 12,000 will be sealed out of each tribe.

There are those who spiritualize this number and the sealing of the 12,000 from each tribe; but it is absolutely impossible to understand the Word of God unless we obey I Corinthians 10:32: “**Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.**” It is impossible to understand the Scripture and to rightly divide the Word of Truth without recognizing three groups:

1. Jews.
2. Gentiles.
3. The Church of God.

We must give them their place in God's program if we understand the Word. To spiritualize Israel is to wreck the Bible. God has not forgotten His people, neither will He cast them away forever (Romans 11). The most glorious days for Israel are yet to come. Every promise God made to Father Abraham will be literally fulfilled.

GENTILES WHO ARE SAVED DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Revelation 7:9-17:

9. **After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man Could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, Stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;**
10. **And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.**
11. **And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,**
12. **Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.**
13. **And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?**
14. **And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.**
15. **Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.**
16. **They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.**
17. **For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.**

In verse 9 we read, "**After this I beheld . . .**" and we learn what John beheld:

1. A multitude which no man could number . . .
2. Of all nations, kindreds, peoples, tongues (this number takes in every tribe on earth, even in the wilds of the most remote jungle). God set before the church at Philadelphia an open door (Revelation 3:8). The Church has failed to evangelize the world through the preaching of the Gospel of Grace. The Church has had the greatest opportunity of any people who ever existed, to preach the Gospel by the means of printed page, radio, television, modern travel, and many other ways. But the Church has not evangelized the world, nor has it announced the good news to the world. Therefore, God seals 144,000 after the Rapture, to fulfill Matthew 24:14.

3. This multitude which no man could number stood before the throne clothed with white robes, and each one had a palm in his hand.

In verse 10 the multitude is praising God with a loud voice, saying, **“Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!”** In verse 11 the elders fall down and worship God and the Lamb. The beasts do likewise. Please notice here that all praise, honor, worship and adoration is directed to the Lamb **“because He is worthy.”**

In verse 12 we hear these rejoicing ones shouting, **“Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever! Amen!”**

Not a member of that redeemed host is silent. Their struggles and trials are over. It is only fitting that this countless multitude of redeemed should break out in one loud and united cry of praise to God and to the Lamb. I feel sorry for dear people who cannot endure a little noise in religion. I am not a fanatic and I do not believe in foolishness; but I believe if we love God we should praise Him.

In verse 13 one of the elders asked a question: **“Who ARE these in white robes? Whence came they?”** Who is this tremendous multitude? Where did they come from? How did they get here?

In verse 14 John said, **“Thou knowest.”** Then the elder said, **“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”**

These are those who have been saved during the Great Tribulation . . . the reign of the Antichrist. They are the saved ones out of every nation, tongue, tribe, and kindred on the face of the earth. They will be saved through the preaching of the 144,000 - but they will be saved by **“the Blood.”** They shall wash their robes white in the Blood of the Lamb. the Blood started flowing in Genesis 3:21 and has flowed down through the ages to this day. Without the shedding of blood is no remission. The preacher who leaves the Blood out of his message is the devil’s best friend.

In verse 15 we read, **“Therefore (because they have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood) are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”**

This verse clearly shows us that this company is not the Bride - the Church. The Bride will reign with Jesus here on earth. This multitude is said to serve Him day and night. Jesus said, **“Henceforth I call you not servants (referring to His disciples), but I have called you friends”** (John 15:15).

In verse 16 we learn that this group will not hunger or thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. This verse definitely identifies the multitude as Tribulation saints. During the reign of the Antichrist no one can buy or sell without having upon himself the mark of the Beast.

Those who refuse to receive the mark cannot buy or sell; those who receive it cannot be saved. Therefore, these saved people, having refused to receive the mark of the Beast, will be forced to hide out under the heat of the sun by day and the stars by night. Many times they will be hungry - destitute for food.

They cannot buy food . . . they will be forced to beg or steal. Therefore, **“they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more,”** because God Almighty will take care of them from that moment forward. They will endure terrible tribulation, but it will be worth it all when they see the face of Jesus.

Verse 17 is tremendous. God Himself will feed them, God will lead them - and God Himself will wipe all tears from their eyes!

In Revelation 22:1-7 we find the pure river of the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God, and in the midst of the street and on either side of the street there is the tree of life. The tree of life bears twelve kinds of fruit and yields a harvest every month. There will be plenty of fruit for everyone, and certainly there will be eating among God’s creatures in eternity.

In Revelation 22 we learn further that the leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations.

Read Acts 15:13-18, Revelation 21:23-27. And remember:

“Give none offence to the Jews, Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.” There will be new heavens, new earth, and the Pearly white City. Yes, chapter 7 is most refreshing. We see the multitude that no man can number - redeemed, washed in the Blood, standing before God with palms in their hands.

Thank God for the Lamb! Even in the midst of great tribulation God still loves, saves, and delivers. He is not willing that any perish - and that takes in YOU. Are you saved? If you are not, God does not want you to die in your sin and wake up in hell. He will forgive you and write your name in the Lamb’s book of life, if you will only **“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ . . . and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31).

In closing chapter seven, let me say that the words **“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”** are unequalled in their depth and tenderness. Please notice: It is not the compassionate Lamb who shed His Blood who wipes the tears from their eyes - but God the Father who gave the Lamb . . . God, against whom they (and we) have sinned. All sin is against God; but God will tenderly wipe every tear from their eyes and they will never weep again. They will enjoy **“everlasting consolation”** and they will enjoy peace uninterrupted.

~ end of chapter 7 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Seventh Seal: The First Four of the Seven Trumpets

Revelation 8:1:

1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

In this chapter, the opening of the seals is resumed. The seventh seal, from which the seven trumpets come, is removed from the seven-sealed book. The seventh seal includes all that happens during the sounding of the seven trumpets, and also the pouring out of the seven vials, and extends down to the time when the Millennium is ushered in. Let me illustrate what I mean: I am sure on the fourth of July, you have seen a rocket fired into the air. The rocket bursts into seven small rockets, and these seven burst into seven other small rockets. In our Scripture, the seventh seal includes the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet includes the seven vials. Three woes are also included. It is very significant that Heaven was silent for the space of half an hour when the seventh seal was broken; and yet, when you read what occurs during the seven trumpets and the seven vials, you do not wonder that all Heaven stood speechless when this terrible judgment was revealed. It is certainly noteworthy that the Spirit directed seven messages to seven churches. The book John saw in the hand of Him who sat upon the throne . . . the book containing the terms of the redemption of earth . . . was sealed with seven seals. Beneath the seven seals were seven trumpets. Chapters 12 and 13 reveal to us seven personages: the sun-clothed woman, the dragon, the manchild, the archangel, the Jewish remnant, the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth.

In chapters 15 and 16 we read of seven vials filled with the wrath of God and poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth. In chapters 17, 18, 19 and 20 we read of seven dooms: the doom of ecclesiastical Babylon, the doom of commercial Babylon, the doom of the Beast and the False Prophet, the doom of the Antichrist nations, the doom of Gog and Magog, the doom of Satan, and the eternal doom of the wicked dead. After the seven horrible dooms, we have seven wonderful new things. Revelation 21 and 22 tell us about the new Heaven, the new earth, the Pearly white City, the new nations, the new river, the new tree of life, the new throne. All seven of these glorious new things will continue throughout the ages of ages: **“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end”** (Isaiah 9:7).

Seven is God's number . . . the Bible number of perfection. In the book of Revelation we have the account of God bringing to a close the affairs of man. God will make a perfect end to all sin, sorrow, unrighteousness and unrest. He will deliver the whole creation from the curse which was brought upon it by the sin of Adam (Romans 8:22). What the first Adam lost through disobedience to God's command, the second Adam purchased back through obedience and death on the cross.

Revelation 8:1 gives us the record of the opening of the seventh seal. When that seal is removed, there is silence in Heaven. Something gigantic, ghastly, unheard of . . . something heretofore unseen . . . happens.

When the seventh seal is opened, the seven trumpets begin to sound. All the terrible judgments of the trumpets are hidden beneath the seventh seal, and the seven vials of the wrath of God are also there. If you will read Revelation chapters 8 through 16, you will not be surprised that all Heaven stood aghast - completely silent, Speechless, and spellbound - for half an hour!

The four and twenty elders ceased to play their harps. Heaven's angels hushed their singing. Cherubim and Seraphim ceased to praise God. The host of Heaven stood in awe. Think, beloved! Think of Heaven standing in complete silence for the space of half an hour! Can you imagine the judgments of misery, blood and woe poured out upon mankind, so terrible that the very sight of those judgments renders all Heaven speechless and silent? God pity those who will be here upon this earth when the seventh seal is removed! Will you be here? If you are not born again, you may be. But you can be saved this moment if you will only believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour (Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9, John 5:24).

Will you, dear reader, be one to experience the horrible sights as you go through the indescribable judgments of God that will come about when the seventh seal is removed? God grant that you will not.

Let me illustrate:

Not long ago a drunk driver ran into the automobile just ahead of me. The driver and two others were killed instantly. In a matter of moments a great crowd gathered. Lying there on the road were the battered, broken, bleeding, twisted bodies of three men . . . three dead bodies.

At least a hundred people gathered quickly. The crowd moved about the wreckage and gazed upon the dead bodies in silence. You could have heard a pin drop. Those who spoke did so in a whisper. In the distance could be heard the screaming of the sirens as the ambulance came to the scene of the tragedy. As the dead were covered with sheets and lifted into the ambulance, the silence was deadly. People seemed to hold their breath. In some very, very small way, that bloody tragedy that rendered me speechless as I looked upon it, illustrates the tragedy that will occur when the judgments of God are poured out upon the wicked during the last half of the Great Tribulation period.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

Revelation 8:2-6:

2. **And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.**
3. **And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.**
4. **And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.**
5. **And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.**
6. **And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.**

In verse 2, seven angels stood before God. These are special angels. Not all angels are said to stand before God. Gabriel stood before God (Luke 1:19). There were SEVEN of these angels - not six, not eight - but seven, representing the full power of God in judicial judgment.

They stood before God to pour out God's wrath upon His enemies. Seven trumpets were given to the angels. Trumpets are used to call soldiers to war. They are used in worship, for the convocation, to proclaim festivals such as the year of Jubilee, the Feast of the Tabernacles - and for judgments. Read Exodus 19:6, Amos 3:6, Joshua 6:13-16 and Zephaniah 1:14-16.

The seven angels received the trumpets, took their Positions as directed, and prepared to sound. But before the sounding of the trumpets, John saw another angel With a golden censer in his hand, and he came and stood before the golden incense altar. We are told that this angel was given much incense, and that he offered the incense with the prayers of "**all saints.**"

These saints were the saints of the Tribulation period. The smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. The angel took a censer and filled it with fire taken from the altar, and cast it into the earth. When the fire was cast into the earth, there were voices, thunderings, lightnings, and a great earthquake. The silence was broken. If you will notice, the same four things happen when the seventh trumpet sounds (Revelation 11:19) and also when the seventh vial is poured out. All end alike.

In verse 3 we read, "**Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer**" The service rendered by the other angel at the altar proves that it could be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

Both the brazen and the golden altars are mentioned here. No ordinary creature could add to the prayers of the saints. The action of this other angel is of a mediatorial nature . . . One who is between the suffering, praying saints on earth and their God. There is "**one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**" (I Timothy 2:5).

Therefore, we conclude that this angel could be none other than the Lord Jesus Himself. The term "**another angel**" is mentioned three times in Revelation - first in chapter 8:3, second in chapter 10:1, third in chapter 18:1.

In Joshua 5:13-15 the Lord appears in the form of a man to defend and fight for God's people. Read the account carefully and you will see that the greatest Commander in Chief of any army that ever fought was none other than the angel of the Lord - Christ Jesus Himself. In our present Scripture the "**other angel**" stood at the altar of the burnt offering which stood in the court of the tabernacle of Israel (Leviticus 9:24 ff). The fire was lit by God Himself, and afterwards kept burning by the daily sacrifices offered there.

Remember, the promises on earth are to God's chosen people, Israel. We, the Bride of Christ, will reign with Jesus over the restored Paradise on earth. God's people Israel are an earthly people with earthly promises. The Bride is a heavenly people with heavenly promises. This altar is mentioned six times in Revelation:

Chapter 6:9, chapter 8:3, chapter 8:5, chapter 11:1, chapter 14:18, chapter 16:7. In Hebrews 9:4 we are told that the censer used at the altar was made of gold, and was used to carry the fire from the brazen altar (Hebrews 9:1-10, Leviticus chapter 16).

Verse 3 continues by saying, "**Much incense was given the other angel,**" and he offered it with the prayers of the saints. The incense was to be offered on the golden altar before the throne.

The question is, who ARE these saints? Why are they praying? It does not seem reasonable to suppose that these are the saints that make up the Bride of Christ . . . those of us who are members of the True Church. At the time of the removing of the seventh seal, the Church will be in Heaven, having been raptured before this time of terrible judgment.

The Church is raptured at the beginning of chapter four, and at the time of Revelation 8:3 will have been with Jesus in the clouds in the air for several months. These "**all saints**" are the converts of the 144,000 sealed messengers of God, about whom we studied in Revelation 7. They are a part of the great multitude which no man could number.

They are praying because they are going through hell on earth under the mighty hand of the rider of the white horse of Revelation 6:1. We are not told what their prayers are, but no doubt their general burden will be for deliverance and judgment on their ungodly oppressors. God answers their prayers by pouring out unheard of judgment upon the peoples of the earth. God deals again with His people Israel as He dealt with them in the days of old in the case of Joshua and the battle of Jericho. The incense used in the tabernacle service was composed of four ingredients. Read Exodus 30:34-38. These four ingredients represent Christ, just as the four Gospels speak of Him from four points of view. The divine fire of God was needed to bring out the fragrance of this four-fold incense, just as Calvary was God's way of bringing out the fragrance of Jesus in its fulness (John 3:16, Luke 22:44). This incense was burned morning and evening in the tabernacle (Exodus 30:7-10).

The sweet savor of Christ is set forth in the incense burning, signifying what He was for us, what He did for us, and what He suffered for us. Why did this other angel, holding the golden censer, stand before the golden altar before the golden throne to offer incense with the prayers of all saints?

Why this demonstration? The answer: The whole action is called for because of the great body of saints on earth during the last half of the Great Tribulation . . . the time of the trumpet judgments. They need heavenly help . . . they must have help from Heaven . . . in this time of terrible, terrible tribulation. If the days were not shortened and if Heaven did not help them, there would be no flesh saved.

In Revelation 6:9-11, the souls of the saints who had been martyred were crying unto the Lord, but no provision for intercession was made for them. They were out of their suffering at that time. They were resting under the altar. They were told to rest a little longer, until their fellow servants would be killed as they had been. These saints who are praying and crying unto God in chapter eight are those “**other servants**” to whom God referred. The intercession of the angel with the censer shows the longsuffering of God toward man, even unto the end.

Verse 4 tells us that the smoke of the incense came with the prayers of the saints, and ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand - not out of the golden censer, but from the hand of the angel. This signifies even further that this angel was none other than the Lord’s eternal High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the prayers of the saints and the incense from the censer have gone up to God out of the angel’s hand, the angel then takes the empty censer, goes again to the altar, fills the censer with fire from the altar - but there is no incense mixed with the fire! The incense was mixed with the prayers of all saints.

Verse 5 tells us that the angel filled the censer with fire from the altar and cast the fire into the earth.

Note: The incense and prayers went up to God, the fire was cast down upon the earth. There were voices, thunder and lightning, a great earthquake - and judgment, raw judgment, judgment in such fury as this earth has never known nor will know up to that moment, which is yet future and will occur during the last half of the Tribulation period. God is bringing to pass the redemption of all creation (Romans 8:22). “**The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof.**” One day God will renovate this old earth a second time, removing every trace of evil and of the curse, and we will have one giant Paradise such as God placed Adam and Eve in when He created man.

When the angel took the censer, filled it with fire and cast the fire into the earth, the stage was set for complete catastrophe . . . voices in the sky, thunderings, lightnings, and a great earthquake. Immediately the seven angels prepared to sound their trumpets.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

Revelation 8:7:

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

The first of the seven angels stepped into position, raised his trumpet, and the blast went forth.

Immediately, hail (chunks of ice), fire (yes, literal fire), and blood . . . not symbolic fire, not symbolic blood, but real ice, real fire and real blood . . . will fall from the sky upon the earth right here where you and I are today. One third of all the trees will perish, and all the green grass will be burned up. Can you picture a sight such as that?

If you find it difficult to believe that ice, fire and blood can come down out of the sky upon the earth, read Exodus 9:18-25, and remember that God Almighty changes not! He is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Dear reader, let your imagination run completely wild. Look up into the sky. Can you imagine blazes of fire, streams of blood and great chunks of ice falling down upon the earth? Look across the mountains (if you live in the mountains). From where I sit dictating this message, I can see a small mountain, and on clear days I can see the range of the Blue Ridge Mountains, covered with trees. Look across the hills. Can you imagine all the trees blazing, burning, going up in smoke - and the grass being burned to a crisp? People will be screaming, running, begging, falling over each other. The hail will beat upon their heads; they will be spattered with blood.

Did I hear you say, "Mr. Greene, I do not believe in that kind of God"? My friend, what you believe does not matter. What you think does not matter. What you may have heard from the lips of some preacher makes no difference. The terrible judgment of blood, ice and fire will be rained upon this earth when the angel sounds the first trumpet.

Some precious people who read these lines have storm shelters. Some have bomb shelters. I am not criticizing anyone who has either of these protective shelters; but if you run to the storm shelter when a tornado is coming . . . if storms scare you . . . if the thought of an atomic war frightens you - then dear friend, think of this: There will be no hiding place, there will be no escape, when God's wrath is let loose!

After the Rapture has occurred, after the saints of God have been caught up to meet Jesus in the air, one day the radio and television networks of the world will send out an announcement such as this: "Ladies and gentlemen, the sky looks very queer. The elements are extremely hot. In some sections it is reported that fire and ice mingled with a sticky red substance (some say it is blood) are falling upon the earth. Scientists, chemists, astrologers, and weathermen are baffled. No one seems to understand the cause of this terrible deluge of ice, fire and blood. Stand by for later information as we receive it."

I know some of you think that what I have just said is fantastic, foolish, and out of all reason. But if you go on in your sins as some of you are doing, if you ignore God and pay no attention to the call of the Holy Spirit - one of these days you will be convinced that these "fantastic" events are coming to pass!! If I cannot convince you; if God's Word cannot convince you - then God Almighty WILL convince you. It is not my business to force you into accepting Christ - but it is my business to warn you of the wrath of God to come. **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"** right now - and God will save you!

THE SECOND TRUMPET

Revelation 8:8-9:

8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

The Bible is true in every minute detail. It is verbally inspired. The Holy Spirit is careful to point out here that this is not a literal mountain - but “**as it were**” a great mountain.

In other words, we can understand how it looked when we think of a giant mountain falling into the sea. What John actually saw was no doubt an immense meteoric mass, ablaze with fire. God simply turned loose one of the giant meteors and it plunged to earth in a blaze. The verse says, “**The sea became as blood**” (notice - sea, not seas), probably referring to the Mediterranean sea, because Israel is back in her own land at this time, the Antichrist will be reigning from Jerusalem and the center of all these judgments will be upon the land of Israel.

They will reach to the four corners of the earth, but will be most severe in the land of Israel. When this great burning mass fell into the sea, it turned a third part of the sea into blood.

Yes, the water became blood - not symbolic blood, just plain blood! If you doubt that water could be changed into pure blood, read concerning the first Egyptian plague when Pharaoh rebelled against God (Exodus 7:19-21). Read the account where God turned the waters of the Nile into blood: “**And all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.**”

The only difference between this first Egyptian plague and the effect on the sea by the falling of the burning mass, is that only one-third of the sea shall become blood when the burning mountain strikes.

Thus, only one-third of the living creatures shall die.

Also one-third of the ships shall be destroyed. This will possibly occur by means of a giant tidal wave when the burning mountain falls into the sea. Think of it! (It was a giant storm that destroyed the Spanish Armada.)

THE THIRD TRUMPET

Revelation 8:10-11:

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

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

Note the words “**burning as it were a lamp.**” Here, John uses a lamp to illustrate the tremendous burning light that fell from the sky, as he used the mountain to illustrate the burning mass under the second trumpet.

When the third trumpet sounded, John saw a great star fall from Heaven, burning like a giant torch. No doubt this will be another heavenly body - a meteor or such like - that God turns loose; and as it falls it will assume the form of a giant torch, in its blazing path down through the heavens as it speeds toward earth at an unknown rate of speed. When the gaseous vapors are scattered throughout the atmosphere, and these vapors explode, they will be absorbed by the waters - and a third of the rivers and fountains of water will be poisoned by the gasses from this burning torch. The waters will be made very bitter. Many men shall die from drinking the poisoned water. “**Wormwood**” is a perennial herb, extremely bitter used in the manufacture of absinthe, which is used in France as a beverage, and is much more intoxicating and destructive to the human body than ordinary liquors known in America.

This time of judgment is foretold by the prophet, Jeremiah: “**Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people (the people Israel), WITH WORMWOOD, AND GIVE THEM WATER OF GALL TO DRINK**” (Jeremiah 9:15).

Thank God I will not be here . . . YOU do not have to be here . . . you can be saved if you are not saved now; and if you are born again now you have nothing to fear or dread, for you will not be here. The born again will be seated at the marriage supper in the sky when these terrible judgments occur (Revelation 19:7-10).

THE FOURTH TRUMPET

Revelation 8:12-13:

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

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

In Daniel 4:26 we learn that the Heaven rules. Here when the fourth angel sends out the trumpet blast, a third part of the sun is smitten, a third part of the moon is smitten, a third part of the stars are smitten, a third part of the day is blacked out - and the night likewise.

That means that a third part of daylight will be blacked out around the world. In this present time, when it is light here in the United States, it is dark in China; when it is light in China, it is dark here in the United States. But when the fourth trumpet sounds it will be dark a third part of the Chinese day and a third part of the American day, proving that Heaven does rule and that God controls the affairs of Heaven and earth. In Luke’s Gospel we read, “**There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken**” (Luke 21:25,26).

Eight centuries before the birth of Jesus, God spoke to Joel and gave to him a picture of the plagues that will accompany the day of the Lord. Read these verses and tremble, if you are not born again. Read them and rejoice if you ARE saved, that you will not be here when these things come to pass. And then do your best to get every sinner saved that you possibly can!

“Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

“The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” (Joel 1:15-2:11).

These things are yet in the future, and if you are not saved it is possible you could be here when they happen.

A UNIVERSAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE THREE WOES

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

Notice: John says, “**I beheld. . . I heard.**” Both the eye and ear are engaged, signifying the careful attention and interest of the beloved disciple in the events which pass before him. The angel is flying through mid-heaven . . . the firmament. He can scan the entire earth, from its center to the most remote boundary of the universe. The triple cry of “**Woe! woe! woe!**” announces the most horrible judgments ever announced . . . judgments that are far beyond the imagination of man.

The “**woes**” are to be especially upon those who have their settled place of abode on the earth. Those who refuse to hear the solemn warnings from Heaven, and in spite of all the announcements of judgment cling to this earth as their home and their dwelling place, as if they would abide here forever. Such people are alive today.

The term “**inhabiters of the earth**” is used twice before, in chapter 3:10 and 6:10, referring to the peoples upon whom the Tribulation will come, and having to do with the Philadelphia believers and the souls under the altar. The souls under the altar were comforted by being assured that the inhabiters of earth would be judged when their brethren had been killed (during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation).

This is a distinct and manifest class of people, spoken of in the term “dwellers on or inhabiters of” the earth.

It will be against this perverse, unbelieving class that these terrible woes of God will be directed. first against the Jews, second against the inhabitants of the Roman earth and empire, and last, it will reach to every square inch of the universe and will have to do with every person who inhabits the earth. This will be the final, the omega, of God’s giant judgments of fury.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER NINE

The Fifth and Sixth Trumpet

Revelation 9:1-12:

1. **And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.**
2. **And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.**
3. **And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.**
4. **And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.**
5. **And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.**
6. **And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.**
7. **And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.**
8. **And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.**
9. **And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.**
10. **And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.**
11. **And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.**
12. **One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.**

When the fifth trumpet sent forth its blast, John saw “**a star**” fall from Heaven. This was not a literal star. The Holy Spirit makes that very clear when He speaks of the star as “he.” This is not strange at all. In Job 38:7, angels were called stars. Bible scholars do not agree on who this is, but after many years of study in the Word of God, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, I personally believe “he” is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. One commentator boldly states that this star is Satan, but I disagree.

The star John saw fall from Heaven had the key to the bottomless pit, and according to Revelation 1:18 **“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; AND HAVE THE KEYS OF HELL AND OF DEATH.”**

Therefore, I believe this angel to be none other than the Son of God in angelic form.

He is God’s star-deputy, God’s star chief of police. I believe this to be the same person who appears in Revelation 20:1-3, when He comes down having a key, and unlocks the bottomless pit. He has a chain in His hand, and He binds Satan and puts him into the pit. Thank God, the devil will be on the chain-gang for one thousand years!

These facts make it very clear to me that the star-angel is not Satan, but the Lord Jesus Christ. It stands to reason that Almighty God would not trust the key of hell to a fallen angel nor to Satan.

The **“bottomless pit”** is hell . . . not the lake of fire. I will explain about the lake of fire further when we reach Revelation 20. Hell is the prison of the wicked spirits who have died since Adam. Demons are there, the wicked spirits are there; but Satan is walking up and down in the earth - sometimes as a roaring lion, other times as an angel of light (Job 1:6-12; I Peter 5:8; II Corinthians 11:13-15).

In Luke 16 we have the moving account of the rich man and Lazarus. This is NOT a parable; it is an actual account of a rich man and a beggar, both of whom died.

Father Abraham and Lazarus are named - and the Holy Spirit never uses proper names or names of departed saints of God in parables. This certain rich man died and opened his eyes in hell. He was tormented in the flames, he begged for water to cool his parching tongue.

The beggar Lazarus died, and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom . . . the place of rest.

A baby rests upon the bosom of its mother. Abraham’s bosom is the Paradise of God. Abraham is there, all the departed saints are there. Paul was caught up into Paradise (II Corinthians 12:1-4). When the rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool his tongue, he was reminded that Lazarus could not come where he was, because between the fire and the Paradise of rest, there was a great gulf fixed.

In the Old Testament era, all departing saints went into the heart of the earth. Hell was divided into two compartments. Between the fires of hell and the Paradise where Abraham was, there was a great gulf. I believe that gulf has now been broken down, and what was Paradise in the Old Testament era is now a part of the burning inferno called hell. **“Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure . . .”** (Isaiah 5:14a).

I believe God simply removed the partition, and now the spirits of the damned occupy the entirety of the center of this earth. The earth is round, the center is a sphere, and therefore is bottomless. I believe hell is in the center of this earth.

At the Great white Throne judgment the spirits of the wicked will be brought out of hell in the center of the earth, and they will appear before the Great white Throne to receive their just reward according to their wickedness. Yes, there will be degrees of punishment in hell. God could not be a just God and permit some teenage boy or girl who was brought up in a bootlegger's home, to suffer the same intensity of punishment as Pharaoh or Hitler. God will give to Hitler and Pharaoh (and others) their just and due torment, according to their wicked works.

The heathen will be judged in righteousness. The teenager will be judged in righteousness. Whether you spend eternity in Heaven or in hell, my friend, you will receive from the hand of Almighty God exactly what is coming to you - no more, and no less.

Today hell is in the center of the earth. The center of this earth is proven to be a rolling, tumbling mass of molten rock and liquid fire. Many times earth's surface bursts open, explodes, fire pours out and liquid lava (melted rock) flows down the side of a mountain. We call these explosions "volcanic eruptions." There are boiling springs in the western part of our country.

In the Bible, hell is always referred to as being "down." Isaiah tells us, "**Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming . . . yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit**" (Isaiah 14:9 and 15).

In Numbers 16:30-33 we have the account of an entire company dropping into hell alive. The Scripture tells us that the earth opened her mouth, and those people went down into the pit . . . into hell . . . alive, and the earth closed her mouth upon them. All the people of Korah - their houses and everything they had - dropped into hell and the earth shut her mouth. Why should I not believe, preach and teach without apology that hell is in the center of this earth? There was no hell in the beginning.

In Genesis 1:1 we read, "**In the beginning God created the heaven (singular) and the earth (singular).**" The Scripture does not say heavens (plural) nor earths (plural). There is no mention of hell here. There was no devil in the beginning. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were in the beginning. God created the angels, the cherubim, the seraphim, and the archangels.

There were probably three archangels, with Lucifer the chief of the three. Sometime . . . perhaps after millions of years . . . Lucifer decided to overthrow God and take His throne. He brainwashed some of the angels, led them to believe they could overthrow God, and they made such an attempt. But since the Creator is greater than the created, and since God created Lucifer and all the angels, God cast Lucifer and the fallen angels out of Heaven. Study Ezekiel 28:11-15 and Isaiah 14:12-14.

God literally threw Lucifer out of Heaven, and Jesus the Son said He witnessed it: "**And He (Jesus) said unto them, I BEHELD SATAN AS LIGHTNING FALL FROM HEAVEN**" (Luke 10:18). When Jesus made this announcement to His disciples, He spoke in the past tense, not future. This does not refer to the time when Satan will be eternally cast out. (We will study about this later in Revelation.) Luke 10:18 refers to the time when Satan was cast out of Heaven.

The devil is a self-made creature. He was not a devil in his original state, but when he decided in his own heart that he could overthrow God, and led some of the angels to believe the same, he became the Deceiver . . . the devil. God was forced to cast him out of Heaven, and since Lucifer (the shining one) had become the devil (the deceiver) God was forced to prepare a prison for the disobedient ones. Therefore, hell was prepared **“for the devil and his angels”** (Matthew 25:41). Jude tells us that the angels which left their first estate are now reserved in chains awaiting the day of judgment. Read Jude in its entirety.

God did not create hell for man, God did not create man for hell; but all men who choose to follow Satan must spend eternity with him in hell. Hell today is in the center of this earth, and will remain there until the consummation of all things. Then all the wicked spirits since Adam, together with the evil angels and Satan himself, will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where they will remain throughout the ages of eternity, burning and begging in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10-15).

If by chance there are some who still doubt that hell is in the center of the earth, let me give you one more Bible proof: When Jesus was here on earth, the scribes and Pharisees asked Him to give them a sign to prove that He was God’s Son. Jesus said, **“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: FOR AS JONAS WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE WHALE’S BELLY, SO SHALL THE SON OF MAN BE THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH”** (Matthew 12:38-40).

Prophesying concerning the Lord Jesus, the Psalmist said, **“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption”** (Psalm 16:10). The words are repeated in Acts 2:25-27: **“For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”**

And now, the capstone that proves the pyramid of truth that hell is in the center of the earth: **“Wherefore He saith, WHEN HE ASCENDED UP ON HIGH, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (NOW THAT HE ASCENDED, WHAT IS IT BUT THAT HE ALSO DESCENDED FIRST INTO THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things)”** (Ephesians 4:8-10).

There is no doubt in my mind, after comparing spiritual things with spiritual, that hell is beneath the ground on which we walk. When the angel unlocks the bottomless pit, smoke will issue from it - and this will not be symbolic smoke. It will be real, just like the smoke that comes from your chimney. The Bible refers to it as the smoke issuing from a great furnace. It will completely black out the sun, and there will be darkness over all the land. When Jesus hung on the cross, the sun refused to shine and all the earth was in darkness for three hours. In this Scripture, the sun is shining but the smoke of God’s judgment blacks it out.

Out of the smoke, millions of locusts will appear. . . billions of demon locusts will come out of the smoke that proceeds out of hell. They will have the power to sting men like the scorpions of the earth have power.

Do I believe this? Why should I not believe it? Why should I believe anything else? Why should I symbolize and spiritualize these locusts? The Bible plainly tells me that they have the power to sting like the scorpions of the earth. I know what a scorpion is; I have seen them.

I saw one person who was stung by a scorpion, and in a matter of moments that person turned black and blue, and went into convulsions of agony.

The torment of the locusts is as the torment of earth's scorpions when the scorpions strike a man. This terrible torment will last for five months. Think of it!

Five months of agony, five months of scorpions. Do I believe this is a literal five months? I answer with these questions: Do I believe John 3:16? Do I believe Acts 16:3-17 Do I believe the 23rd Psalm? Do I believe John 14:2 - **"In my Father's house are many mansions"**? I certainly do! Then why should I not believe this? Men will be stung and bitten by locusts for five months. They will swell and hurt, beg and scream; but they cannot die.

"And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

Are you capable of understanding that statement? Do you understand those words? Guns will not kill, razors will not sever arteries, poison will not poison, necks will not break, hearts will not stop! Men will go on their faces and beg God to kill them . . . to let them die. They will mutilate their bodies, but they cannot bleed to death. They will put guns to their temples and pull the triggers - but the bullet will penetrate the head with no harm . . . just more pain, no death!

I know it is humanly impossible to understand such fury, but since the Bible declares it, I have no alternative but to preach it.

Dear reader, will you be one of those who will fall on your face and beg God to kill you? Will you be one of those who drink poison but cannot die? Will you be one of those who will only add to your pain as you mutilate your body and seek for death? If you are not a child of God you may be one of those.

Thank God, you can escape it all! If you are not saved, you can be, right now - If will just bow your head and in your own words ask the Lord to come into your heart and save you. **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . . Whosoever shall call upon His name shall be saved . . . They that come to Me I will in no wise cast out . . . As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God!"**

Receive Him NOW, and you will not be here when the horrible plague of the locusts comes.

This army of demon-locusts out of hell is described in verses 7-10. They had bodies like horses prepared for battle. (In Italy and some other foreign countries locusts are called “little horses” and some of them resemble a horse.) They had on their heads crowns like gold. These demon monstrosities had faces like men, with long, flowing hair like a woman. They had jagged, sharp teeth like a lion, and “as it were” breastplates of iron . . . durable and strong, comparable to our iron.

They could not be destroyed. Bullets would not penetrate these locusts. They had tails like scorpions of the earth, with stings in their tails, and they were to sting men for five months. Read Joel 2:4 very carefully, also Jeremiah 51:27 and Exodus 10:12-15. These hideous, savage, demon monstrosities will fill this earth for five months.

Think of it! This great army of locusts is organized . . . it has a king . . . a leader. The leader is the angel of the bottomless pit . . . the devil himself, in angelic form. The devil has a cheap counterfeit for everything God has that is good and great.

I said the angel in verse one of this chapter is none other than Jesus. Here, the angel is the devil . . . his name in the Hebrew is Abaddon, which means destruction. In the Greek it is Apollyon, which means destroyer. The devil is a deceiver, and has always wrought destruction. He is the destroyer of the souls of men.

The king over the locusts is the devil. He personally leads his army of tormentors. Jesus will personally lead the army of the saints when we, with Jesus, invade this earth, riding upon white horses, clothed in bright shining linen (Revelation 19:11-16).

Let me emphasize once more that these demon locusts are not to kill men. They are to torment them, tantalize them, sting them, for five months. **JUST A MINUTE! DO I HAVE YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION? DID YOU REALLY GET THAT PICTURE? ARE YOU SURE? ? ?**

My precious lady and my dear brother: If you are left here on this earth when the Rapture takes place, one morning you will awaken, prepare your breakfast, and as you sit at the breakfast table you will look through the window into your back yard - and you will not be able to believe your own eyes. You will wonder if you are losing your mind, for in your back yard you will see what resembles a group of midget horses.

They will have unique bodies.

They will be wearing crowns that look like gold. They will have a very unusual tail - and as you gaze out the window one of them will raise its head and look straight into the room. Your blood will run cold in your veins as you sit awe-stricken, dumbfounded, amazed - and you will see the demon locusts of hell, face to face!

When this demon locust lifts his head, you will see that his face looks like a man - and yet his hair looks like that of a woman. When he opens his mouth you will see that his teeth are sharp and slender, like those of a lion.

You will notice that the breast of this demon locust is protected by something that resembles iron, and as this monstrosity gazes at you and you gaze back at it, it will begin to fly straight to your window. You will run screaming - or possibly you will faint and fall flat on your kitchen floor.

I know this is a horrible picture - but beloved, I dare not soft-pedal the Word of God nor cut corners to prevent being called a religious fanatic. I believe that what I have suggested here will happen literally, right here on this earth. Get that picture if you can, and if you are not saved, fall down on your knees right now, wherever you are, and tell God in your own words that you want Jesus Christ to come into your heart and save you. He will do it!

THE SIXTH TRUMPET

Revelation 9:13-21:

13. **And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,**
14. **Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.**
15. **And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.**
16. **And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.**
17. **And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.**
18. **By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.**
19. **For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.**
20. **And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:**
21. **Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.**

In verse 13, the sixth angel sounds his trumpet.

John says, **“I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.”** In the tabernacle of old, there were two altars . . . one stood without, in the court - and one stood within the Holy Place directly in front of the veil which covered the Holy of Holies. The golden altar is twice referred to in Revelation - chapter 8:3 and chapter 9:13.

The brazen altar is six times mentioned in Revelation; it stood in the court. The golden altar stood in the Holy Place. The brazen altar was the altar of sacrifice.

Every morning and evening except on the annual Day of Atonement, incense (representing the merits of Jesus Christ, our Saviour) was burned on the golden altar in the Holy Place.

On the Day of Atonement, the Blood of sacrificial animals was put upon the four golden horns of the altar. The account of this ceremony is in Leviticus 16:18, 19 and chapter 4:7-18. The brazen altar, where the Blood was shed, points to the Cross and the shed Blood of Jesus Christ.

In verse 13 John said, **“I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar.”** In chapter 8:3 we hear the prayers of the saints of the earth. They are going through terrible, horrible persecution. In chapter 9:13 God is about to judge the persecutors of the saints who will be on earth at that time. The terrible slaughter is about to wipe out one-third of earth’s inhabitants. The sixth trumpet and the second woe are far more dreadful than the preceding trumpets. The voice John heard is either the voice of God or of one who has been commissioned by The Lord God. The voice is heard from the four horns of the golden altar. Why was the voice not from the altar itself, instead of from the four horns? In Revelation 16:7 the voice comes from the altar itself.

Why, here, does the voice come from the four horns?

Why not from one horn? All numbers in the Bible have spiritual significance. Four expresses universality the world over. For instance, four metals are mentioned in Daniel 2. Four beasts are mentioned in Daniel 7. Four divisions of the human family are mentioned in Revelation 7:9. Four points of the compass (north, south, east and west) are mentioned in Revelation 7:1. The voice coming from the horns denotes power over all the universe (Psalm 118:27, Psalm 89:17-24, Psalm 92:10, Psalm 132:17 and Revelation 5:6).

In verse 14 we learn the message given by the voice: **“Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.”** These four angels are not the same as the four angels in Revelation 7:1-3. In chapter 7 the angels stand on the extremities of the earth. Here in chapter 9 they are bound in the great river Euphrates. The angels in chapter 7 hold back the forces of evil.

The four angels in chapter 9 let loose the human and satanic instruments of destruction and judgment.

The great river Euphrates is mentioned twice in Revelation - chapter 9:14 and chapter 16:12. The Euphrates is 1,780 miles long. The Nile river and the Euphrates form the borders of the Promised Land - the ground God deeded to Abraham for an everlasting possession (Genesis 15:18).

In verse 15, the four angels bound in the river Euphrates are loosed. They are prepared for an hour, a day, a month and a year. Greek scholars tell us that they are prepared for the hour, and day, and month, and year. That is, they are prepared for a specific moment, and they will perform their duty and follow the command of God at that hour, day, month and year. Read Acts 15:18.

The mission of these angels is to slay one-third of the inhabitants of the earth.

Think of it! One-third of all persons on earth will be butchered at that time.

In verse 16 we learn the number in the army that will be led by the four angels, loosed for this specific mission at this appointed moment. The army numbers two hundred thousand thousand . . . that is, 200,000,000.

It is said that the largest army ever to go into the field of battle was under Xerxes when he invaded Greece. He led one and a half million (1,500,000) troops against Greece. The four angels will lead two hundred million troops against the earth. It is hard for the human mind to grasp such a figure. It is hard to think in such terms. (Read Psalm 68:17 concerning God's chariots.)

During World War II, at the height of the conflict, America had approximately 12,000,000 men under arms. Compare that with an army of 200,000,000.

In verse 17 John said, **"I saw the horses in the vision."** He further states, **"I saw them that sat on them."** He saw the horses and their riders, and he describes both. What a description! The riders of the horses had breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone. The riders undoubtedly will be super-human, and probably demented . . . a great army of demons out of hell. The heads of the horses were as the heads of lions (the lion is king of the beasts). The riders are mounted upon horses that cannot be stopped, cannot be conquered. Out of the mouths of the horses issue fire, smoke and brimstone!

Verse 18 further describes them by saying, **"by these three** (fire, smoke, and brimstone)" one-third of all men shall be killed. The army of locusts did not kill men - they only tormented them. But this army leaves one-third of earth's population dead.

In verse 19 we learn that the power of these hideous monstrosities is in their mouth and in their tails: **"Their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt."** Some Bible teachers have interpreted these horses to be modern airplanes and bombers, with their powerful guns spurting fire; but I cannot see the modern bomber here. I believe these are literal horses, demented - and that the riders are demon monstrosities.

I believe these horses are creatures from the regions unknown. Just as the locusts came from the smoke out of the bottomless pit, these horsemen will come out of hell. I refuse to spiritualize or symbolize any part of Revelation that is not clearly stated to BE a symbol, or spiritual.

Verse 20 tells us that even though one-third of earth's population is dead, having been slain by the 200,000,000 horsemen, the other two-thirds refuse to repent. It seems that certainly after this terrible slaughtering there would have been a season of repentance and turning to God; but if you will carefully read II Thessalonians 2:8-12 you will learn that people who have had the opportunity to be saved before the Rapture will be sent strong delusion, they will believe **"THE LIE,"** and they all will be damned.

We read in verse 20, **"The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."**

The sins of these people in this particular hour are “**the works of their own hands.**” (Read Isaiah 2:8, Jeremiah 1:16-25, Jeremiah 6:14, Deuteronomy 4:28, Psalm 115:4-7 and Psalm 135:15.)

- They worshipped demons - that sounds like modern spiritualism. (Read Matthew 8:28,29 and Revelation 16:14.)
- They were idolaters.
- They were murderers,
- They committed sorceries,
- They were fornicators,
- They were thieves.

They were committing and practicing the fulness of wickedness. Seven sins are named here - seven is the Bible number of perfection. So they were completely given over to the devil.

These people were spiritually blind . . . they could not see. They were sent strong delusion, they did believe The Lie. They had reached the perfect standard of ungodly living. Their cup of sin was full and running over.

At the time of the sixth trumpet, the Holy Spirit is with the Church in the sky at the marriage supper. There is no resisting power after the Rapture. The devil and all the forces of hell will run wild, engulfing the entire earth, with the teeming millions given up by God and given over to Satan. There is no wonder that all hell literally breaks out on earth - but thank God, those of us who are born again will not be here. We will not go through this terrible time of suffering and chaos. But if you are not a believer, you may be here! You may witness the invasion of the two hundred million demon monstrosities.

God deals in blood and fire. Either get under the Blood - or you will end up in God's fiery judgments. There is no need to spiritualize Revelation 9:13-21. These verses mean exactly what they say. These things have happened on the earth before; they will happen again. This is the fulfillment of Joel 2:30-31. Part of the prophecy of Joel was literally fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, so why should not the rest of his prophecy be literally fulfilled? Read it. He tells us that in the latter days God will show wonders in Heaven, and in the earth blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, In the great and terrible day of the Lord. That day, of course, is the day when Jesus comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.”

ONLY IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN, WHERE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE, WAS THERE NO HAIL” (Exodus 9:22-26).

The God of Israel is my God. The God of Israel is the God of today. He is the same omnipotent One . . . the same God who sent hail and fire upon the land of Egypt. God does not change. The hail and the fire that fell upon Egypt was literal ice and literal blazes of fire.

So why not again, during the last days of the Great Tribulation?

In verse 14 the Spirit mentions the great river Euphrates. This is a literal river . . . it is not spiritual.

Why mix the literal and the spiritual in the same passage? Just as surely as the Euphrates is a real river still known today, the angels will be literal (Hebrews 1:14).

The army of 200,000,000 horsemen will be real. They will have bodies. They will spew literal fire, smoke and brimstone from their mouths. They will have heads like lions, and by the fire, smoke and brimstone from their mouths one-third of the people will die.

I know you do not understand such terrible judgment, and neither do I understand it. But the thing for us to do is prepare to meet God, and let God run His affairs.

We are not commanded to understand God’s ways - His ways are not our ways. He wants us to believe on Him and be saved. Every time a sinner refuses to receive the Lord Jesus and be saved, that refusal causes the sinner’s heart to become harder and harder. It is a fact that the same Gospel that softens the heart and prepares it for salvation (John 5:25, Romans 10:17, I Peter 1:23) also serves to make the heart harder if that Gospel is rejected.

Every time a sinner says “No” to the Holy Spirit and “Yes” to the devil, this act makes it easier to say “No” to God the next time, and “Yes” to the devil.

Over a period of time the sinner’s heart becomes so hard, so calloused, that the Gospel does not penetrate or disturb the sinner any more. And God finally gives up that soul.

In Romans chapter 1 we have itemized three sins that will cause God to give up the person who commits them.

- The first one is that **“they knew God, but refused to glorify Him as God.”** Therefore, God gave them up (Romans 1:21-24).
- The second sin is that **“they changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections”** (Romans 1:25,26).
- The third sin is that **“even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God GAVE THEM OVER TO A REPROBATE MIND”** (Romans 1:28).

When people know God, but refuse to worship Him as God; when people hear the Gospel but refuse it, by their very actions saying, "I do not believe it," thereby making God's truth a lie; when people do not like to think about God and entertain God in their minds - then God gives them up! And when God says to the Holy Spirit, "**Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone**" (Hosea 4:17), that person is forever doomed and can never be saved. John 6:44 clearly teaches that no man can come to God except the Holy Spirit convict and draw him. If God gives up a soul, the Holy Spirit will not convict that soul any more. The most dangerous thing any person has ever done is to hear the Gospel - and reject it.

If you are not a believer, bow your head and trust the Lord Jesus with all of your heart this very moment.

"Today is the day of salvation, now is the accepted time . . . Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Read carefully John 5:24, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, I John 1:9, Matthew 10:31-33.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER TEN

The Mighty Angel and the Little Book

Revelation 10:1-7:

1. **And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:**
2. **And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,**
3. **And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.**
4. **And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.**
5. **And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,**
6. **And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:**
7. **But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.**

Chapter ten begins with “**I saw another Mighty Angel come down from Heaven.**” This is not an ordinary angel by any means. Let me point out seven things about this Angel that I feel give us his identity:

1. This Angel is mighty.
2. This Angel came down from Heaven.
3. This Angel is clothed with a cloud.
4. The face of this Angel is like the sun.
5. The feet of this Angel are as pillars of fire.
6. He has in His hand “**a little book open.**”
7. He stands with one foot on the land and one on the sea—denoting universal ownership and authority. “**The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof**” (Psalm 24:1).

These seven facts testify that this Angel could be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the only One found worthy to open the book and to loose the seals (Revelation 5:5-7). The book is now open and in the hand of the Mighty Angel.

In the Old Testament Jesus is referred to as “the Lord’s Angel . . . **the Angel of the Lord.**”

This specific Person - an unusual Person - appears in many places in the Old Testament. In Revelation Jesus is referred to as the Lamb, as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and also as The Warrior. Why should he not be referred to as a “**Mighty Angel**”?

Jesus can take any form He desires, in order to perform any specific mission having to do with completion of God’s program. I believe the angels mentioned in Revelation 7:2, 8:13 and 10:1 are one and the same - the Lord Jesus Christ.

The angel John saw will actually appear when the time comes. He is referred to as “**the Mighty Angel,**” denoting His unusual strength and setting Him apart from all other angels mentioned previously and in the chapters that follow.

Wherever clouds are connected with glorious manifestations, we find the presence of deity. In Nahum we read that the clouds are the dust of His feet. Jesus was taken up in a cloud when He ascended back to Heaven after His resurrection (Acts 1:8-10). The Lord God came down on Mt. Sinai in a thick cloud (Exodus 19:9).

the Lord appeared on the mercy seat in a cloud. When Israel was delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, “**the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud**” (Exodus 13:21, 14:24; Nehemiah 9:12). When the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, “**a cloud covered the tent of the congregation**” (Exodus 40:34). When the Lord reproached Israel for murmuring, “**the Lord appeared in a cloud**” (Exodus 16:10). The Lord said unto Moses, “**Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud**” (Exodus 19:9). The psalmist said, “**Clouds and darkness are round about Him**” (Psalm 97:2). “**He maketh the clouds His chariots . . . the clouds are the dust of His feet**” (Nahum 1:3). Last, but by no means least: “**BEHOLD HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS and every eye shall see Him**” (Revelation 1:7).

As the garments of deity, clouds indicate the unapproachableness of God and denote His infinite majesty . . . His consuming power toward sin. Sin cannot live before His uncovered glory - and yet in Revelation 10 He draws near to earth to offer mercy to earth’s dwellers.

The Mighty Angel will have the rainbow - symbol of mercy - upon His head. The rainbow is a sign of divine mercy in the midst of divine judgment. This is one of the four times the rainbow is mentioned in God’s Word, and on every occasion it is connected with God’s mercy given unto men. God put the bow in the sky, promising to remember His covenant with the earth (Genesis 9:8-17). (The rainbow is a sign of God’S mercy - not angelic mercy.)

Angels are special creations of God, but this Mighty Angel is not one of the created beings. He is the Lord Jesus Himself. He is about to speak to earth’s dwellers for the last time. The face of this Mighty Angel was like the sun.

In Revelation 1:16 John saw the countenance of Jesus “**as the sun shining in his full strength.**” Jesus is referred to in the Bible as “**the Sun of Righteousness.**” Paul saw a blinding light on the road to Damascus, when God parted the sky and Jesus looked down. Read the account in Acts 9. This Mighty Angel had “**His feet as pillars of fire.**”

The same statement is made describing the feet of Jesus in Revelation 1:15: “. . . **and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.**” Nothing like that has been said about any ordinary angel - not even Michael or Gabriel, the archangels.

In verse 2 we learn that this Mighty Angel had in His hand a little book - open. This is the same book mentioned in chapter five, when John “**wept much**” because no one could be found worthy to open the book; but One WAS found - the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here in our present Scripture the book is open and the Mighty Angel is holding it in His hand. He stands with one foot upon the land and the other foot upon the sea.

This is significant . . . it denotes possession. When the Mighty Angel deliberately sets His feet upon the sea and upon the earth, He thereby plainly announces that He intends to possess and take them for His own. “**The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.**” Jesus is the rightful Sovereign of both land and sea (Revelation 5:11-13); but the devil has been the prince of the power of the air since Adam yielded to him in the Garden, and the land and the sea have been under the control of the Lord’s enemies for more than six thousand years.

Thank God, Satan’s control of God’s creation is fast coming to a close. The whole earth now groans and travails (Romans 8:22), but one day the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters now cover the sea. Those mighty feet standing on the land and on the sea testify to the Lord’s enemies that there is no need for further resistance. Who can stand against two tremendous columns of fire?

The image here is one of invincible power and steadfastness, joined with consuming destruction to those who dare oppose. Pillars are firm and mighty. Pillars of fire are irresistible. The Mighty Angel plants His feet on the sea and on the land “**as pillars of fire.**” Never forget - Jesus deals in fire and blood. The feet of the Mighty Angel are immovable and will hurriedly consume all opposition.

“ . . . **And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth . . .**” This further identifies the Mighty Angel.

This is the voice of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. It is a cry of power and victory - not a cry of fear nor of distress. The lion fears no beast. He is king of the jungle, and his roar is feared by all other beasts. This cry was an announcement of vengeance upon the enemies of God and the wicked who at that time will inhabit the earth:

“**The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake**” (Joel 3:16a). Think of it! In Revelation 1:15, His voice was “**as the sound of many waters.**” But here His voice roars like a lion. Read Jeremiah 25:29, 31.

When Jesus comes to set His feet on the earth and on the sea, He will shout the shout of victory as those **“who tread out grapes.”** The shout shall be given and the cup of the divine fury of God shall be poured out. The winepress of the earth will be trodden under His feet until the Blood runs to the horses’ bridles In the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 14:14-20).

The shout from the Mighty Angel is the announcement of the immediate oncoming judgments of God, and Heaven answers in seven thunderous voices. In connection with this, read Psalm 29.

Thunder is the voice of the Lord in judgment (I Samuel 7:10, Psalm 18:13). The seven thunders **“uttered their voices.”** (John assumes that the readers already have Some knowledge of these seven thunders.) In Revelation 4:2, 3 John saw a throne encircled by a rainbow, and here in chapter ten we see the same rainbow. In Revelation 4 John saw upon the throne One who was to look upon as a jasper and a sardine stone, and **“out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices.”**

In chapter 10, we have the same thunder, sounding out a message of God’s fury and judgment.

We also had these same thunders in chapter 8, when the Priest-Angel turned the contents of His fire-filled censer upon the earth. **“There were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”**

The seven thunders are the judgment thunders from the throne of God. When the Lion of the Tribe of Judah roars, as on the eve of bounding forth upon His prey, the seven thunders utter their roaring voices as in full sympathy and agreement with what is about to proceed in righteous vengeance and holy fury from the throne of eternal majesty.

Personality is attributed to these **“seven thunders.”** Everything is in sympathy with the Lamb of God. These mighty thunders utter messages that are intelligible . . . they speak words. John heard what they said - and when the time comes in reality, the seven thunders will speak literal words that earth’s dwellers will fully understand. It will be a message in tones of thunder. We use a public address system to amplify voices when we want to be heard - but God needs no amplification. He can speak like mighty thunder - and He WILL when the time comes!

At the beginning of these marvelous visions, John was commanded to write in a book what he saw and heard - past, present and future. But when the thunders spoke, John was given another command. He was about to write - but a voice from Heaven said: **“Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not!”**

The seven thunders must have given a terrible message. Already set before us are blood, tears, famine, heartache and heartbreak; killing, misery, hail, fire, burning mountains, demon monstrosities, men begging to die and unable to do so. Surely what John was forbidden to write must have been beyond human imagination and understanding! There is no need to speculate on what the thunders said. Your guess is as good as mine; but you may rest assured that the message had to do with God’s last gigantic, unheard of, indescribable judgment, when God “lowers the boom” in utter destruction.

Will YOU be on earth when the seven thunders speak? You are the only one who can answer that question. If you are born again you will NOT be here - but if you are not born again, you may be here. Read John 1:11-12, 3:16-18, 3:36, 5:24; Romans 10:9-10, 10:13, 10:17; Ephesians 2:8-9; I John 1:9. Read these verses, hear what they say; receive them - and you will not be here when the seven thunders utter their message of destruction. You will be with Jesus.

Verses 5 and 6: **“And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up His hand to Heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.”**

The Amplified New Testament reads, “And swore in the name of Him who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and all they contain, and the earth and all it contains, and the sea and all that it contains. HE SWORE THAT NO MORE TIME SHOULD INTERVENE AND THERE SHOULD BE NO MORE WAITING OR DELAY.”

I think this rendering makes the verse a little clearer. Time does not end here. This is not the beginning of the eternal ages. What the Angel is announcing is that there will be no further delay; God is about to lower the boom of holy fury and unheard of judgment.

Here we have the record of one of the most sublime unveilings of Revelation. How comforting, strengthening, assuring and magnificent! We turn from blood strife, chaos, demon maniacs, the devil in flesh (Antichrist) - to God's eternal purpose concerning the earth.

The earth is the Lord's - and one day the Lord Jesus will possess it and give it to His own. In the sweet by-and-by the meek shall inherit the earth. See the Mighty Angel as He stands with one foot on the sea and one on the earth - and then hear God's holy Word: **“He must reign until His enemies become His footstool.”** Jesus will do just that!

He is the Saviour of sinners today. He will be the Judge of sinners in the tomorrow of the end of the age. The book of closing prophecy in His hand - the book that was sealed with seven seals - is now open. He lifts His hand to Heaven and swears **“by Him that liveth forever and ever”** (one can swear by no higher nor greater), that there will be no further delay. Judgment is about to fall. The thousand years of peace are yet ahead, and will surely come at the appointed moment.

Again I say, What a sight! The Mighty Angel (Jesus) with all the brightness of the sun, all the raging, roaring fire of a powerful furnace about His feet. The clouds of glory compose His robe and compass His body, the drapery of the blue sky floats over His mighty shoulders and around His divine head. The brilliance of the rainbow makes up His diadem. There He stands! One foot on the land, one foot on the sea! The wide extended earth and the mighty oceans serve as His footstool as His flaming feet stand to conquer and possess! With His mighty hand raised up to the stars, He speaks and vast regions of the firmament echo with His mighty voice. All the artillery of the sky bursts forth. Seven thunders speak, sending out the universal alarm, preparing the earth to receive Heaven's orders to finish God's program of judgment. There can be no further delay.

- The cup of fury is running over.
- God's longsuffering and tenderness are running out.
- Consuming fire of judgment is about to fall.

For 2,000 years God has not interfered with the governments of the world. The visible church has pushed Him out. The world is a colossal wreck. God has put up with man's insults long enough.

Man has had his chance; governments of earth have had their chance; the visible church has had its chance.

There can be no further delay.

In verse 7 we read, **"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."**

Let me list the seven mysteries:

1. The mystery of God's will (Ephesians 1:9).
2. The mystery of iniquity (the devil in flesh) (II Thessalonians 2: 7).
3. The mystery of godliness (I Timothy 3:16).
4. The mystery of God (Colossians 2:2).
5. The mystery of the seven stars (Revelation 1:20).
6. The mystery of the woman on the beast (Revelation 17:7).
7. The mystery of Israel (Romans 11:25).

These mysteries are distinct from the mystery of God in our present passage . . . they denote something previously unknown but now revealed.

The mystery mentioned in Revelation 10:7 will be unfolded at the time when the Mighty Angel, the Lord Jesus, will stand with the earth and the sea under His feet, and His hand raised toward God's throne.

Does it not seem strange that God has allowed Satan to rule the affairs of men for nearly 6,000 years? Satan has warped, twisted, marred, scarred, and almost completely wrecked creation. What havoc he has wrought!

Why has God permitted it? We know God is more powerful than the devil. We know Satan's power is subject to and limited by the power of God. Satan is mighty - but God is ALMIGHTY. The God of Heaven rules, and all power is ordained of Him. We know that Satan will soon be cast down. Why has God allowed him to get by so long?

That is God's mystery . . . God's business. It is not ours to know. He will explain it to us when we reach Home.

On one occasion a self-made free thinker asked me, "If God is so big, and the devil is so terrible, why does not God kill the devil?" I answered him thusly: "That is none of your business! Your business and my business is to **"fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."** Read Ecclesiastes 12:13.

- Is God indifferent to sin, ungodliness and unrighteousness?
- Is God indifferent to sorrow and tears?
- Does not God see all the suffering Satan has caused these 6,000 years?

Yes, God sees it all - God knows all about it: **"For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act"** (Isaiah 28:21). *

* Order my book entitled *"God's Strange Act"*

Have you ever heard someone ask, "Where did the devil come from? Why did God make the devil?" You might ask "Why?" ten thousand times - but there is no answer. God will explain it . . . it belongs to the mystery of God. **"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law"** (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Regardless of what happens to you or me, if we are born again **"we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose"** (Romans 8:28).

We cannot understand how all things work together for our good - but we can believe and accept it, whether we understand it or not. **"God cannot lie"** (Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18).

All the suffering, pain, disappointment and hell that a believer will ever know will be right here on earth in this body. Paul, whom I believe suffered as did no other man except Jesus Christ, said, **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"** (Romans 8:18).

Be of good cheer! The best is yet to come! (John 16:33).

God has a plan, God has a program; and you need not worry about God's program - it is on schedule: **"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world"** (Acts 15:18).

God knew in the beginning exactly what He would do, exactly when He would do it, exactly HOW He would do it.

That may be a mystery to you and me, but God has a right to His own mystery. You and I need not dig into the things He does not want us to know. God has put up with sin and the devil for these many thousands of years, but when God pays, He will pay in full!

In Revelation 14:15 the angel is instructed to **“thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”**

When the harvest is ready, the Lord will reap. The reins with which God restrains Satan are unseen today: **“Only He** (the Holy Ghost) **who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way”** (II Thessalonians 2:7). If it were not for the Holy Ghost and His restraining power, the devil would take over completely in this earth. But the Holy Ghost restrains Satan and permits him to go only so far.

Thank God we have the assurance that we are more than conquerors through the Lord Jesus, and **“If God be for us, who can be against us?”**

In verse 7 of our present chapter, this mystery of God is about to be finished.

Jesus, God’s only begotten Son, the Heir of all things, will wrest the governments of earth out of the hands of Antichrist (the devil incarnate) and take over the governments of earth Himself (Isaiah 9:6, Luke 1:32,33). Just as surely as David sat on a throne, Jesus will sit on a literal throne in Jerusalem. You and I will reign with Him here on this earth during the Millennium. There can be no Millennium until the devil is put in the pit (Revelation 20:1-3).

Jesus will personally put the devil on the chain gang for one thousand years. Finally he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10) and will be tormented day and night forever, eternally. He will be tormented along with those he led astray and damned. Jesus will reign with His Bride here on earth for one thousand years, and then after the battle of Gog and Magog, Jesus will reign forever (Isaiah 9:6,7).

Evil now present will be openly put down and punished - destroyed once and forever. The whole creation now groans and travails, but will be delivered (Romans 8:22). We will not be bothered with Satan nor with ungodliness any more. The mystery of God is about to be finished. There can be no delay. Jesus is about to take over the earth.

The glad tidings were proclaimed to the prophets of old, although they did not understand. **“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets”** (Amos 3:7). God’s public judgment of sin and the devil is imminent. He will soon judge the one who has afflicted God’s saints with evil and temptation, who has destroyed souls on every hand and who is responsible for the marring of earth’s created beauty. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel (not exactly when the seventh angel sounds) the mystery is at an end. Christ is about to reign. This is indeed glad tidings proclaimed to His prophets of old.

We Christians today have a blessed hope which gives us strength and courage. The grace of God that saves us also teaches us to look for **“the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ”** (Titus 2:11-15).

Believers seem to be in the minority today - and truly we are, in number.

We seem to be losing the battle - but thank God we are not. We will win. We shall reign with Him on the earth. Are you ready for His return? What if Jesus should come today? Would you be left in the kingdom of Antichrist? Or would you be taken up to meet the Lord in the air? God help you to repent this very moment if you are not born again. **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31).

JOHN EATS THE LITTLE BOOK

Revelation 10:8-11:

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

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

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

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

The book John saw in the hand of the Mighty Angel was the same book described in chapter 5.

There it was closed; here it is open in the hand of the One worthy to open it. John was commanded to go and take the little book out of the hand of the Mighty Angel, and he obeyed immediately. He is then commanded to EAT the little book - and again he obeys. He eats the book and in his mouth it is as sweet as honey; but the moment it reaches his innermost parts it is bitter.

There is nothing sweeter than the message of grace, redemption and peace; but there is nothing quite so bitter as the judgment message that God’s messengers must deliver. To eat is to make the thing one’s own, to incorporate it into one’s being. When John eats the little book, it is exceedingly bitter in his innermost being. Why? The book revealed the terrible, horrible judgments of God’s holy fury.

The roll of God’s Word to Israel was in the mouth of Ezekiel **“as honey for sweetness”** (Ezekiel 3:1, 3). But that message carried him on a mission to which he **“WENT IN BITTERNESS, IN THE HEAT OF HIS Spirit”** (Ezekiel 3:14). It is not all sweet to be a fully consecrated believer . . . a prophet faithful! There is pain, suffering, bitterness, heartache, lamentations and woe when we see and fully realize the judgment that is to come upon unbelievers. The message of Grace is sweet and must be delivered. The message of judgment is bitter; it brings anguish and suffering - but it, too, must be delivered.

- John tells us that God is love - and I believe it.
- Paul tells us that God is a consuming fire - and I believe that.
- The Psalmist tells us that the man is blessed who walks with God - and I believe it.
- The Psalmist also tells us that God is angry with the wicked every day - and I believe that.

To receive as his own - as the food of his soul - these precious title deeds of the blessed inheritance, thrilled John; he was filled with joy and unspeakable gladness. But those horrible scenes of blood, wrath and fury about to be poured out upon earth's dwellers brought bitterness to his soul.

What did the Spirit mean when John was instructed to **“eat the book”**?

The explanation is in John 6:53 ff: “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

“THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK UNTO YOU, THEY ARE Spirit, AND THEY ARE LIFE” (John 6:63).

Now - **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”** (John 1:1).

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Who was this? **“The Word was made flesh.”**

Jesus wrapped God's Word up in flesh and brought it down to man. When we believe the Word of God, when we assimilate the Word and take it into our minds and hearts (and into our daily living) we are eating the very life of Jesus.

The Word of God is alive - Jesus said so: **“The words I speak, they are spirit and they are life.”** When we read and assimilate the Word of God, we are eating His flesh and drinking His Blood. **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”** (John 5:24).

- A. Hear the Word of God.
- B. Believe on Him (Jesus Christ).
- C. You have everlasting life.

“By grace are ye saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8).

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17).

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but Incorruptible . . . by the Word of God” (I Peter 1:23).

John ate up the message of the little book. It was sweet in his mouth - but bitter in his soul. Read Jeremiah 15:16, John 6:49-58, Ezekiel 2:8 and 3:1-3. Prophecy both gladdens and saddens. It announces both joy and grief. It is wonderful - and horrible. It is refreshing - and yet it is bitter.

Is it sweet to you, dear Christian, when you look all around you and see the drunks, the dopers, the gamblers and the harlots, the liars, thieves and murderers?

Is that sweet to you? You know if the Rapture should take place today they would be left behind. Is that sweet?

As a believer, you know the wages of sin is death, and that all sinners go to hell and burn forever. Is that sweet?

No, if you are a true child of God that is not sweet. It is bitter . . . extremely bitter.

May God help you and me to go after the lost as we have never gone after them before. God help us to be soul winners, to warn the wicked man in his wicked way, lest he die in his sin.

Our chapter closes with these words: **“And He said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”**

John was to prophesy OF them, not TO them - and he does just that in the following chapters of Revelation. The last verse of chapter ten leads us immediately into new phases of God's fury and judgment . . . new scenes and circumstances.

We will see in the following chapters the appearance of new personalities not referred to thus far.

~ end of chapter 10 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The “Times of the Gentiles”; The Two Witnesses; The Seventh Trumpet Revelation 11:1-2:

1. **And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.**
2. **But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**

In this chapter, God is about to take possession of what belongs to Him. The earth is the Lord’s, it was created by Him and for Him - but it has been under Satanic control for six thousand years. God gave Adam dominion over all creation and made him dictator of the universe - but! he sold out to the devil. God gave Adam a command which he deliberately disobeyed, thereby losing everything God had entrusted to him. One of these glorious days the second Adam (Christ) will redeem all that the first Adam lost, including the earth and all creation.

Today the devil is the prince of the power of the air . . . the god of this age (Ephesians 2:1-3, II Corinthians 4:3,4). One day soon Jesus will personally put the devil into the lake of fire and brimstone, and he will deceive the nations no more. In that day, **“the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea”** (Isaiah 11:9).

Revelation 11 describes the beginning of the last three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation. During this time the Gentiles will make their last strong attempt to frustrate God’s plan and purpose. The **“times of the Gentiles”** began with the captivity of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar (II Chronicles 36:1-7). From that day until May 1948, Jerusalem was under Gentile rule. Today the city is still protected because of Gentile power.

Were it not for America, England, and other free nations, the Communists would take the new state of Israel.

The Arabs next door to Israel hate the Jew as he has never been hated, and were it not for fear of the freedom-loving peoples of earth (and if God would permit it) the Arabs would wipe the Jew from the face of the earth! The **“times of the Gentiles”** will come to an everlasting end when Jesus comes in power and great glory, and destroys Antichrist and his armies. The account is found in Revelation 19:11-21.

In the last verse in chapter ten, John was informed that he must prophesy again of many peoples, tongues, and nations. As we look into this a bit further, we learn that John begins that ministry in our present chapter.

To prophesy is not merely to foretell events of the future it is also to exercise the functions of a witness for God. All true Bible preachers are prophets in a sense.

To declare the message and the will of God, to act as God's ambassador and mouthpiece, is to fulfill the office of a prophet. Aaron was Moses' prophet; he was spokesman for Moses because Moses had an impediment of speech. God has always had such witnesses here on earth and He always will have. Every true Christian who witnesses against wickedness, lifts up righteousness, points men and women to the Lamb of God - is a prophet, and after the Rapture of the Church will sit with Jesus as He judges unrighteousness.

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (I Corinthians 6:2). Saints have never before judged the world, but they will judge with Jesus, our High Priest and Righteous Judge:

“Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword In then hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: THIS HONOUR HAVE ALL HIS SAINTS . . .” (Psalm 149:5-9). Read those verses in your Bible - and see the great honor God has placed upon His children, the true believers.

Revelation 11:1 begins with a conjunction: “. . . **and**” thus connecting this verse with the last verse in chapter ten. John is here beginning the prophecy mentioned in the preceding verse.

To John was given a reed like unto a rod, and the Angel said, **“Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”** (Forty-two months add up to three and one-half years . . . the last half of Daniel's seventieth week . . . the part of the Tribulation period known as the GREAT Tribulation.)

These words set forth the initial progress of the actual taking possession of the earth by our victorious Redeemer - the Lord Jesus. Like judgment administrations as a whole, this taking possession of earth is a gradual work which passes through different stages, involving particular times, places, and persons. This is the beginning of the taking-over of all things by the rightful Heir to all things - the Lord Jesus Christ.

John was given a reed **“like unto a rod.”** (We would call it a measuring stick.) It was an instrument used in taking measurements, and it was ten feet long. (Read Ezekiel 40:3 and Zechariah 1:16.) The temple, the altar and the worshippers were included in the measurements. This suggests that God will preserve and protect the temple, the altar, and those who worship there.

Revelation 21:15 tells of an angel with a golden reed measuring the glorified Church - or the Pearly white City. Israel is an earthly people with earthly promises. They have to do with earthly blessings throughout all eternity.

But the Church (the Bride) is a heavenly people with heavenly promises, and will be on display in the heavenlies, showing forth the exceeding riches of God's grace (Ephesians 2:6).

John had been only a spectator until now, but with Israel, his own brethren, in the picture, he becomes the main actor. The Angel instructed him to "**Rise and measure.**" He is roused into speedy activity by the divine command, and he measures the temple, the altar, and the worshippers as he was instructed to do.

When the Jews asked Pilate to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus, they asked that His Blood be upon them and upon their children. God set Israel aside for a season.

He did not cast them away, but gave them up to blindness until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Jewish worship ceased, the Christian era began - and will continue until the Rapture, when the Church will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. When true worship is set up again, it will be Jewish worship after the manner of Israel.

Believers have no specific place of worship - but the Jew could not worship without the temple. Christians have no temple on earth (I Corinthians 6:19; II Corinthians 6:16). "**God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth**" (John 4:21-24; Hebrews 10:19-22).

The sanctuary above is the only place of worship for true believers. Christian sacrifices are praises to God (Hebrews 13:15, 16).

This is quite different from Jewish worship, both in the past and that which is to come. Both the temple and the altar are essential and imperative to Jewish worship. That is the reason the Jews became so angry when Jesus said, "**Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days.**" He was speaking of His body, but they thought he spoke of the beautiful temple in Jerusalem.

The temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem by the Jews after the Rapture of the Church. The temple has been rebuilt many times, but it will be rebuilt when the Jews construct it after the Rapture. It will be built where the Mosque of Omar now stands.

Below is a list of some of the temples that have been destroyed:

1. Solomon's Temple (I Kings, chapter 7). This temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 588 B. C.
2. Zerubbabel's Temple (Ezra 3:12), pillaged and dedicated to the heathen god, Jupiter, by Antiochus Epiphanes, 170 B. C.
3. Herod's Temple (John 2:20) was very beautiful. Its building was begun in 17 B. C., and it was destroyed by Titus in 70 A. D.

Two future temples:

1. The temple to be rebuilt during the first three and one-half years of the reign of the Antichrist (I Thessalonians 2:4). Judah will then be back in her own land and will rebuild this temple.
2. The Millennial Temple - the temple of Jesus (Acts 15:16). Read Ezekiel 40, and you will find the description of its magnificence.

In I Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19, the body made up of born again, blood-washed believers is called **“the temple of God.”** Jerusalem is the only city on earth where the temple of stone is divinely sanctioned and honored by the Lord.

In Revelation 11:2 we learn that the Holy City shall be trodden under foot for forty and two months - the last half of the seven years of Tribulation. Jerusalem is the Holy City spoken of throughout the Bible. Read Nehemiah 11:1-18; Isaiah 52:1 and Daniel 9:24. This period is mentioned in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6 as **“1,260 days.”** In Revelation 12:14 and Daniel 9:27, it is spoken of as **“time, times, and half-time.”** The statements all refer to the three and one-half years which comprise the last half of the Tribulation period. Bible months having to do with prophecy are always months of thirty days each. There are no twenty-eight-day nor thirty-one-day months in Bible prophecy. For 1,260 days, the Gentiles will tread down the people in Jerusalem as mire in the streets (Isaiah 10:6).

The anti-Christian nations will befriend the Jew during the first half of the reign of the Antichrist - the time of peace when he rides out with a bow but no arrow. However, these same people will turn and in vengeance and horrible terror the Jews **“shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains and the beasts of the earth. The fowls shall summer upon them and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them”** (Isaiah 18:6).

Thus the Gentile enemies will turn loose their fury upon Judah . . . Israel, God’s chosen people.

GOD’S TWO WITNESSES

Revelation 11:3-12:

3. **And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**
4. **These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.**
5. **And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth, out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies: and If any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.**
6. **These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.**
7. **And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them and shall overcome them, and kill them.**
8. **And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.**

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

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

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

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

We are dealing with Jews in this passage, and Jewish law demanded two witnesses to give competent evidence concerning matters of law, religion, or the dealings of men with one another (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). (You will recall that two angels were in the tomb of Jesus the morning of His resurrection - John 20:12. Two men appeared to the disciples at the Lord's ascension - Acts 1:10. In Luke 10:1 the seventy were sent out two by two.) So God sends TWO witnesses - and they prophesy exactly 1,260 days - no more, no less.

Who are these two witnesses? Bible scholars differ as to their identity. Some say they are Elijah and Enoch, basing their decision on Hebrews 9:27: “. . . **It is appointed unto men once to die.**” This leads them to conclude that since Enoch and Elijah were the only two men to leave this world without dying, they must be the two witnesses. But may I remind you that at the Rapture of the Church a great number will ascend to Heaven without dying: I Thessalonians 4:16b-17: “. . . **and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air . . .**” The statement in Hebrews cannot mean every individual - but man as a race.

Personally, I believe Enoch is a type of the New Testament Church when raptured. Enoch lived in the darkest hour just before the judgment of God fell by way of the flood. He walked with God - and one day in that dark hour he went home to be with God - without dying.

The Church is living in the darkest hour of man's history . . . and it will be even darker before we are caught up to meet Jesus in the clouds. Just as Enoch was caught up from this earth into God's presence, so shall the Church be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-17; I Corinthians 15:50-55).

Others believe the witnesses will be Elijah and Moses. Moses had much to do with Israel. He was the one to whom God gave the Law: “**The law came by Moses.**” He is the only man for whom God ever came down in order to personally supervise his funeral (Deuteronomy 34:6).

I believe that the evidence in harmony with the remainder of Revelation proves that not Enoch, but Moses, was the other witness. There is no question that Elijah was one of these two witnesses. The Old Testament - and also the Lord Jesus Himself - tells us plainly that Elijah will come again before the coming of Jesus in power and great glory. Revelation 11:5 also identifies this prophet of fire. “**And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.**”

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

The miracles described in the first part of this verse are certainly characteristic of Elijah, the chief of prophets, who called fire down from Heaven and shut up the heavens so that it rained not for the space of three and one-half years during the reign of wicked Ahab. Elijah appeared to Israel during the darkest day of their spiritual bondage here on earth. The nation departed from the Lord under the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, and God sent Elijah, the mighty prophet of fire, to deliver Israel from spiritual bondage after the same fashion Moses delivered them from physical bondage.

The miracles recorded in the last part of the verse fit Moses in every detail. Read the account in Exodus, when God sent Moses to deliver His people from the hand of Pharaoh - and Pharaoh was certainly a type of the Antichrist.

When Moses went down to meet Pharaoh, he turned the water to blood and called down ten plagues upon the Egyptians. Read and study Exodus, chapters five through twelve. When it seemed that Israel would be crushed and destroyed by the iron hand of Pharaoh, it was Moses who came from the back side of the desert - called and commissioned by God - to deliver Israel out of Egyptian bondage. These chapters in Exodus tell the story of plague after plague being visited upon the godless nation of Egypt. God finally destroyed them at the bottom of the Red Sea. Under the hand of God, Moses delivered Israel from material and physical bondage. He led them on their way to Canaan's land. Why should not God use this great deliverer again as one of the witnesses of Revelation 11?

Moses appeared to Israel in one of the darkest moments in history; why not again in this dark moment when it seems that Antichrist and the wicked Gentiles will completely annihilate the little band of Israelites? (The Jew can never be destroyed; he is the apple of God's eye, and God will protect him. Many have tried to destroy Israel - and have failed. History records such instances even in your day and mine - Hitler was one of the last, and Adolph Eichman paid with his life for his part in attempting to wipe the Jew from the face of the earth.)

Moses and Elijah were the outstanding mountain-peak prophets in God's program in dealing with Israel throughout the Old Testament era. And when Jesus went up on the Mount of Transfiguration it was Moses and Elijah (not Enoch and Elijah) who came down to meet Him and discuss His coming death on the Cross (Luke 9:27 -35).

Jesus came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill the Law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17). Since God gave the Law to Moses, and since Elijah was the chief of prophets, it seems reasonable that it would be these two with whom Jesus would discuss **“. . . His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.”**

To the nation Israel, these two prophets of God represent spiritual and physical deliverance. There are three things about these two witnesses that cause me to believe they will be Moses and Elijah:

1. Their times
2. What they did
3. Their end

Their times were not Gospel times. They were called to prophecy in times of horror. The Jew will be back in his own land, his temple will have been rebuilt; but there is no trace of Gospel or of the grace of God at that moment. Believers under grace are not to render evil for evil; we are to return good for evil. We are to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us. We are to rejoice and be exceeding glad when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Jesus had power to call down fire and destroy His enemies - but He did not.

He said He came to save . . . not to destroy (Luke 9:56). He told Peter to put up his sword, and informed him that He could call down twelve legions of angels if He needed help.

But it will be quite different when Moses and Elijah prophesy.

These two witnesses will have the power to destroy men - and they WILL destroy men with fire which **“issueth out of their mouth.”** Imagine Moses and Elijah prophesying on a street corner in Jerusalem. Henchmen of the Antichrist walk up and begin to mock. Elijah simply blows his breath on them - and they turn to a handful of ashes!

Oh, yes - the Word of God is true. It makes no difference what modernists and liberals say about it, these prophets will blow their breath upon men and cremate them! The preaching of the Gospel is good news (Isaiah 52:7), but the message of the two witnesses will be a message of literal fire.

These prophets are clothed in sackcloth, a symbol of calamity and judgment. Nature rejoices at the message of grace (Isaiah 55:12,13), but the message of these two mighty men will shut up Heaven and no rain will fall for three-and-a-half years. They will speak - and rivers will turn to blood. Plagues of sores and diseases . . . things too terrible to name . . . come upon men because of them. They remind us of the time when Jeroboam's hand was withered by the unnamed man of God (I Kings 13:4) and of the time when fire from Heaven consumed the soldiers of Ahaziah who came to Elijah on the hill (II Kings 1). The times of these two witnesses will be times of exceeding evil and of fiery judgment.

- Jacob wore sackcloth when he mourned for his sons.
- David wore sackcloth when he grieved deeply because Abner was unjustly killed.
- Daniel wore sackcloth when he came before the Lord to weep and pray about the sins of Israel.
- Hezekiah wore sackcloth when he heard of the terrible blasphemies of Sennacherib.
- The priest of God wore sackcloth when the holy services of the temple were interrupted.

In like manner, the two witnesses will wear sackcloth, and during the time they prophesy, hell will have literally moved to this earth. From the abyss there will come a mysterious beast to whom Satan will give power and authority as his chosen agent for prime minister. The beast will blaspheme God and the temple and all that is holy.

He will have power to perform miracles that will cause the mass of earth's dwellers to accept him as Messiah. The times will become so terrible, the war against God and against righteousness will become so fierce, that the fire-producing witnesses themselves will finally be overcome and killed by the powerful counterfeit messiah. Peoples of earth will be so wicked and vile that they will send gifts to each other and rejoice with dancing in the streets because God's witnesses have been slain! It will be a time of jubilee among the enemies of God!

The time of the two witnesses will be a time of supernaturalism - both from Heaven and from the underworld.

It seems that all natural laws will fail during this time.

God's witnesses will shut up the heavens, turn rivers to blood, smite the earth with all kinds of plagues. Not only will these men have supernatural power - but the beast out of the abyss will demonstrate like power (Revelation 13). There will be a giant image, and the beast will cause the image to speak. He will pull fire down from Heaven in the sight of men. In the days of Moses, hell's ministers performed miracles, too. Read Exodus 7:10-13.

Today people are looking for the supernatural, the sensational. If a preacher is just an ordinary preacher, he does not get far. He must claim some super-duper gift. He must announce that he is able to perform tremendous miracles - and then the crowd comes. Those who are sponsored by liberals and modernists also have a large following, but ministers who preach pure Grace, pure Gospel, pure Salvation, will not draw a crowd, generally speaking. The fact that a man performs some miracle that seems supernatural does not mean that he is God's minister. Satan is powerful, too. I John 4:1 admonishes us to try the spirits, and be sure the spirit we follow is the Holy Spirit. These are dangerous days, and we cannot be too careful.

When the two witnesses are here, the powers of Heaven and hell will lock horns in the last gigantic conflict. This old world will be stained with blood, it will reel and rock - and great convulsions will shake the very fiber of the universe. During this time, Antichrist and his prime minister will perform miracles that would deceive the very elect of God if that were possible. This will occur during the "**day of the Lord.**" Read Amos 5:16-20 very carefully, and study it. These verses will enlighten you concerning the "day of the Lord."

When the seventh angel sounds, that will bring in the consummation of all things. The seventh angel is standing ready to sound, the moment these witnesses pass from the scene of action. The two witnesses are here on earth at the time when judgment from God is hastening to a climax. The affairs of earth are being swiftly brought to a close.

Now let us look at the nature of the work of these two witnesses: They are armed with fire (Hebrews 12:29).

During the time of their ministry in Jerusalem, if anyone tries to stop them or hurt them they will consume their enemies with fire.

During the first days of Christianity many of God's dear children paid with their lives. They sealed their testimony at the burning stake, or were fed to beasts in the arena at Rome. But it will not be so in this day.

These men not only work through supernatural power, but they also have at their command any and all things to protect them from death. **“Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed”** (Deuteronomy 28:23,24).

During the time of their witnessing, these messengers will shut up Heaven, and the sky will become as brass.

Without any rain for three-and-a-half years the ground will become hard as iron, and the elements will be filled with dust. Their work will not only consist of shutting up the sky and turning the earth into a dustbowl but what water is left will be turned into blood.

That is not all, beloved! These men have power to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they wish. They prove by this unusual supernatural power that they are sent by Almighty God, and that He has power to utterly put down and destroy all who resist Him and follow ungodliness.

The prophecy of these two witnesses . . . the miracles they perform, the plagues they bring upon the earth . . . will not turn the masses from Antichrist to Christ. But their prophecy will cause a remnant to turn from the beast. During the closing days of time, before the great eternity of eternities begins, God will send to earth a message of mercy through these two witnesses and other ordained ministers of God whom we have discussed in previous chapters.

Concerning the days of the Antichrist, we read, **“I will send you Elijah the prophet . . . and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse”** (Malachi 4:5,6). Scholars tell us that the word here used for curse is the same Hebrew word God used when He told Israel to curse (EXTERMINATE) the Canaanites . . . that is, utterly destroy their cities and annihilate the people.”

If Elijah and Moses did not come at this time, there would be universal acceptance of the Antichrist as God, and God would completely exterminate all creatures on earth; but the message of Elijah, Moses and others will cause a remnant to believe on the Lord Jesus as God's Christ, and God will have mercy on that remnant (Acts 16:31). It is true that the masses will worship Antichrist and accept him as God.

The career of these two witnesses, though illustrious and crowded with miracles from start to finish, will be very brief - only three and one-half years . . . 1,260 days - a very short ministry for such great witnesses as Moses and Elijah. They will be God-protected. No power on earth or in hell can touch them until they have completed their testimony. When their work is finished, they then become vanquishable - and are vanquished.

Verse 7 tells us that when the two witnesses have finished their testimony, the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, will overcome them, and kill them. What form of death they will suffer is not stated, although during the reign of the Antichrist, beheading is prevalent (Revelation 20:4).

We are told that they will not be buried. Their dead bodies will be left lying in the streets of Jerusalem, “**spiritually called Sodom and Egypt.**” (Note how careful the Holy Spirit is to tell us that the city is spiritually, not literally, Sodom and Egypt.) Thank God, the Holy Spirit makes it clear when something is to be spiritualized or symbolized. I take Revelation literally except where it is clear that it is symbolic or spiritual. Men mistake God’s mind and pervert His Word when they refuse to accept and interpret the Bible just as the Holy Spirit dictated it to holy men of old, and they wrote it down.

Jerusalem is not literally Sodom, but spiritually is likened unto that city. Read Isaiah 1:9,10; Deuteronomy 32:30-33; Jeremiah 23:14. Jerusalem is spiritually likened unto Egypt because of its gross idolatry; and idolatry will prevail in the days of the two witnesses (Ezekiel 23:3-19).

The statement “**where also our Lord was crucified**” identifies the city as Jerusalem. The place where the bodies of the witnesses were left was in the city street - a public thoroughfare - a place where more people passed than any other spot. The fact that they were denied burial is an outrage on common decency and humanity. It is filled with significance. It was no accident that the bodies of these two witnesses were not buried. Even the vilest of criminals were granted burial the same day of their execution (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23). But all law and decency is set aside in regard to these fire-blowing prophets who had tormented the area for three-and-a-half years, and who, for that length of time, could not be destroyed.

The bodies of these men lying in the public street testified to the most extraordinary malignity, spite and hatred with which they were regarded. Their enemies were not satisfied to kill them - they actually gloated over their decaying bodies for eighty-four long hours!

People passed the dead bodies - and mocked. “**They that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.**”

Church history tells us that when John Huss was burned at the stake, his enemies held banquets and danced, making merry that he was dead! Satan’s dupes are so insane with lust and so blind to God’s judgment that they think since these two witnesses are dead, things will level off, settle down - and they will enjoy peace again in the city that is spiritually as Sodom was. They are so ignorant of God’s program they do not know that much worse judgment is just ahead. How pitiful is the man who is so easily blinded by Satan!

Cain killed Abel - and probably buried him in a shallow grave, thinking he had covered up his crime. But nothing is hidden from the eyes of God. the Blood of Abel cried out from the ground, revealing Cain’s sin.

God will allow the beast to kill His two witnesses when they have completed their ministry of prophecy, and for three-and-a-half days their bodies will lie in the public street. But God is not yet through with earth's dwellers.

The Jews believe that the spirit of a dead man hovers near the body for three days. That is the reason when Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus He waited until the fourth day. Had He raised Lazarus on the third day, the Jews would not have acclaimed it a miracle because the spirit would still be near the body for three full days; but Lazarus came forth on the fourth day. These two witnesses will lie in the street for three days plus a half day - and therefore the Jews will know that according to Jewish belief the spirit has departed from the body. When three and one-half days are over, something extraordinary and extremely unusual, happens:

- The two witnesses are dead.
- Parties are in progress.
- Gifts are being exchanged.
- The whole country is jubilant.

But . . . the scene changes: **“And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.”** The party came to an abrupt end. Gift-passing abruptly ceased. There has never been anything happen on earth that could stir people like two dead bodies which instantaneously stand up and begin living, after having deteriorated in the sun for several days.

“The triumph of the wicked is short” . . . so saith the Word of God. I wonder what the people thought when they met these two witnesses coming down the street, very much alive? I wonder what some folks who may read these lines are going to think when the monster the Bible calls death comes to their bedside and demands their departure? Think it over! It is appointed unto man once to die - and after death there is a judgment - and you will be there!

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

When Jesus ascended as recorded in Acts 1:9-11 He was taken up in a cloud out of the sight of the disciples, who stood amazed, gazing into the heavens in the direction of His disappearance. While the disciples gazed steadfastly toward Heaven, two men appeared - two messengers from Heaven, dressed in white - and gave to these disciples the assurance that **“this same Jesus will so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.”**

I wonder if they were making plans to put these two fellows to death a second time, when they began to slowly rise toward the sky? Perhaps they were having a meeting of the council to determine just what to do . . . whether to lock them up, or chop them up. They never reached a decision, because **THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY TOOK THEM UP.** The mob stood on the ground, horrified. One day soon, every born again blood-washed believer will be caught out of this earth instantaneously - in a split second, in the twinkling of an eye - to meet the Lord in the clouds just above the earth. That will be a day of amazement for unbelievers when they discover that all believers have been taken out of the earth.

THE SECOND WOE

Revelation 11:13-14:

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

14. The second woe is past; and, behold the third woe cometh quickly.

As the two witnesses begin their ascension the earth begins to tremble, groan, and go into a mighty convulsive earthquake. One-tenth of Jerusalem is leveled.

Seven thousand die! This happens the same hour the two witnesses are taken up to be with the Lord in the air. **“The second woe is past . . . “**

“ . . . Behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” Things are gaining in momentum. God is bringing a quick conclusion to man’s wicked control of earth. Notice the Scripture says, **“A GREAT EARTHQUAKE.”** God deals in earthquakes. Many times in Scripture it is recorded that God sent an earthquake:

- When Jesus died on the Cross there was a great earthquake (Matthew 27: 51).

- When Paul and Silas prayed in the Philippi an jail, God answered their prayer with an earthquake (Acts 16:26).

- At the opening of the sixth seal there was an earthquake so great that mountains and islands were shaken loose (Revelation 6:12).

- In Revelation 16:18 we are told there will be a great earthquake like no earthquake that has ever been.

Man spends millions to build bombs to blow up cities.

God needs no bombs! He speaks a word - and His word surpasses any bomb man ever had or ever will have.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

Revelation 11:15-19:

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

16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

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

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

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

In verse 15 we have the resumption of the trumpet judgments. The Church is safe with Jesus in the air, and at this time will have a grandstand seat in the heavens. (The Bride is seen in Heaven from chapter four through 19:10.) In Revelation 19:11-16 we see the Bride coming in the air on white horses.

At this time, Jesus has removed the seals from the seven-sealed book that contains the redemption terms of the earth. All creation is now to be delivered from the curse. The angel announced in Revelation 10:6 that God's dealings with earth's dwellers are almost over, and righteousness is about to take over in the earth.

When the seventh angel sounds, there will be no little stir in Heaven. John heard "**great voices.**" The announcement was that the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdoms of our God.

Man and the devil have been in power for six thousand years, but praises be to our God, the Lord is taking over what rightfully belongs to Him (Psalm 24:1). He is about to take His seat on His throne (Isaiah 9:6,7; Luke 1:32). He will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The curse will be lifted and we will have "**peace on earth, good will toward men,**" as announced the night Jesus was born. We will have the peace the politicians have talked about but have done very little to bring about.

In verse 16 the four and twenty elders fall upon their faces and worship God. They cry out, "**We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.**" Jesus came the first time as a babe in a manger - a tender Lamb. He is coming the second time in the Revelation in great power, taking vengeance on them that know not God. He will roar out of Zion, "**the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.**"

Here we approach the grand climax of the affairs of the ungodly on earth. "**The ungodly are not so but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish**" (Psalm 1:4-6).

"For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

“The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous” (Psalm 37:9-17).

The judgments that follow after the sounding of the seventh trumpet are the most intense, the most ghastly, the most remarkable and the most numerous - both in Heaven and on earth - anywhere outlined in the Word of God.

Truly, these remaining chapters of Revelation record the time of Jacob’s Trouble, the time of Great Tribulation.

There were many mighty wonders present when God delivered Israel out of the land of Egypt and led them on into the Promised Land. There were wonders in the air, in the waters, the trees, the rocks and clouds. There were marvels and miracles that stand out among the greatest of bygone days; but nothing to compare with what happens after the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

When Jesus was born, and during His earthly life and at the time of His death, there were also great wonders among the angels, the stars, the elements and on earth among men - both living and dead - which give us a divine story never told before. However, neither of these - nor all combined - can compare with the overwhelming intensity of the manifestations which attend and follow the sounding of the seventh trumpet. When the blast of the trumpet goes forth, John declares he heard **“great voices.”**

As we study the remaining portion of chapter 11 and the chapters down through 19:11, we will hear voices like unto many waters . . . great thunder . . . harpers with their harps . . . a Mighty Angel flying through Heaven with such a Voice that it can be heard throughout every square inch of the universe . . . angels shouting for the fall of Babylon . . . another voice crying, **“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from this day forward,”** and another voice calling to Jesus to thrust in the sickle and reap.

Another great voice calls for the pouring out of the bowls of the wrath of God . . . another voice cries, **“It is done!”** The voices cry, **“Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!”**

Along with these, there are still other great voices from the heavenly world crying out praises to God as He takes over the reins of the earth and closes out wickedness, filling the earth with righteousness as promised from the beginning.

In Revelation 5, when Jesus took the seven-sealed book from the hand of **“Him that sitteth upon the throne,”** there was quite a commotion in Heaven. The act performed here was the beginning of the fulfillment of the redemption of all creation. When Jesus was found worthy to open the book, He took it and began removing the seals.

This seventh trumpet is found under the last of the seals. From the moment Jesus took the book until this moment, all along the way we have seen the unfolding judgments. During the entire course of events there has been much heavenly interest and excitement. But when the seventh trumpet sounds, everything in Heaven and all creation breaks out with thunderous praises, shouts, “**Amens!**” and songs of victory.

The four and twenty elders fall upon their faces. When the Lamb took the book in chapter 5, the elders fell down and gave thanks and praises - but here they humble themselves to a much greater degree . . . they are on their faces. These four and twenty elders represent the first-born of the resurrection . . . those who will be raised and those who will be translated when the Rapture takes place. They are the seniors of Heaven’s redeemed. They are the ones “**counted worthy to escape the woes that will come upon the whole earth.**”

They are already glorified - that is, at this point. That does not diminish their interest in the on-goings of earth’s dwellers. They already have their golden crowns - but that does not withdraw their sympathy from those who are still under the iron hand of Antichrist here on earth.

There is no vanity nor selfishness in Heaven - no pride in Heaven, no vaunting of authority. These crowned elders, these “seniors of Heaven,” are more concerned over the pending conflicts and victories yet to be won than they were over those through which they had come in order to win their crowns of gold.

- They know that the destroyer of earth (the devil) is not yet destroyed.
- They know the great white Throne Judgment is ahead.
- They know the rewards to all the faithful have not yet been passed out.

The meek shall inherit the earth - but they have not yet done so. The devil still remains out of the pit, and therefore the victory of victories is yet to be won. The elders know that.

But - the trumpet which brings all this to pass and brings to a climax all judgments, is now sounding in the ears of these “kings and priests.” They could not keep their seats. They fell prostrate on their faces before the Lamb.

In verse 18 the nations of the earth are very angry.

The time of God’s great wrath is come. God is about to judge the wicked in final judgment; He is about to reward all of His prophets and servants. There will be a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The saints will be put on display in the Pearly white City. Satan will be put in the pit. All sin and all unrighteousness must be removed from the earth. The Antichrist and the wicked will be put down. They become exceedingly angry, and in chapter twelve a great War breaks out between God and the devil.

In verse 19 the temple of God is opened. Did you know there is a literal temple in Heaven? There was seen in the temple the ark of His testament. There were lightnings and voices and thunderings and an earthquake and great hail.

The tabernacle and the temple of the Jews were copies of the tabernacle and temple in Heaven. **“LOOK THAT THOU MAKE THEM AFTER THEIR PATTERN WHICH WAS SHEWED THEE IN THE MOUNT!”** (Exodus 25:40). The Holy Spirit spoke to Paul in these words concerning the tabernacle and the temple: **“.. . patterns of things in the heavens.”**

There is a temple in Heaven.

There is a tabernacle in Heaven. And one time in the past, Heaven and earth’s worship was very close together.

God visited His creatures in the Garden of Eden and spoke directly to many in the Old Testament era. But of course, sin appeared in the Garden and wrecked the perfect unity and harmony between man and God. But thank God, the second Adam, the Lamb of God, has redeemed all by His Blood - that is, all who will come to God by Him.

And one day that sweet union between Heaven and earth will be restored. The Lord Jesus said, **“After this manner . . . pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.”** One day the oneness between Heaven and earth will be restored. This is clearly taught in Revelation chapters 21 and 22.

When the temple in Heaven is open, John sees **“the ark of God’s covenant.”** All the covenants and promises of God to His people are in that ark. God’s solemn promises cannot be broken - they are forever settled in Heaven. His engagements, His appointments with His people, are there. In that **“SACRED CASKET”** they have been stored safely and preserved under the protecting hand of the Lord God in Heaven.

Not one word of God’s promises is obsolete, dead, or forgotten. God cannot lie, He cannot prove untrue, He cannot break His promise. He will keep every item of His covenant and promise to faithful Abraham.

And now, at the ending of time, when all promises are to be fulfilled, that treasure box, that sacred casket, appears. Where? In the temple of God that was opened In Heaven when the seventh trumpet sounded.

The study of the ark in the Old Testament is very interesting. God’s blessings went along with the ark.

- The Jordan River rolled back beneath the shadow of the ark
- The walls of Jericho fell down before it;
- The enemies of God were scattered when the ark appeared.

Where it rested the thousands of Israel dwelt in safety. Its appearance here is a token of the recurrence of all these wonders, but on a more complete, more magnificent and sublime scale than in the Old Testament era.

The appearance of the ark announces the speedy fulfillment of all that God has spoken, all that He has promised concerning the earth, the righteous, the wicked, and all creation (Romans 8:18-23).

As we close this tremendous chapter I ask you, dear reader - are you born again? Are you a child of God?

Are you washed in the Blood? That is one thing we can know for sure. If you do not know for sure that your sins are washed away, bow your head and accept the Lord Jesus Christ right now; then if you die, your spirit will return to God who gave it, your body will return to dust. When the Rapture takes place, your body will be raised incorruptible, your spirit will enter the glorified body like unto Jesus' body (I John 3:1-3).

If Jesus comes while you are living, you will cheat death and be caught up to meet Jesus in the clouds in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). But if you reject Jesus, if you die you will open your eyes in hell - and if you are living when the Rapture occurs you will be left to go through the fury of the Great Tribulation period.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The First Five of the Seven Personages

Revelation 12:1-17

- 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:**
- 2. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.**
- 3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.**
- 4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.**
- 5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.**
- 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**
- 7. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,**
- 8. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.**
- 9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**
- 10. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.**
- 11. And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.**
- 12. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.**
- 13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.**
- 14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.**

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

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

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

Revelation is a book of sevens:

- In chapters 2 and 3 we have the seven churches.
- In chapter 5 - the seven-sealed book.
- In chapter 6 - the beginning of the seven seals.
- In chapter 8 - the beginning of the seven trumpets.
- In chapters 12 and 13 - the seven personages.
- In chapter 16 - the seven vials.
- In chapters 17, 18, 19 - the seven dooms.
- In chapters 21 and 22 - the seven new things.

Seven is God's number of completion - the divine number of divine completeness. In Revelation God is making a complete end of sin and sorrow. He will complete His wonderful plan of redemption for all creation.

Paradise, with all of its original glory, and more, is restored in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. In the first few chapters of Genesis, Paradise is lost; in the last two chapters of Revelation, Paradise is restored.

THE WOMAN

Chapter 12 opens with these tremendous words (verses 1 and 2): **“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”**

This woman (the **“great wonder”**) is clothed in a very extraordinary manner. She is wearing the sun - and for shoes she wears the moon. For her hat she wears a crown studded with twelve stars. She is a mother-to-be, and her delivery is imminent.

Why all this? What does it mean? Why would the Holy Spirit use such language to set forth some spiritual truth?

There have been many suggestions by Bible teachers and scholars, but the only way to arrive at the right answer is to compare spiritual things with spiritual, let God's Word tell us what all this is about, and who the woman is.

If we will stick to the Word of God and forget what men say and what men believe, we can learn the truth of the entire passage.

The adjective “**GREAT**” is used five times In chapter 12 - which is indeed a GREAT chapter!

The woman is not actually in Heaven - but upon the earth. The sign is in Heaven, but the birth takes place right here on this earth. This woman, clothed in the most unusual attire anyone could ever wear, is Israel.

Do you remember when Joseph had his memorable dream in the Old Testament days, he saw the sun, the moon, and stars bowing down to him (Genesis 37). This was a prophetic picture pointing to his exaltation after he had been sold into Egyptian slavery by his wicked brethren.

It was also a prophetic picture to the nation Israel. Joseph was sold into the hands of Gentiles, just as Israel has been sold into captivity, scattered to the four corners of the earth, suppressed and persecuted by Gentiles.

Even in recent years Israel has been persecuted by modern Pharaohs, some of whom were named Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and Eichman. They did their best to wipe out Israel, but they are gone and Israel is still here!

Israel is the woman who brought forth the man-child who is to rule with a rod of iron. Only of Israel could it be said that “**she is clothed with the sun.**” “**But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings. . .**” (Malachi 4:2).

Israel brought forth the Redeemer. The Church did not produce the Saviour (“**salvation is of the Jews**” - John 4:22). “**Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham**” (Hebrews 2:16). Again, it is of Israel - and Israel alone - that it could be said, “**He hath prepared for her a place in the wilderness.**”

Many Bible scholars believe this “**place in the wilderness**” to be the mighty, ruby-red, rock fortress of Petra. Mrs. Greene and I visited Petra and spent three days and nights there. The city is carved from solid rock, and is certainly a marvel and a wonder to behold.

It is a natural rock fortress, with a very narrow entrance. There is only one way to enter the city, and it would be impossible to capture an army within such a fortress. Today Petra is held by the Arabs, but Israel is only twenty-five miles from it. There has never been any doubt in my mind that this woman is Israel.

There are four women mentioned in the book of Revelation:

1. Jezebel (Revelation 2:20) - representing the papal system.
2. The woman we are now discussing - Israel, God’s chosen people with earthly blessings.
3. The great harlot (Revelation 17:1) or the future apostate, corrupt church that will be in power after the Rapture of the true Church.
4. “**The Bride, the Lamb’s wife**” - the Church, glorified in the Pearly white City that John saw coming down from God out of Heaven.

Here, with the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and the stars upon her head, is presented for us a complete system of government. Isaiah tells us “**of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end**” (Isaiah 9:7). The government of Almighty God will never cease. This earth will be governed by God throughout the eternity of eternities.

The crown on the woman’s head signifies royal dignity - but why the stars in the crown? Without doubt these stars point back to Joseph’s dream in which the future glory of the twelve tribes is set forth.

“**Twelve stars**” . . . the number twelve used here and in several other passages in Revelation, denotes administrative rule in the hands of men. Israel is earthly with earthly promises, and every promise made to Abraham will be fulfilled to the letter, in every minute detail - even to the possessing of the land promised to his seed.

In verse 2, the woman is great with child and travailing in birth, about to be delivered. The mother-to-be is Israel - but who is this manchild about to be born . . . this child whom Satan is ready to devour? If we compare Scripture with Scripture and spiritual things with spiritual, I see no reason why we should not see plainly who the child is:

He is to “**rule all nations with a rod of iron.**” Who could that be other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

We the Church will reign with Him, but He will be King of kings and Lord of lords. He will rule with a rod of iron and we will reign with Him as He Sits on the throne of David. (Read Psalm 2 in its entirety.) Jesus has been the object of the devil’s hatred since He was promised in Genesis 3:15. There is a trail of blood from Genesis to the cross - a trail of blood left by those whom Satan destroyed in his all-out attempt to stop the Seed of the woman.

But praise God, Jesus fulfilled every demand of God the Father, He paid sin’s debt in its fulness. He conquered death, hell and the grave. He arose, He appeared to men, He ascended back to the Father and He is coming again in power and great glory. Jesus will personally supervise putting Satan into the lake of fire, where he will be tormented with fire and brimstone forever and ever.

The child about to be born is Jesus, the mother-to-be is Israel. Some teach that this woman is the Church - but that just could not be! The Church is the Bride of Christ. Israel is the mother of Christ - and is the wife of God! Jesus came forth out of Israel.

“**And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne**” (verse 5). If you accept this child to be Christ (and certainly the child can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ), then all misunderstandings will disappear. Israel - not the Church - was the mother of Messiah (Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:2, Romans 9:5, Matthew 1, John 4:22, Isaiah 66:7).

“**Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child**” (Isaiah 66:7).

The travailing and pain for Israel is yet future, during the last half of Daniel's seventieth week - the time of great tribulation. But before that time of travailing, Israel was to bring forth a man child - Jesus. And He has come forth. **"Therefore will He give them up until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel"** (Micah 5:3). The travail will come centuries after the birth, depending upon how much longer Jesus tarries. Then why, in our present Scripture, are the travail and birth mentioned together? There are three reasons:

1. The long period of time that Israel is set aside (coming in as it does between the birth and travail) is not mentioned in our present chapter, but it is mentioned and fully discussed in many other books in the Bible.
2. It shows the deep interest and concern God takes in His chosen people. Many centuries ago, He thought of His people in the period of Great Tribulation, and made provision to shorten those horrible days lest all flesh be destroyed. Read Matthew 24:15-28 very carefully.
3. At the time of the account in our present chapter, Israel is about to go through the most horrible time she has ever known since becoming a nation - or ever will know again. The object of the Holy Spirit going back to the birth of Jesus in this Scripture is to connect Him with Israel in His proper place during this terrible time of Jacob's trouble. God has not forgotten His own - and He never will.

Remember, beloved, we are dealing with earth and Israel in this chapter. The Church is with Jesus in the air, and has been since the beginning of the reign of the Antichrist. (The Church is to be raptured before the Antichrist is revealed). Israel is on earth in her own land. The false messiah is in power. And now, during the last three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation, all hell has broken out.

SATAN

Verses 3 and 4: **"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."**

The red dragon is Satan - presented here in his most horrifying character. Read Revelation 20:2, Ezekiel 29:3-4 and Jeremiah 51:34. Being a RED dragon signifies his murderous nature. This dragon is spectacular in that he has seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns. What is said of him here is predicted of the beast we find in Revelation 13:1. The seven-crowned heads of the dragon refer to the concentration of earthly power and wisdom in cruel, despotic rule. His ten horns; point to the future extent and limit of his kingdom. He will be the unseen force behind ten kings who will rule over the ten kingdoms of the empire. The red dragon will be the ruler of the world-wide Gentile monarchy. He will carry on his government through its personal head - the little horn referred to in Daniel 7.

We note in verse 4 that the dragon's tail will pull down one-third of the stars in Heaven. The tail of this dragon is certainly one of his outstanding features. His tail swings through Heaven, coils about celestial principalities, "**and draweth along a third part of the stars, and casteth them down to earth.**" These are specific heavenly bodies with which we are now dealing - not the little stars that twinkle. Remember, we are dealing with a "**wonder**" in Heaven.

The stars here are angels. The being (or angel) who came down to unlock the bottomless pit was referred to as a star (chapter 9). These angels are truly THE "**stars of heaven.**" When God made the world in the beginning, "**the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy**" (Job 38:7). These were the angelic hosts . . . they are called stars because of their beauty and glory. They are the stars of Heaven because they pertain to Heaven, and are the most sublime ornaments of the celestial world.

Satan - the red dragon mentioned here - was at one time the leader of all stars (Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:12-15).

Study these verses carefully. Jude speaks of the angels "**which kept not their first estate, but left their habitation**" (Jude 6). Peter refers to the angels who sinned, who were cast down and are now "**in chains of darkness**" (II Peter 2:4).

There was a day when Lucifer, "**the shining one,**" became so jealous of the Lord God that he decided he would overthrow God. He brainwashed some of the angels, brought evil among the heavenly creatures and indoctrinated many of them - soiled their robes, tarnished their crowns, silenced their songs, dislodged them from their glorious seats and took from them every noble impulse and holy affection. They allied with him in an all-out attempt to overthrow the God who had created them. How this horrible disaster came about is mentioned in various places in the Bible.

The Bible does not say how many angels Satan led astray except here in this Scripture, where the dragon pulls one-third of the stars down to earth, drawn from their place of shining in God's great Heaven of beauty.

Jude tells us that they are now reserved in chains in darkness. They are blacked out, they no longer shine.

Disobedience to God brings spiritual blackout and spiritual slavery. All sinners are slaves, in bondage to the devil.

Greek scholars tell us that the two verbs used in this verse are in two tenses. "In the **drawing of the stars** the verb is in the present tense, denoting action in continuity at the time John was writing Revelation. In the **casting down to earth** the verb is in the past-tense, denoting an action past, as the disposition and ejection of the wicked angels is, and was at the Apostles time period, a past event."

This bit of information given to us by authorities on the Greek language sheds light on this passage.

Never forget that the devil is a powerful being. Three times. Jesus Himself declared that the devil is **“the prince of this world”** (John 12:31 14:30 16:11) Paul in later years declared the devil to be “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4). John testifies that **“the whole world lieth in wickedness** (In the lap of the wicked one)” (I John 5:19). When we look around us today we certainly agree with John. The whole world seems to have sold out to Satan.

The red dragon had ten horns. Horns are instruments of destruction (Zechariah 1:18-21), and ten is the number of evil, worldly completeness. With ten horns the dragon gores, wounds, hurts, scatters, destroys and kills. The dragon has seven heads - but whether he comes with the head of **“an angel of light”** or the head of **“a roaring horn,”** he has the same heart and is the father of the same deception and destruction. His head may change but his heart never changes.

The dragon is RED - the color of the horse whose rider took peace from the earth (Revelation 6:4). Red is also the color of the apparel of the Almighty King when He comes in HIS strength to crush all His enemies (Revelation 19:11-16; Isaiah 63:2-4). Red describes flaming heat, Intensity of fierceness, bloody administrations - and all these terms describe the true nature of the dragon - Satan.

Satan is a **“murderer from the beginning”** (John 8:44).

- He is a **“roaring lion seeking whom he may devour”** (I Peter 5:8).
- He brutally attacked our first parents in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3).
- He hurled against Jesus everything that he could here on earth (Matthew 4).
- He is the cause of every murder (John 8:44).
- He is the cause of every deathbed scene (Hebrews 2:9-15; I Corinthians 15:30).
- He is the cause of all unrest and unhappiness (Proverbs 13:15).
- He is the cause of every tear that falls (Revelation 7:17).
- He energizes every arm that plunders, hurts, kills, blights, mars, scars and destroys both body and soul (James 1:13-16).

Yes, Satan is the red, bloody dragon!

Very few of us have ever realized the power of the devil. Ever since he became Satan he has been extremely envious and jealous of God. Here in our Scripture he is making his last great drive to overthrow the God of all creation. Under the mysterious economy of God, Satan has only been able to make certain mighty strides toward the realization of his fallen desire and purpose.

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

According to the Word of God, principality after principality in the celestial realms succumbed and fell to his drawing power. Now there exists a mighty confederation of demons, fallen angels, men, and disembodied spirits numbering untold millions, who burden the atmosphere and overspread this planet with disorder, anarchy, misrule, darkness, gloom, sorrow, tears, death, murder - thousands dying indescribably horrible deaths because of the power of Satan.

Jesus is more than a match for Satan, but Jesus is the only one who can handle him - and even Jesus feared when He saw the cup of bitterness He must drink in order to put a stop to Satan's destruction. (Mark tells us that Jesus "**was sore amazed.**")

The devil turned loose all hell's demons, principalities and powers to prevent Jesus from paying the ransom note and making it possible for the captives to be set free. But in spite of the devil and all hell, Jesus drank the bitter cup to the last dreg, and just before He died He proclaimed, "**It is finished!**" (John 19:30). Satan is a defeated foe. He knows his days are numbered, and therefore he is working overtime to damn every soul he can and break every heart he can.

The latter part of verse 4 enlightens us further about the dragon: He stands ready to devour the woman's man child the moment it is born. The dragon was not trying to destroy the woman - but the SON . . . Jesus. In Genesis 3:15 Jehovah God announced to Satan that the Seed of the woman would bruise (crush) his head. That moment war was declared between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the devil. The battle became bloody when Cain killed Abel. (Satan was attempting to destroy the Seed that would crush his head . . . he was stabbing at the Seed of the woman.)

The battle raged through the Old Testament and was renewed in the New Testament even before Jesus was born. It continued in all bitterness until at last Jesus proclaimed, "**It is finished!**" Then, thank God, the devil and all hell went down in defeat. *

*I have a full-length sermon on *The Greatest Battle of the Ages*. You should read this message . . . you will appreciate Jesus more than you ever have.

In the second chapter of Matthew we see the slaughter of all the babies who were two years old, and under. Herod was the man who had the slaughter carried out, but the red dragon was operating through Herod, who was only a tool of the dragon. Imagine every little baby in Bethlehem and around the coast of Judaea, from one hour to two years old, all slaughtered.

The devil was not concerned over all the babies that were butchered; he was stabbing at one little Baby - the Baby Jesus. But God protected His Son. All through the earthly ministry of Jesus His enemies tried to kill Him. The devil tried to shed His Blood before He reached Calvary, because he knew that if Jesus ever laid down His life for sin and purchased redemption for the sinner, then Satan's scheme to conquer all creation and wrest it from the Creator would be lost.

From the day in the Garden of Eden when the Lord served notice on Satan that the Seed of the woman would bruise his head, until Jesus said, "**It is finished,**" the devil did everything in his ungodly power to devour the Man child - the Lord Jesus. He tried to corrupt the seed in the Old Testament era, he tried to kill the Baby when it was born, he caused the parents to forget the Child when He was twelve years of age, leaving Him in the temple with the very crowd who later crucified Him. The unholy crowd tried to push Him over the precipice, they tried to stone Him, they tried to kill Him at the whipping post; but Jesus Christ the Son of God had a single mission to fulfill, and He marched on until He could say, "**It is finished!**"

THE CHILD

Verses 5 and 6: **“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”**

In verse 5, the woman delivers the Man child, the child is caught up unto God, and in verse 6, the woman flees into the wilderness where God has a place prepared for her protection. She will be fed there for 1,260 days - the last half of the Tribulation.

Those of us who are born again have nothing to worry about. Jesus is the head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23). He is the foundation of the Church (I Corinthians 3:11), and the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church (Matthew 16:18). We are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh and if you are born again, fret not. When all of these horrible things take place, all believers will have a grandstand seat in the sky! The Man child is caught up to God and to God's throne. We who are members of the New Testament Church will be caught up with Him before the horrible time of Tribulation comes upon earth.

From the birth of the Man child to the time He was caught up to God covered a period of about thirty-three years - the length of time Jesus lived on this earth. He had approximately three and one-half years of public ministry. Between verse 5 and verse 6 there is time element consisting of the Church age - the day of grace. It has already been more than 1900 years. We do not know just how many more years remain until the woman will flee into her place of protection, probably the rock fortress of Petra. We are living today in the age of grace. When this age comes to a close, the Rapture will take place, the Antichrist will begin his reign, and in the middle of the seven years of tribulation Israel will be forced to flee into the prepared place lest she be completely annihilated.

Only God knows the centuries covered in Revelation 12. **“A thousand years is as one day with the Lord”** (II Peter 3:8). God has plenty of time. The finite mind cannot conceive of time as measured by Him who is **“from everlasting to everlasting”** (Psalm 90:1,2). You may rest assured that God's program is running on schedule:

“Known unto the Lord are all His ways from the beginning” (Acts 15:18).

The woman Israel fleeing into the wilderness, signifies a place devoid of natural resources . . . a place of complete isolation. The Word tells us that Israel will again be fed as they were fed in the days when God rained manna from Heaven and sent quail for meat. If God did it then, could He not do it again? In Jeremiah 30:7 we read, **“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.”** That will be a time **“when all their faces turn to paleness.”** It will be the time described by Jesus in that memorable twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew:

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (the temple of God in Jerusalem is the holy place referred to here. Read Daniel 7:8 and Revelation 19:20.) . . . then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains (This refers to the middle of Daniel’s seventieth week of prophecy . . . the time when Antichrist breaks all his promises to the Jews who are then back in their own land.): Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake, those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not” (Matthew 24:15-23).

The people in Judaea are here instructed to flee to the mountains when they see the **“abomination of desolation”** stand in the holy place. This time of tribulation will be so terrible that the Bible instructs those who are on the housetop not to return into the house to take any of their possessions. We may not fully understand this statement, but in the Holy Land the porch is on the housetop. Most houses there are built flat, with concrete tops, and people sit up on the housetop in the cool of the day.

Those who, therefore, are sitting on the housetop are instructed not to go inside to take anything, but to flee to the mountains. Those who are in the field are not to return to their homes for anything, but they, too, are to flee for their lives. Can you imagine such terror and such horrible days of persecution?

Verse 19 of Matthew 24 speaks of them who are with child and who have young babies. Many dear ladies and mothers worry about this verse; but my dear mother or mother-to-be, if you are a child of God you need not worry because when this comes to pass, all believers will be with Jesus in the air. This has to do only with Jewish mothers. The message is addressed to the people in Judaea and surrounding territory, and of course Israel will be in their own land at this particular time. It will be a time of sorrow and woe to the Jewish mothers with young children and to the expectant mothers, but it does not refer to any mother who is born again.

If you are a Christian, you have nothing to worry about, because you will be with the Lord Jesus in the air. This part of the Great Tribulation has to do with Israel, and except those days should be shortened there would not be any flesh saved (Matthew 24:22). But for the sake of Israel those days will be shortened.

THE ARCHANGEL

Verses 7-12: **“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

“Michael and his angels fought.” Who is Michael?

He is leading the army of angels who are battling Satan and his angels. Michael is mentioned five times in the Scriptures: (Daniel 10:13-21; Daniel 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7). He seems to be the highest of all angels. Jude calls him THE archangel. Read I Thessalonians 4:16 and Jude 9.

It seems that Michael is the leading angel having to do with the Jewish people . . . he is probably the guardian angel over God’s elect: **“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people”** (Daniel 12:1). That refers to Israel. Michael shall stand up to see that Israel does not perish in the Great Tribulation - the time of Jacob’s trouble. **“He (Jacob) shall be saved out of it”** (Jeremiah 30:7). Michael is the militant angel who fights on the side of God’s elect-Israel.

The wars that rage here on earth are but the reflex of opposing spiritual powers in the lower heavens - the atmospheric heavens just above us. Angels, good and bad, are daily playing their parts in world affairs, political and religious - right here on this earth now, and in the end time the wicked powers will have full sway. The struggle between light and darkness, though invisible, is nevertheless real. Read I Samuel 16:13-15, I Kings 22:19-23. Angels and angelic influence toward Christians here on earth is accepted by most spiritual people as a Bible fact. I believe that every born again person has a guardian angel (Acts 12, Hebrews 1:14). Angels watch over little children (Matthew 18:10).

In verse 7 war is declared: **“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.”**

It is a Bible fact that the atmospheric Heaven just above us is the kingdom of Satan. The devil does not have access to the third Heaven where God’s house is. Paul was caught up into the third Heaven, and was forbidden to tell what he heard and saw there (II Corinthians 12:1-3).

Satan knows what God’s house is like. Before he became Satan, he was Lucifer, the **“anointed cherub that covereth”** (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28). But sin was born in the heart of Lucifer. He was cast out of Heaven and the angels he led astray are now in chains awaiting the judgment.

In Ephesians 1:3 and 2:6 Paul tells us that we believers sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Positionally we are dead and our lives are hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Positionally we are members of His body now, and He sits at the right hand of God; so we sit with Jesus in heavenly places, in the third Heaven.

Besides the saints, there are others in the heavenlies (Ephesians 3:10), and there is a battle raging NOW against wicked spirits in heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).

In Revelation 12 we find that the time will come when Satan will be evicted from the heavenlies for good, never to re-enter - and will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:1-3, 20). The title, "**The prince of the power of the air**" (Ephesians 2:2), will be lost to him forever.

Michael and his angels defeat the dragon and his angels. The dragon and his angels are cast out of Heaven.

The dragon is called "**the old serpent, the devil, Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.**" When the dragon is cast out, a loud voice from Heaven cries, "**NOW IS COME SALVATION, AND STRENGTH, AND THE KINGDOM OF OUR God, AND THE POWER OF HIS Christ: FOR THE ACCUSER OF OUR BRETHREN IS CAST DOWN, WHICH ACCUSED THEM BEFORE OUR God day AND NIGHT!**"

Imagine that! Satan spends every moment of day and night accusing God's children before God's face.

In Job 1, when the sons of God appeared on a certain day, Satan walked right up with them; and when God asked Satan where he had been, he replied that he had been on earth walking up and down, accusing the brethren. But his days of operation are numbered and one day the Lord Jesus will stop his slanderous accusations against the children of God.

Here in chapter 12 we have the account of the beginning of the greatest battle ever fought in the atmosphere above us - Michael and his angels against the devil and his angels; but praise God, Satan will be defeated, cast down, and finally placed in the eternal prison of the damned.

Since the day Lucifer was cast out of Heaven and at that moment became the devil - the deceiver - he has been the archenemy of the Lord God and of God's people. (Read Job 1:6,7; Zechariah 3:1,2; Matthew 4:4-11; Ephesians 6:11; I Peter 5:8.) The heavens as well as the earth must be cleared of all evil, demons, and sin - and of the curse (Romans 8:22). All creation suffers because of sin. All creation is out of joint, off balance, and must be set straight.

The method by which the earth and the regions above the earth will be purified is stated in Colossians 1:20 and Hebrews 9:22. the Blood of Jesus Christ is the answer. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Without the Blood of Jesus there is no redemption. How complete - how far-reaching - how powerful - how pure and sinless is the Blood of the Lamb!

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Before we leave the discussion of the dragon, please let me give you the names of the dragon as listed in verse 9:

1. **“The great dragon”** -so termed because of his remorseless cruelty.
2. **“The old serpent”**: This reminds us of his first and successful attempt to effect the ruin of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). Subtlety, craft and deep cunning are characteristic features of Satan from the beginning of his history in connection with the human race. I am satisfied that Genesis 3 is a true and actual account of what took place in the Garden of Eden. I believe Satan spoke through a real serpent. There is no need supposing that such is an impossibility, because it is not.

There are at least three remarkable instances in the Old Testament where lower animals were given miraculous use of the power of speech. Speech was given to the serpent (Genesis 3). A certain intelligence and speech were granted to Balaam’s ass (Numbers 22:21-30). The great fish which swallowed Jonah answered to the voice of the Lord God and disgorged the penitent prophet on dry ground (Jonah 2:10). I firmly believe in the exact historical accuracy of these narratives, which moreover are vouched for in the New Testament (II Corinthians 11:3; II Peter 2:15,16; Matthew 12:40).

3. **“The devil”** - a personal name. The devil is a historical person, not a spirit.
4. **“Satan”**: The two former titles (serpent and dragon) are descriptive of character. **“Devil”** and **“Satan”** refer to the dragon as a person.

At this time, Satan will know that he has forever lost his opportunity to destroy the Church. (He was informed that **“the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**) His drastic, all-out drive to mar and scar the Church will fail, and it will be presented to Jesus without spot or wrinkle . . . a perfect Church.

Satan has lost Israel, and he is very, very wroth.

The miracle-working God of yesteryear who delivered His ancient people on many occasions, has frustrated the plan of Satan again. Satan knows it and he is furious Read Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11, 12; Lamentations 4:19; Psalm 35. Then read Matthew 24:22. The God of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps, nor does He change.

When thousands of Israelites came up out of Egypt, God took care of them. There was not one feeble person in all the tribes. Not one foot became sore from marching. Their shoes lasted for forty long years, and not one garment became threadbare. the Lord said to His people **“YE HAVE SEEN WHAT I DID UNTO THE EGYPTIANS AND HOW I BARE YOU ON EAGLES’ WINGS AND BROUGHT YOU UNTO MYSELF”** (Exodus 19:4). What God did in that day, God is very able to do again!

Satan and Israel in the Tribulation

Verses 13-16: **“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.”**

Revelation 12:13 tells us that when the dragon realized that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the Man child. And the woman is given two wings of an eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for three and one-half years, and protected from the face and the power of the serpent.

The serpent made his last attempt to destroy the woman and her child. He cast out of his mouth a flood of water in an attempt to drown the woman. Mother earth helped her. Since Israel is an earthly people with earthly promises, the earth came to the rescue opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast forth out of his mouth.

THE JEWISH REMNANT

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

~ end of chapter 12 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Two Beasts

In chapter 13 we will study two beasts - one from the sea, the second out of the earth. The victory of Michael over the red dragon resulted in complete overthrow of Satan's power and influence in the heavenlies. Satan and his hosts were cast down to the earth. This event is very important and of grave significance. The earth is now to become the main battleground and the scene of Satanic operation. His kingdom has been just above us, but when he is cast out of the Heaven lies he will set up headquarters on earth. God-fearing Jews and Gentiles will be the special objects of Satan's fury and hatred.

He will also blind and darken the minds of the peoples of other countries outside of Israel. Although Satan is a spiritual being unseen by mortal eyes, he is actually a person embodied in flesh during the Tribulation period. His two principal ministers are described in Revelation 13. These demented instrumentalities are also spoken of as beasts - wild and fierce. Satan will give to these two beasts all of his power and authority, and will be the master-mind of these two apostates.

THE FIRST BEAST

Revelation 13:1-10:

- 1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.**
- 2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.**
- 3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.**
- 4. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?**
- 5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.**
- 6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.**

7. **And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.**
8. **And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**
9. **If any man have an ear, let him hear.**
10. **He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**

In chapter 12 John's eyes were focused on the sky. Things were happening in the atmosphere just above the earth. There was war (a literal battle) between Michael with his angels, and the dragon with his angels.

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a Beast rise up out of the sea.” John's gaze moves from the heavenlies to the earth, and he stands upon the sands of the sea to behold the next great event in the program of God as God brings all wickedness to an end and prepares earth for the kingdom of Heaven.

In chapter 1:9 we see John on the Isle of Patmos.

In chapter 4:1 he is caught up into Heaven. In chapter 13 we see him standing on the sands of the sea. In chapter 17 we will see him standing in the wilderness. In chapter 21:10 he takes his place on a high mountain. John has a grandstand view of all God's doings in the Revelation God gave to him to give to you and me.

Here the sands of the sea represent vast multitudes of people. God told Abraham that He would multiply his seed as the sands of the sea. In Revelation 20:8 God's army is referred to in number as **“the sands of the sea.”** The sands of the sea represent multitudes; the sea itself represents unrest and turmoil among the masses. Almost without exception Bible scholars agree that this “Beast” is the revived Roman Empire (with its dictator), which rose to power in a similar way just before the birth of Jesus.

Daniel records a vision which will help us identify these Beasts in Revelation 13. Daniel is an outstanding personality; Jesus speaks of him in Matthew and declares that he was a prophet. He also had the gift of understanding and interpreting dreams. As a prophet God revealed to him the entire course of **“the times of the Gentiles.”** The prophecy of Daniel is mainly concerned with things that shall befall the people Israel in the latter days (Daniel 10:14).

Here in Revelation 13 we are dealing with the things that shall come to pass in the last half of the seventieth week of Daniel's seventy weeks.

In Daniel 7:3, **“four beasts came up out of the sea.”** These four beasts represent the four successive forms of Gentile power, which are Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece and Rome. Rome fell in A. D. 476. Since that time she has been an insignificant power, but she will rise again to become a world power under the leadership of Antichrist after the Rapture. Christians are not looking for the revival of Rome, nor for the Antichrist; we are looking for THE CHRIST.

After the Rapture this super-human Beast will work miracles that will make the Roman Empire great again in a very short time.

There are seven things I would like to point out about this first Beast:

1. He is said to have power, a throne, and authority.
2. He has authority over tribes, tongues and nations.
3. He will be a political world dictator.
4. He is a monster, he is wild, he rules in terror.
5. His reign will last for approximately seven years - with forty-two months of terror during the last half of the Tribulation.
6. Though his government will be under ten kings, he will be supreme.
7. He is the world's master blasphemer. Of all that have ever been before him, none could touch the hem of his garment in blasphemy: **“And upon his heads the name of blasphemy”** (Revelation 13:1).

Revelation 13:2 further describes the Beast. John saw a beast like unto a leopard, with feet like a bear and mouth like a lion.

In Daniel 7, Daniel saw the same three beasts in reverse order. The reason for this is apparent: Daniel stood at the beginning of the age of Gentile world dominion and therefore saw Babylon first, while John stood at the end of the Gentile age, looking back.

This revised Roman Empire has the characteristics of the three preceding empires. Therefore, this Beast of Revelation 13:1 will contain the different elements of the other three Gentile world powers in one great monster.

The dragon gave him his power, his seat, and his great authority. This enlightens us as to where the Beast-ruler gets such great power as he demonstrated. Actually, this Beast is the devil incarnate, so far as power is concerned.

Verse 3: **“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.”**

In the fifth century after the birth of Christ, the head of the great Roman Empire was wounded unto death. The monster empire of Rome was killed. Parts of it have existed ever since, but the real head died. Now the Beast is that head raised to life again, consisting of ten federated kingdoms. A Roman Emperor rules again, and the whole world wonders at the great miracle of the revived Roman Empire.

This empire will not be revived before the Rapture.

If you read newspapers, news magazines, and listen to the radio, you know the cry today is “World Government . . . United States of the World . . . One World . . . Unity among the nations . . . The common market.” Such propaganda as “All men are brothers” is the slogan.

All men ARE brothers from the standpoint of the flesh - but all men are not brothers so far as God is concerned. Jesus said to the Pharisees, “**Ye are of your father the devil!**” (John 8:44). “**Beloved, now are we the sons of God . . .**” (I John 3:1-3). We are not all brothers.

All believers are brothers, and all unbelievers are brothers; but believers and unbelievers are NOT brothers.

In verse 4, the world worships the dragon which gave exceeding power to the Beast that came up out of the sea, and the cry was, “**Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war against him?**”

Who can stop him?

Who is able to conquer him?”

The world is looking for a superman, and this world dictator of the revived Roman Empire will sweep men off their feet.

Immediately they will begin to worship him. They will declare that no one can stand against him, that there is nothing he cannot do. What horrible blasphemy! This is the age of personality worshippers . . . in religion, in politics, in social life and in every other phase of life. This is the age of idols.

In verse 5 we discover that in the pride of his heart the Beast boasts and blasphemes. Who he is and what he has DONE constitute, no doubt, the sum of the “**great things**” spoken, and added to this are the significant words, “**and blasphemies.**” There was given him authority to pursue his career for forty-two months.

In verse 6, the Beast blasphemes God, blasphemes the temple, and them that dwell in Heaven. Words - bad and bold - are uttered. What is said we do not know, but we may be sure that the utmost of undying hatred to God which the malice of the dragon can suggest, is publicly and loudly expressed.

In verse 7 he makes war with the saints here on earth, overcomes and butchers them. (The saints killed here are those referred to in chapter 6 when the martyrs were told to wait for a little season until their fellowservants be killed in like manner). The Beast then becomes dictator of all kindreds, tongues, peoples and nations.

In verse 8, all worship the Beast save those whose names are in the Lamb’s Book of Life. The slain Lamb who had redeemed them by His Blood, takes special account of these sufferers. The Book of Life in which their names are recorded belongs to Him. The Beast conquers and kills, but eternal life is the portion of those martyrs.

Verse 9 sounds out a solemn warning: “**If any man have an ear, let him hear!**” Dear Reader! Whoever you are, wherever you are, if you have an ear - listen: Are you born again? Are you washed in the Blood? If you are not, may God help you to be saved this very moment.

If the Rapture should take place now, YOU would be left behind to go through the horrible reign of the Antichrist. Read Romans 10:9-13, and believe it!

Verse 10: “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

This is a solemn warning that **“with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again”** (Matthew 7:2).

Whosoever leads into captivity must himself go into it. Whosoever kills with the sword must himself be killed. What a word of warning - and how seasonable to saints then crushed under the iron rule of the Beast. That is what the Beast is doing . . . killing with the sword, making slaves of people, leading millions captive.

Those who refuse to worship and bow down to the Beast will be taken into captivity, and they that endure to the end (unto death) will be among the great multitude out of every nation, tongue, tribe and kingdom, mentioned in chapter 7. Those who receive the mark of the Beast will drop into hell. There will be those who will succumb to the terrible persecution and horrible suffering while in captivity; they will accept the mark and worship the Beast. But there will also be those who will endure to the bitter, bloody end.

Regardless of what a believer suffers during the age of Grace or during the time of the Great Tribulation, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us, and the glory we will share with Jesus in the land that is fairer than day.

THE SECOND BEAST

Revelation 13:11-18:

- 11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.**
- 12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed.**
- 13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,**
- 14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.**
- 15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.**
- 16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:**
- 17. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**

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

A second Beast makes his appearance - this time, out of the earth. This Beast will have two horns like a lamb - but he has the voice of a dragon. These two Beasts are world dictators in their separate fields - one political, one religious.

When the second Beast makes his appearance, things will be leveled off politically. It will be a time of false peace.

Let us compare these two Beasts:

- The first Beast is a secular power; the second is a religious power.
- The first Beast is a Gentile; the second is a Jew.
- The first Beast had ten horns; the second had two horns.
- The first Beast is a civil authority; the second is a religious authority.
- The second Beast is subordinate to the first Beast. He used the military power of the first Beast to enforce his demands and his dictatorship.
- The second Beast is lieutenant to the first. He appears after the first Beast - they do not both appear at the same moment.

The first Beast is the head of a vast military and political system, and as such he perishes at the coming of the Lord, at the close of the Tribulation, when Jesus comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God. To this Beast Satan gives what he offered Jesus in Luke 4:6-7, which Jesus refused with the rebuke, **“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”**

It will do you good to read Luke 4:6-7 and see the power Satan really has. Read the second Psalm. God the Father will give Jesus the kingdom and the earth.

No power on earth can withstand this tremendous political Beast . . . but, of course, God's power will finally put him down.

The second Beast rules in Palestine. He finally becomes the minister of the first Beast, and all kingly and priestly power is merged in the first one. But the second Beast is the one who deceives the world and labors untiringly to put Judaism and all religions of earth into the arms of Satan. There will be a world church, about which we are hearing much today. Both Beasts will share one thing in common: They will meet the same fate. Revelation 19:20: **“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”**

They led the masses into captivity, and they must go into eternal captivity.

Sometimes it seems as though the believers are fighting a losing battle, but we are not. We are in the minority - but we are on the winning side. From the standpoint of numbers, we are outnumbered, but **“If God be for us, who can be against us?”** (Romans 8:31).

We are definitely on the winning side. We cannot lose with God. God does not always payoff on Saturday night, but when He DOES pay, He pays in full!

The devil, the Beast, the false prophet and all the wicked have a date at the judgment bar of God Almighty. At the Great white Throne, God will judge in righteousness, and all wickedness will be put down forever. The devil is the prince of the power of the air today, he is the god of this age; but the day is coming when he will be stripped of all of his power and placed in the lake of fire. He has been leading poor souls into captivity for six thousand long years, but soon God will put a stop to his activities.

The first three verses in chapter 13 refer to an empire. Verses 4 through 10 refer to a person . . . the dictator of the empire, the ten-kingdom confederation. The second Beast is a person - not literally a beast, but a beastly human. All through the books of prophecy in the Old Testament, empires and emperors are symbolized by beasts.

This mysterious and terrible Beast is called by various names. In the Old Testament he is called:

- **King of Babylon** - Isaiah 14:4.
- **Lucifer** - Isaiah 14:12.
- **The little horn** - Daniel 7:8; 8:9-12.
- **A king of fierce countenance** - Daniel 8:23.
- **The prince that shall come** - Daniel 9:26.
- **The willful king** - Daniel 11:36.

In the New Testament he is called:

- **The man of sin** - II Thessalonians 2:3-8.
- **The son of perdition** - II Thessalonians 2:3-8; John 17:12.
- **That Wicked** - II Thessalonians 2:3-8.
- **Antichrist** - I John 2:18.
- **The Beast** - Revelation 13:11.

Jesus prophesied concerning this Beast when He said, **“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive”** (John 5:43). Jesus made this statement to the Jews who shouted, **“Crucify Jesus! Give us Barabbas!”** But when Antichrist comes they will receive him with open arms.

The Lamb of God in Revelation 5:6 has seven horns - seven being the number of divine perfection. The Lamb of God has fulness of power . . . He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent.

The false lamb - the Antichrist - has but two horns, denoting limited power. This second Beast is also called **“the false prophet”** (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10). He has two horns **“like a lamb”** . . . but his voice betrays him: he **“spake as a dragon.”**

Both spiritual and moral ruin is the aim of the dragon, and he is supported one hundred percent by the Beast. Rome and Jerusalem are the centers of influence from which Satan conducts his program in Europe, Palestine, and the whole world.

Verse 12 tells us that this second Beast has all the power of the first Beast, and he tells the people on earth that they should worship the first Beast whose deadly wound was healed, which seemed to be a great miracle. Never forget, the devil can perform miracles . . . limited, yes - but miracles.

Verse 13 tells us that the second Beast is so mighty and powerful that he makes fire come down from Heaven on the earth in the sight of men. The stage is set for the appearance of this miracle-working personality. Imagine what would happen in my meetings if I could reach up in the air and pull fire down from the air in the sight of men! There is not a building in the United States that would seat the people who would come to see me pull fire down out of Heaven. This Beast will have that power.

Keep in mind that these two Beasts work together - political and religious. The first will be the leader of the most powerful, united kingdom that has ever been on this earth. He will be the most colossal ruler - the boldest, most blasphemous ruler who ever lived upon the face of this earth. The second Beast will have no royal authority outside of Palestine; therefore, he uses the power and prestige of the political Beast to bring about his diabolical design to get all the peoples of earth to bow down to Rome and worship the great Beast who was wounded unto death but now has miraculously come alive.

The second Beast will have no military power of his own. Military power will be turned over to the first Beast by the dragon - the devil. The second Beast is much worse than the first. He influences men religiously and leads them into the vilest blasphemy and idolatry. He demands men to worship him. He sits in the temple in Jerusalem and announces publicly that he is God Almighty.

It has been reported by reliable sources that the Jews now have every stone cut, ready to rebuild their temple the moment they conquer and take over the temple area where the Mosque of Omar stands now. The Jews are now in possession of the land within a short distance of the temple area (where Solomon's Temple stood) and the only reason they did not take it in the last war between the Jews and Arabs was that prophetically it was not time for them to possess that particular spot.

The second Beast is the one **“who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God”** (II Thessalonians 2:4),

Jesus came in His Father's name, to do His Father's will. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. The false messiah will come in his own name, to do his own will (John 5:43).

With the exception of those who have believed and been redeemed through the testimony of the 144,000 and the two witnesses of chapter 11, the masses will fall down and receive the Beast as their messiah, and joyfully line up to receive his mark in their forehead or in their right hand. They will be sent strong delusion; they will believe the lie. Read II Thessalonians 2:8-12.

I repeat: The world is ready, the stage is set, the masses are anxious for the appearance of this superman - both religiously and politically. The world is looking for a man who will promise shorter working hours, more money, less taxes, more machines, and jobs with ninety-eight percent of the labor removed. The world does not want an ordinary man in either politics or religion. People love to be fooled.

Did Hitler lead the Germans? Did Mussolini lead the Italians? Did Tojo lead the Japanese? Did Stalin lead the Russians in his day, and is Khrushchev now leading the Russians? Are the Americans falling in line with our present leaders? You know the answer. When the wicked rule, the people mourn. Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. The wages of sin is death. The nation, the family, or the individual who sows to the flesh will reap corruption.

The nations of the world are power-crazy, and the rulers of the world are making a mad rush to build a bomb that will destroy the most people in the least number of seconds at the least cost possible.

Religiously speaking, there are two groups in America that are going strong:

(1) The man who is backed by the big denominational machines, by the National Council of the Churches of Christ, by the World Council and the big denominational universities. That man can build a big church.

(2) Men who claim power to cast out demons, raise the dead, and cure all kinds of diseases. They, too draw tremendous crowds. I believe in miracles. I believe God can heal any and all diseases; but I do not believe in some of the modern methods used today. I do not believe in making merchandise of sick people.

The stage is set for the greatest miracle-worker who ever set foot on earth, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not have a prophet on earth today nor a miracle-working preacher who would dare advertise that he will publicly pull fire down from Heaven. The Antichrist will not advertise it . . . he will DO IT; and then the masses will advertise him as God.

Elijah prayed, and God sent fire (I Kings 18:38, 39).

The sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the altar and the water were all licked up with fire when Elijah prayed. The followers of Baal attempted that miracle, but could not perform it. The Antichrist will.

Verse 14 tells us that the Beast uses his miracles to deceive them that dwell on earth. He then sets up an image to the first Beast that was wounded by the sword "and did live." It is remarkable that at the beginning of Gentile supremacy and power, men were compelled under the pain of death to bow down to images in worship.

Daniel 3 gives us the story of Nebuchadnezzar, a ruler in the day of the beginning of the Gentile nations. At the close of Gentile power, man will be compelled to again bow down and worship an image. The image which will be set up will be an actual statue of the Beast - and if you do not believe that today is a day of statues, just look at the statues on the dashboards of the automobiles you meet. Look in homes, in the churches, in places of business. Look at the ornaments people wear around their necks - and you will realize that we are living in an age of statues.

Many Protestants make an idol and a statue out of the building where they worship, and worship the building instead of God.

The death of the first Beast is mentioned three times in Revelation 13. Verse 14 tells us that the wound was made by the sword, which signifies a violent break-up of the Beast-kingdom, and not a gradual decline unto death. That is exactly what happened. The millions of savage barbarians in the fifth century after Christ swept down from the north and quickly brought the great political empire of Rome to an end. Fragments of that empire have never ceased to exist as separate kingdoms, but the imperial government under one head was wounded to death and ceased to be.

Prophetically, in Revelation 13 we have the restoration of that imperial head over a federal empire of ten kingdoms. There will again be an emperor - the Beast.

Verse 15: **“And (the Beast) had power to give life unto the image of the (first) beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”**

If you are here when the image is set up, and when the second Beast is in power, you will worship the image or your head will be chopped off. So dear friend, if you are not born again, the only wise thing to do is to be saved right now - not Sunday, not when you feel like it, but right now!

Verses 16-17: **“And he causeth all (ALL), both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name.”**

Let me bring you up to date: In Revelation 4:1-3 the Rapture will take place. Millions of farmers will be taken in the Rapture. Percentage-wise there is more true Christianity among country people than among city people, and it is the farmers who produce what the city folks eat. The dairymen, the poultry men, the hog-raisers, the wheat farmers, and farmers in general raise the foodstuffs consumed by the millions in the cities.

When the Rapture takes place, more country people than city dwellers will be taken. Where there are hundreds in the country, there are millions in the cities; therefore, there will be a tremendous food shortage.

The surplus will soon diminish, and the strictest rationing system ever known on this earth will be set up. Every person who buys or sells will have to display the mark of the Beast in his forehead or in his right hand. There is no rejecting this command. Those who refuse to receive it cannot buy, they cannot sell, and of course, if they refuse to worship the Beast they will be killed.

The small and the great (the humble and the mighty), the rich and the poor (millionaires and paupers), free and bond - whether it is an American, a Russian, or a Chinaman - will be forced to receive a mark in their forehead or in their hand. This will be a fool-proof, international rationing system that none can escape. There will be only a certain amount of food for each person, and they will be allowed only their daily allotment - no more. Read Revelation 6:5-6.

There is also a note of religion in the rationing system and in the mark of the Beast, which will link those who receive it to the kingdom of the Beast. Those who receive the mark can never be saved nor forgiven. In that day those who eat will join the kingdom of the Antichrist, marked to be damned. If they do not receive the mark, they will hide in the forest, in the mountains and the dens; they will beg, borrow, steal, eat out of the rivers and the woods, until finally they are caught and killed. **“They that endure to the end, the same shall be saved.”**

After the Rapture, church and state will lock arms in full accord. The dragon will dictate the policies of politics and religion. He will make his last great drive to overthrow God and control the kingdoms of Heaven and earth - but thank God, he will fail. In those awful days, individual thought and individual rights will be crushed to the ground by the iron hand of the Beast. No matter how rich or how high-ranking a person may be, ALL must bow to the wishes of the false messiah - or pay with their life blood. If they refuse to receive the mark of the Beast and worship him, they cannot buy or sell, and they will be put to death. They cannot win, so far as earthly things are concerned.

Verse 18 is extremely important - but easily understood. **“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is SIX HUNDRED THREE SCORE AND SIX.”**

There is much confusion in the land concerning the mark of the Beast. There are varied and sundry man-made ideas on the subject. But if we compare spiritual things with spiritual, search the Scriptures and rightly divide the Word of God, we can know what his mark will be.

I suppose one of the outstanding teachings in this day concerning the mark of the Beast is that those of us who worship on Sunday have that mark. One preacher declares in his pulpit, “Sunday observance - and the observance of Christmas, New Year’s, Easter, etc. - is the mark of the Beast.” The above is a quote from a book mailed to me by one of my listeners, who was greatly disturbed concerning Revelation. God is not the author of confusion, and in the words of Paul, **“Let God be true, but every man a liar”** (Romans 3:4).

The book which tells of the Beast and his mark is not a book of riddles, but of revelation . . . unveiling, making known the deep things of God. The Revelation was given to John by the Holy Spirit and it is not the work of man. It is the Word of God.

Can you not see that if the observance of Sunday, Christmas, etc., were the mark of the Beast, then the Holy Spirit would simply have said "He that hath wisdom, let him know that observing days is the mark of the Beast." But the Holy Spirit did not say that. He said, through John, "**Here is wisdom . . . Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast.**"

In other words, "If you have good common sense and reasoning power, figure it out." His number is the number of a man - six hundred three score and six. Six hundred, plus sixty, plus six - which adds up to three 6's. God's number is seven - He worked six days and rested on the seventh. Seven is the number of divine completion. Six is man's number. Man was created on the sixth day, and was created in the image of God, although he is short of God. Six is one short of seven.

Therefore, the "**number of a man**" (verse 18) is 666 - and since the devil is a trinity, we have not one six, but THREE sixes. The devil has counterfeited everything God has that is good and great. So we have a Satanic trinity - the Beast, the False Prophet, and the Dragon. Then, too, the Antichrist is imitating God. Jesus ministered three-and-a-half years, and they crucified Him.

The last half of the Tribulation will be three-and-a-half years, and it is in the middle of the seven years that the Antichrist announces in the temple that he is God Almighty.

He also imitates God in using marks for his own.

Every child of God has a seal, a mark (Ephesians 4:30). Read Revelation 7:3; Revelation 14:1; Revelation 22:4; Ezekiel 9:4. God's own are marked, and the devil marks his children during his earthly reign.

Yes, I believe there will be three sixes tattooed on foreheads and right hands . . . indeed I do. I believe John 3:16. I believe God literally loved, literally gave, Jesus literally came and literally died. Why should I not believe the number of the Beast will be 666?

There are many reasons why I believe we are living in the last days of the Dispensation of Grace. I firmly believe Jesus is at the door. I said earlier in this message that the stage is set and the masses are anxious for the appearance of a superman. This is the age of numbers, photographs, computers - and man is fast becoming totally and entirely dependent upon numbers and machines.

Ninety-nine percent of the people who read this message are marked . . . they have a card and a number.

Most of you have several cards and several numbers. So far as the United States Government is concerned, it does not matter too much what your name is, but your Social Security number is very important. No, the Social Security number is not the mark of the Beast, but it is educating the peoples of earth FOR the mark of the Beast. This is the age of marks and numbers. The stage is set, the end is near. Jesus is coming for the Church, and when the Church is taken out of this earth it will be as it was when Noah entered the ark and God shut the door.

God will pour out fury upon this earth, and earth will be turned into a literal hell before the end of the Tribulation period. I hardly know how to say what I want to say, dear reader. It may sound a little blunt; but it seems that the masses want hell on earth. They get drunk; they butcher each other on the highway; they slaughter each other in the homes at parties; they blaspheme God. The motto of the world today is "Wine, Women, and Song."

This is a lust-crazy age, and if hell is what the masses desire, they will receive just that - but not until the saints of God are caught out to meet Jesus in the air and are above the terrible judgment and indignation to be poured out upon ungodly men. This superman who is coming is mentioned many times in the Old Testament:

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25).

"He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes (Jesus)" (Daniel 8:25).

"(He) shall do according to His own will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods . . ." (Daniel 11:36).

When Daniel saw this superman (the Beast, the Son of perdition) he fainted: **"And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it"** (Daniel 8:27).

Daniel spent a night in the den of man-eating lions - and came out the next morning unshaken, his nerves under perfect control. The lions did not bother him, and he faced kings unafraid; but when he saw the Antichrist, HE FAINTED! What do you suppose you will do when you see him, unbeliever? Think it over: and if you do not know you are born again, be sure to get on your knees now. Do not delay one moment. Bow your head, repent, call on God - and be saved NOW.

This will be of interest to those of you who may doubt that the mark of the Beast is 666 - the number of a man. Goliath, the opposer of God's people and a type of Antichrist, was six cubits high. He had six pieces of armor. His spearhead weighed six hundred shekels (I Samuel 17:4-7).

Nebuchadnezzar's image was a type of the image of the Beast. The image Nebuchadnezzar had built was sixty cubits high, six cubits wide, and six instruments of music summoned people to bow in the dust (Daniel 3:1-7).

~ end of chapter 13 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Lamb and the 144,000; Doom of the Beast-Worshippers; Vision of Armageddon
Revelation 14:1-5:

1. **And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.**
2. **And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:**
3. **And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.**
4. **These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.**
5. **And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.**

What a refreshing sight after the horrors of Revelation 13! John sees the Lamb and 144,000 redeemed, standing on Mount Sion, and there is much rejoicing and much music. In chapter 13, truth had fallen in the streets, and the saints' blood ran like water; at the close of chapter 13, good had been almost banished from the earth (Psalm 4:6) and faith was almost unknown (Luke 18:8). The Beast proudly proclaimed himself to be God and dictated both political and religious policies. The few faithful ones were going through such terrible persecution as was never known upon this earth, and except the Lord had shortened those days, **"there should no flesh be saved."**

There are seven outstanding things to be noted in our present chapter:

1. We see the 144,000 sealed ones on Mount Sion - verses 1-5.
2. God's closing testimony to earth: **"the everlasting Gospel"** - verses 6 and 7.
3. The announcement that Babylon is fallen - verse 8.
4. The terrible doom of the Beast-worshippers - verses 9-11.
5. The blessedness of those who die in the Lord - verse 13.
6. The harvest of earth is reaped - verses 14-16.
7. The fullness of God's wrath and vengeance is poured out - verses 17-20.

Who are the 144,000 in verse one? Are they a separate group from the 144,000 sealed in Revelation 7? I believe them to be the same. These were sealed between the sixth and seventh seals. They are still alive after the sounding of the seventh trumpet - the third woe - and the revealing of the man of sin. They live through it all.

They were mature persons when sealed; and they are still alive, not having died during the course of the last half of the Great Tribulation. This fact teaches us that the period spoken of as days, months, and years are actual measurements of time just as we know time today.

There have not been thousands of years of fulfillment, as some teach and preach in an attempt to spiritualize these things. Yes, the 144,000 here are the same as those in Revelation 7. They are conspicuously marked, having the names of the Father and of the Lamb in their foreheads.

They are redeemed from the earth and are no longer part of the ungodly world systems. They are a segregated group, separated from all earth's inhabitants. They are redeemed from among men. They are pure . . . they are virgins. In their mouth was found no guile. These attributes spell perfection.

The time when the 144,000 witnesses testify and live is the time when hell's worst is taking place on earth. The world has gone completely mad over the miracle-working Beast, with the exception of those who refuse to receive his mark. The entire order of society is a lie. The religious system of the day is a lie. The god in charge of all of earth's affairs is a god of lies - "Anti-" means opposite - counterfeit. Jesus said, "**Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free**" (John 8:32). The Antichrist will come; he is the Lie - and all who believe him will be damned.

These 144,000 are of The Truth in the midst of gross untruth. They stand blameless before God. A singular thing about these witnesses is the song they sing . . . a song no one but themselves could learn. They sing this song in the presence of the living ones (creatures) and the elders who are wearing golden crowns (the Bride, those of us who are believers and make up the Church).

This expresses a lesser heavenly dignity. These 144,000 do not hold the same position as the Bride of Christ . . . the Pearl of Great Price. The Bride will be displayed in the heavenlies throughout the eternity of eternities (Ephesians 2:6,7). The Word of God does not say that these 144,000 have crowns. They sing before the throne, but are not said to be connected with the throne. Read Revelation 4:9-11, where the elders who represent the Church fall down around the throne and cast their crowns before the throne.

These 144,000 are not of the highest order of the saved and glorified: "**In my Father's house are MANY mansions**" (John 14:2). In the Father's house there are many mansions, many degrees of reward, many degrees of glory. Study carefully I Corinthians 3:11-15.

Angels cannot join in the song of the redeemed. Angels never knew the joy that our salvation brings, because angels have never been lost. They were created righteous, perfect, untouched by sin. It is true that some of them went astray, but they are reserved in chains now.

No one can join in the singing of the song sung by the 144,000 - not even the Church-because only this singular group can learn it. They have a song to sing which no other group can sing. They stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion. The Bride will be at the marriage supper in the sky and will dwell with the Lamb in the Pearly white City.

One day Jesus will stand on Mount Zion. One day He will reign from the city of Jerusalem in Mount Zion (read Isaiah 35:10, Jeremiah 3:17, Isaiah 24:23 and Psalm 2). The 144,000 are a **“firstfruit to God and to the Lamb.”** What the living ones and the elders are to the Bride, these 144,000 are to the redeemed sons of Abraham. John saw this great company standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb of God.

After studying the first five verses of Revelation 14 we must admit that this group is a special, singular group. There is no other group in Heaven or on earth like them.

THE ANGEL WITH THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

Revelation 14:6-7:

6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

In verse 6 an angel flies through the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth - every nation, kindred, tongue and people. This everlasting Gospel is to be preached to the peoples on earth at the end of the Great Tribulation period, immediately preceding the judgment of the nations when the sheep will be divided from the goats (Matthew 25:31-46).

The everlasting Gospel is not the Gospel of the Kingdom; it is not the Gospel of the grace of God. The message is judgment - not salvation; however, even though the message is judgment, it is good news to the elect (Israel) and to the saved nations, because they have gone through - and are now in - great tribulation. The saved ones will rejoice to hear the message of the everlasting Gospel.

Verse 7 records the message of the angel: **“FEAR God, AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM; FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”**

THE FALL OF BABYLON

Revelation 14:8:

8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

In verse 8 we learn that following the angel with the everlasting Gospel, there is another angel who is making an announcement.

The angel with the everlasting Gospel is preaching judgment; the second angel announces what would, in our language, be an “**Amen!**” The angel cries, “**Babylon is fallen, is fallen! That great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.**”

Babylon symbolizes the ungodly world-systems under Antichrist. We will study this more fully in Revelation 17 and 18.

THE DOOM OF THE BEAST-WORSHIPERS

Revelation 14:9-12:

- 9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,**
10. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:
11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.
12. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

In verse 9 we see still a third angel.

The first angel is preaching the Gospel of judgment. The second angel announces the fall of the colossal system of earth’s worst harlotry and corruption. The third angel announces the doom of the Beast-worshippers. The angel who preaches the everlasting Gospel admonishes the inhabitants of earth to worship God who created Heaven and earth. He is pleading with the people not to worship Antichrist (the Beast) but the masses will pay no attention to his message. The doom of those who receive the mark of the Beast, or who worship the Beast, is clearly outlined:

In verse 10, they will drink of the wine of the wrath of God. They will be tormented with fire and brimstone. The torment will be in the presence of the Lamb of God whom they rejected.

In verse 11, the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever . . . eternally, unending, and they have no rest day or night. Judgment is sounded out concerning those who receive the mark of the counterfeit messiah, or who worship the image of him. This Scripture is very clear and understandable.

These will be tormented with fire. Do I think that will be real fire? Why should I think anything else? When the Word of God clearly says, “**he shall be tormented with fire,**” why should I spiritualize or symbolize that statement?

It is real fire, just like the fire we know. Brimstone is added to the fire. If you look up that word in your dictionary, you will find that it means “*burning sulphur*”; that will add heat to the blaze and pain to the tormenting, which will be in the sight of the holy angels and the Lamb of God.

Smoke will boil up as from a great furnace. This is not spiritual nor symbolic smoke - it is real smoke. But tragedy of tragedies, the torment is unending . . . it will last forever and ever and ever and ever, day and night, day and night, no rest, no rest, no rest!

There are those today who tell us that the wicked will be burned up . . . that there is no such thing as an everlasting hell. I would like for these fellows to explain to me why, If God is going to burn up the wicked, He does not put out the fire. Why does the smoke ascend up forever and ever? There is no such thing as “soul-annihilation.” There is no such thing as the annihilation of the wicked. If God burns up souls, then how many days or nights does it take to burn up a soul?

In our present Scripture, these are burning day and night, continually, and in Revelation 20:10 the devil is cast into the lake of fire where the Beast and the False Prophet are. Please notice - “where they ARE.”

When the devil is cast in, it will be at the end of the Millennium when he is loosed for a little season. The Beast and the False Prophet were cast in at the beginning of the Millennium, and had been burning for one thousand years, and were not burned up. They are still burning - and they will burn forever and ever and ever. The rich man of Luke 16 is in hell at this very moment begging for one drop of water to cool his parching, blistering tongue.

Oh, you may not believe in hell - but dear friend, I have news for you: This Bible was here before you were, and it will be here when you are gone. What you believe about hell, what you have heard about hell, what your preacher preaches about hell does not matter. God has had His say, and that settles it.

If there is an eternal Heaven with the glories described in the Bible, then there is just as truly an eternal hell with the horrors described in the Bible. And friend, YOU HAD BETTER BELIEVE IT. If you do not believe in hell this side of the grave, you will believe in it on the other side!

BLESSEDNESS OF THE Holy DEAD

Revelation 14:13

13. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Verse 12 says, “**Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**” And then the Holy Spirit hastens to say, “**And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.**”

There are those who believe in soul-sleep . . . unconsciousness of the soul. These dear people believe that the spirit, body and soul go to the grave and return to dust until the resurrection. It is a mystery to me how they read that verse, and preach such damnable heresy.

The dead in the Lord are blessed. Blessed folks are happy - and the people in Paradise are happy. Luke 15:7 and 10 tell us there is joy in Heaven . . . rejoicing in the presence of the angels . . . over one sinner who repents. (We are not told that the angels rejoice when a sinner is saved. The Scripture says there is joy in the presence of the angels, but it is the redeemed who rejoice.)

Somehow, in some way, God makes known to a mother when her boy is saved here on earth. The mother who prayed many years for her boy, and went on to Heaven without seeing him saved, knows and rejoices when that boy is converted. There is joy in Heaven. The righteous dead are happy. They are at peace, they are resting, **“their works do follow them.”**

What a refreshing verse! What a comforting hope!

Happy are the dead who die in the Lord from this day forward! All believers who have died since the day of Pentecost have gone to the Paradise **“far above all heavens”** (Ephesians 4:7-11). The dead in Christ are with the Lord now, and will remain with Him until the Rapture.

When the Rapture takes place the bodies will be raised, and the spirit which is with the Lord now will reunite with the body. We who are alive will be changed and will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air. (Study II Corinthians 5:1-8, Philippians 1:21-24, Luke 16:22.) There is no intermediate state of unconsciousness for the dead. The righteous dead go immediately to be with the Lord; the wicked dead go immediately into hell. Then someone asks, “Why the resurrection?” I will explain when we reach Revelation 20.

If you have godly loved ones who are deceased, do not worry about where they are. They are resting in the presence of the Lord Jesus. If you are troubled at the thought of dying, if it scares you to think of a graveyard, remember that you are not going to the graveyard; your body will go there, but your spirit will **“go back to God who gave it”** (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Do not fret; the moment you close your eyes in death, that very selfsame moment you will open your eyes in the presence of God. **“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me”** (Psalm 23:4). Where Jesus is, it is light-never dark. Where Jesus is, all is peace - never fear. Where Jesus is, is Heaven - and even to pass through the valley of the shadow of death is Heaven, because Jesus will be with you if you are born again.

If you are afraid of death, if it frightens you to think of dying, then dear friend you have not experienced perfect love (I John 4:18). **“Perfect love casteth out fear,”** and if you are afraid to meet God, then I am afraid you will spend eternity with **“the fearful”** (Revelation 21:8).

Today is the day of salvation. Now is the accepted time. Bow your head and invite Jesus to come into your heart - and He will!

ARMAGEDDON
Revelation 14:14-20:

14. **And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.**
15. **And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.**
16. **And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.**
17. **And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.**
18. **And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.**
19. **And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.**
20. **And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.**

The battle described here, and the battle of Gog and Magog, described in Revelation 20:8-9, are two separate battles. This battle will be fought at the close of the Tribulation period. The battle of Gog and Magog will be fought at the close of the one thousand years' reign of Jesus. We will discuss that further when we reach chapter 20. The battle here is a battle of blood. The battle in chapter 20 is a battle of fire. Fire will come down from God out of Heaven and consume the armies of Gog.

Verse 14 describes what John saw: **“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.”**

In Acts 1:9-11 we have the account of Jesus ascending in a cloud. The disciples were eyewitnesses to the event. Two men from Heaven appeared and said to them, **“This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner (on a cloud) as you have seen him go into heaven.”**

“Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” (Luke 21:27).

This does not describe the Rapture of the Church. The Rapture takes place in Revelation 4:1-3, and is described in I Thessalonians 4:13-17. Luke 21:27 and Acts 1:11 describe the Revelation . . . the time when every eye shall see Him . . . the second phase of the second coming (Revelation 1:7, II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

John sees a cloud, and on the cloud **“one like unto the Son of man.”** There is no guesswork here, no speculation, for we know the identity of Him who is riding on a cloud: **“The clouds are His chariots.”**

“He who will judge the quick and the dead (II Timothy 4:1) is appearing on a white cloud. He is the one who will clear earth of all the hellish seed sown by the Antichrist and his followers. He will destroy the Antichrist **“with the brightness of His coming” (II Thessalonians 2:8).**

What a sight! One day the masses on earth will look up into the sky and will see a white snow bank . . . a giant cloud; and on the cloud the Lamb of God will be sitting. On His head will be a crown of pure gold. What a sight that will be!

Daniel knew of that event and prophesied in his day: **“I (Daniel) saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of days, . . . and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom . . .”** (Daniel 7:13,14). In these verses Daniel saw and recorded what John saw and recorded in Revelation. Jesus is coming back to this earth. His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4). He is coming to judge the nations (Matthew 25:31,32).

Verse 16: **“And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”**

Certainly we need not guess where these events are taking place. It is clearly set forth that they happen right here on this earth. When the Lamb of God thrusts His sickle into earth’s harvest, such plagues, such agonies as will immediately come upon the earth have never before been known. Men will **“gnaw their tongues for pain”** (Revelation 16:10). During this time the great whore sitting on the beast is stripped of her pride and haughtiness. She is filled with torment, burning, sorrow, anguish, woe, misery.

In verse 17, another angel appears out of the temple which is in Heaven, and he also has a sharp sickle. In verse 18, still another angel comes out from the altar, and this is the angel of fire. He cries with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, **“THRUST IN THY SHARP SICKLE, AND GATHER THE CLUSTERS OF THE VINE OF THE EARTH; FOR HER GRAPES ARE FULLY RIPE.”**

The Lamb who sits on the white cloud has **“a sharp sickle.”** He is coming in judgment, to reap the harvest of the earth. Sin’s harvest is fully ripe, and it is time to reap. When Jesus comes in the Rapture, He will come with a **“trumpet voice.”** The shout will be, **“Come up hither!”** (Revelation 4:1); but here He comes with a sharp sickle in His hand. (The sickle is an implement used in harvesting grain, and is still in use in remote sections of the Arab country today.)

The Lamb is about to reap **“the harvest of the earth.”** He will separate the tares from the wheat - and that will be a time of blood . . . rivers of blood. But those of us who are born again have nothing to fret about. The Church will not be here (Revelation 3:10; I Thessalonians 5:9).

In verse 15 another angel appears. This angel comes out of the temple, crying with a loud voice, speaking to Him who is sitting on the cloud and saying, **“Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”** What words!

What a tremendous announcement!

The Angel who stood on the land and the sea announced, “**There will be no further delay**” (chapter 10).

These things are happening in rapid succession. God is bringing to an end earth’s ungodliness and the reign of Antichrist.

There are six angels mentioned in chapter 14: Verses 6, 8, 9, 15, 17 and 18. Those mentioned in verses 15 and 17 come from the temple from whence the vials of the wrath of God are poured (Revelation 16:1). Notice there are six angels mentioned here - man’s number is six. Six is short of completion - the perfect number, seven. Six of these angels have to do with the completing of man’s affairs on the face of the earth.

Remember the souls of the martyrs in Revelation 6:9-11? They were crying, “**How long?**” They were assured that the wrath of God would be poured out, but they were instructed to rest for a little season. Now the wrath of God is about to be poured out upon these murderers here on earth. The brazen altar speaks of God’s acceptance. (Read Leviticus 1 and Ezekiel 9:2.)

The angel from the altar called with a loud voice. It was an urgent call . . . one that could not be delayed: “**GATHER THE CLUSTERS OF THE VINE OF THE EARTH; FOR HER GRAPES ARE FULLY RIPE,**” ready to be harvested and cannot wait. Psalm 80:8 identifies the true vine of the earth - Israel. Israel of old was the vine brought out of Egypt . . . the Lord’s fruit-bearing system on earth. In Isaiah 5:2-4 we learn that Israel produces “**wild grapes.**” In Jeremiah 2:21 we learn that God’s divine vine turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine.

Israel was therefore set aside by God to be replaced by “**the true Vine**” . . . the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone produces fruit acceptable to God the Father (John 15:1-10). The mark of true discipleship is to be a fruit bearing branch, and not just a branch. Jesus is the true Vine from Heaven. The Antichrist is the counterfeit vine that bears wild grapes that must be reaped and destroyed.

The expression “**vine of the earth**” constitutes the entire religious system in the coming crisis, when earth shall be reaped at the close of the Tribulation period. The grapes are fully ripe for judgment. They are gathered in bunches and cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. The great religious systems of earth led by Antichrist and his henchmen will be dealt with unsparingly by Almighty God. The tares will be gathered (Matthew 13:40-42). The branches that do not bear fruit will be burned (John 15:6).

That will be the day of “**THE VENGEANCE OF OUR God.**” Note this Scripture: “**Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come**” (Isaiah 63:2-4).

The prophet asked, **“Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel?”** Jehovah answers, **“I have trodden the winepress!”**

The angel thrusts in his sickle, and the vine of the earth is gathered, cast into the winepress of the wrath of God, the winepress is trodden by Jehovah God, and the Blood (not wine nor the juice of grapes) comes out of the winepress to the horses’ bridles for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs . . . which adds up to approximately two hundred miles of blood.

Jerusalem is the city referred to here. The valley is Armageddon, just north of Jerusalem. It is there that God’s wrath will be poured out. What a day! What a battle! What a river! Blood six feet deep, two hundred miles long, ten miles wide! What a sight to behold!

This is the terrible battle described in Revelation 16:14; 19:19. These accounts have their center in Palestine. It is there that the wickedness of the earth will be concentrated. Religiously speaking, Palestine has always been the center of the earth. The Beast and False Prophet meet their doom there. Gog and the King of the North will meet their doom there (Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39).

The consummation of God’s dealing with wicked men on the earth, as expressed in the harvest of the vintage, will center in Palestine, and is not confined to Israel alone, but also with the nations. The world today has its eyes upon Israel and the Palestine area.

Even as I dictate these words there are nations who would like to pounce upon Palestine. The Arabs hate the Jews, the Communists hate them . . . they are hated by millions around the world. But nations like America and England prevent the enemies of Israel from destroying that nation. However, when the Rapture takes place and God’s people are gone, the Antichrist will come into power and the state of Israel will then be at the mercy of the devil. He will make a covenant with them when he first appears, but he will break that covenant in the middle of the Tribulation period. The last three-and-one-half years will be a time of bloody death.

Let me sum up here what we have studied thus far:

John was on the Isle of Patmos for his testimony.

He was instructed to write in a book the things he had seen, the things he was looking upon, and the things which should be in the future. He did just that. He wrote concerning the vision he had seen; he wrote concerning the Church period in which he lived; and in chapter 4:1-3 he moves from earth to Heaven as the Rapture takes place.

In chapter four we see the redeemed around the rainbow-circled throne - the judgment seat for believers, where we will be rewarded for our stewardship (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

Chapter five speaks of the seven-sealed book containing the terms of earth’s redemption. John wept because no one was found worthy to open the book, but the Lamb prevailed . . . the Lion of the Tribe of Judah opened the book.

In chapter six we have the beginning of the removal of the seals. The Antichrist rides out on a white horse a symbol of peace. He is counterfeit; he has a bow and no arrow, but his white horse soon turns red.

Chapter seven gives the sealing of the 144,000 missionaries, and in the last of the chapter is revealed a great multitude of people saved through the ministry of the 144,000.

In chapter eight the seventh seal is opened, and the horrors under that seal were so terrible that all Heaven stood speechless for the space of half an hour. Four of the seven trumpets are recorded here.

Chapter nine opens with the fifth trumpet and the first woe. The last part of that chapter reveals the sounding of the sixth trumpet.

Chapter ten gives us the picture of the Angel (Jesus) with the little book . . . the same book as in chapter five, except that the seals have been removed and the book is now open.

In chapter eleven we saw the two witnesses of God - Moses and Elijah. They prophesied during the last half of the Tribulation; they cannot be destroyed until their ministry is finished, at which time they are put to death and their dead bodies lie in the street for three-and-one-half days. Their bodies are then resurrected and caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord. The last of chapter eleven resumes the trumpets, and the seventh and final trumpet is sounded.

In chapter twelve we have the judgment continued under the seventh trumpet. There is war in Heaven, and in this chapter we see seven personages.

In chapter thirteen the two Beasts appear - one a political dictator, the other a religious dictator.

In chapter fourteen we see the Lamb, sitting upon a white cloud, and the coming of the Lord Jesus in power and great glory, to pour out His fury upon earth's inhabitants. The doom of the Beast-worshippers is given in this chapter.

Out of the seventh trumpet come the seven vials of the wrath of God, which is God's final judgment upon this earth. At the end of the seven vials, the Antichrist and his systems will be put down forever, completely destroyed, and the Beast and False Prophet will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

~ end of chapter 14 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Seven Angels With the Seven Last Plagues

Revelation 15:1-8:

1. **And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.**
2. **And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.**
3. **And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.**
4. **Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.**
5. **And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:**
6. **And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.**
7. **And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.**
8. **And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.**

Chapter fifteen is a short chapter, but a very important one. In this chapter we will see the seven angels who have the seven last plagues. John sees the vision of the angels with the bowls of the wrath of Almighty God.

In Revelation 12:1 John saw a great sign in Heaven . a woman. In Revelation 12:3 he saw another sign . . . a red dragon. Now in Revelation 15:1 there is another sign . . . this one being “**great and marvellous.**” What makes this third sign so great and marvelous is that the “**full wrath of God**” is about to be poured out upon the persecutors of the woman (Israel).

There are three numbered groups of angels mentioned in the book of Revelation:

1. Revelation 7:1 mentions four angels.
2. Revelation 8:2, 15:1 and 16:1 mention seven angels.
3. Revelation 21:12 mentions twelve angels.

The seven angels who have the seven trumpets must undoubtedly be angels of a very high order: **“They stand before God.”**

This is not said of the Vial angels in our present chapter. The vials held by these seven angels are filled with the full fury of God’s wrath, and they are ready to pour out this fury upon the earth. The actual pouring out of the vials begins in 16:1.

After the vials of God’s fury are all poured out, Jesus comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God. This is the time when every eye shall see Him, when He comes in person to finish the judgment against the ungodliness of earth’s dwellers. Every eye shall see Him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him (Revelation 1: 7).

In verse 2, John sees a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had gained the victory over the Beast, over his image, over his mark and the number of his name are standing on the sea of glass, **“having the harps of God.”**

In Revelation 13 we studied the Beast and his power.

He went forth conquering and killing all who would not worship him and who refused to receive his mark. At that time he was victorious over the saints; he butchered them by the millions. But now all those who were martyred by him are victors on high, and the Beast is about to receive the fullness of the vengeance of Almighty God.

The Bible is fool-proof - no loopholes, no untied ends. John saw **“as it were** (it appeared as) **a sea of glass mingled with fire.”** That must have been a sight to behold!

In chapter 4 John saw **“a sea of glass like unto crystal.”** The sea was unoccupied when John saw it in chapter 4, but here we see those who have been victorious over the Beast; they are standing on the sea and they have something in their hands: **“harps of God.”** There will be music - such music as our ears have never heard!

Please note: These are standing. Their position denotes victory. They sealed their testimony with their life’s blood. They are now victors. They have **“harps of God,”** and they will share a martyr’s crown. (Read Hebrews 2:12 and Exodus 15.) Can you imagine the music that will come from this great company of heavenly musicians playing on harps of God? What a day that will be for the victorious hosts as they stand upon the calm sea of glass mingled with fire!

Verse 3 reveals the song they play and sing: **“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”**

The song of Moses celebrates God’s mighty deliverance of His people Israel - God’s elect.

The song of the Lamb celebrates the great redemption purchased by the Lamb on Calvary by the victorious shedding of His precious blood; and had the Lamb of God not laid His life down, had He not shed His precious blood, the Blood offered by the high priest in the Old Testament era would have been void.

All the shed blood of the Old Testament pointed to the Blood of the Lamb. Old Testament saints looked forward to the shedding of the Blood, while WE look back to Calvary. Without blood there is no salvation: Hebrews 9:22: “**Without shedding of blood is no remission.**” I John 1:7b: “**the Blood of Jesus Christ, (God’s) Son, cleanseth us from all sin.**”

The opening words of the song are “**Great and marvellous are thy works!**” These words also occur in verse one . . . John saw a sign which was “**great and marvellous**” . . . great and wonderful because of the great and wonderful victory which is made available through the accomplishment of that which John beheld. In verse 1, the sign of the closing judgments is “**great and marvellous,**” and in verse 3 the works of God are also “**great and marvellous.**”

The pouring out of the vials of wrath will be brief - but terrific, stupendous and wonderful in power. This work is ascribed to JEHOVAH . . . Almighty God . . . the self-existent Creator of all things, who is “**from everlasting to everlasting**” (Psalm 90:1,2). The judgments in these vials are terrible. Words cannot describe the pain, the woe, the anguish, the misery they will bring; but they are “**true and righteous.**” God deals in righteousness - whether it be with His own, His enemies, or whosoever. God cannot be untrue, He cannot be unrighteous. His judgment is righteous. In the last part of verse 3 we read, “**Thou King of saints.**” Jesus is not the King of the saints; we are members of His body - we are the New Testament Church.

But He is the King of Israel, King of kings, King of the earth, King of all nations. Nowhere is He referred to in the Bible as King of saints. We, the saints, will reign with Him here on the Millennial earth. Read I Corinthians 4:8, 6:2-3 and Revelation 1:6.

The nations here are about to be dealt with in final fury and righteous judgment; therefore, Jesus Christ is declared “**King of nations.**” He will put down all enemy rule and resistance (Jeremiah 10:7).

Verse 4: “**Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.**”

In this verse we have three reasons why all should fear the Lord and glorify His name:

1. “**For thou art holy.**” The Hebrew word here denotes that God alone is worthy of worship. The nations have been at this time worshipping the Beast. The cry to the nations is “**Fear God!**”
2. “**For all nations shall come and worship before thee.**” All nations of earth have never in the past worshipped before God, and they will never all worship before God until this time; but there is a day coming when all nations will bow at His feet (Zechariah 14:16,17; Isaiah 2:2-4, 56:6,7; Psalm 100 and Psalm 148).

3. **“Thy judgments (thy righteousnesses) are made manifest.”**

Note, please, the plural of the word **“judgments,”** signifying the righteous acts of God in these terrible, horrible judgments contained in the vials of wrath. Here God is declaring Himself to be righteous in judgment - and certainly that is reason enough for all peoples to fear God. **“O, God, deal with me in mercy!”** is my humble prayer. I seek the mercy of God . . . God’s grace . . . not my just desserts.

Verses 5-7: **“And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.”**

After **“these things”** in verse five, note a break a change of procedure in the judgments. The vials of God’s wrath are in a group all to themselves. Two things about the vial judgments differ from the seal and the trumpet judgments:

1. The throne in Heaven is the source of the seal and trumpet judgments. But the temple is the source of the vials. The temple takes the place of the throne in the vial judgments, introducing therefore an even more violent judgment than ever before witnessed on this earth. These vials, filled with judgment, come from God in His holy and righteous character.

2. These vials contain the wrath of God against the organized systems of evil, which are in power here upon the earth at that time; and the pouring out of these vials of God’s wrath will mean the consummation of all evil power here upon earth. God’s judgments upon evil men and their systems are being completed in order that the Millennium can begin, and there will then be peace on earth and good will toward men for the space of one thousand glorious years of peace.

In verse 5 we learn that John saw the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in Heaven, opened. From Revelation 11:19 to Revelation chapter 19, it is the **“temple in Heaven”** from which action on earth proceeds, and not the throne. Here - and also in Revelation 11:19 - the temple John saw is in Heaven, and is open. The temple in Heaven is the residence of Almighty God and God’s angels.

In Revelation 11:19 the ark of the covenant is seen. This ark is the token of God’s presence with, and interest in, His people - the elect; but here in verse 5 we see the tabernacle of the witness (testimony). This was a testimony really to the **“rights of God”** - which has been openly denied by the Antichrist, who claimed to be God and who announced from the temple that he WAS God; but now he is about to be put down by Jehovah God, and all of the ungodly systems of Antichrist will fall with him. **“The covenant”** was the sign of Israel’s security (Psalms 105:8; 106:45; 111:5). **“The witness”** testifies to judgment according to the holy nature of God, judgment upon His enemies and the would-be destroyers of God’s elect - Israel.

What a sight John saw when the temple was opened!

John did not see the priest of God ministering in the holy place, nor did he see the high priest ministering in the holy of holies, but the seven mighty angels with bowls, vials, containers . . . filled to the brim with the fury and the wrath of God. He did not see priests (the ministers of grace), but angels (the ministers of judgment).

God Himself has commissioned and equipped these angels for the terrible job they are to perform. God's temple of old was a temple of grace . . . a temple of mercy . . . a temple of longsuffering. Here His temple is open for judgment such as the world has never known.

The wickedness of earth's dwellers deserves judgment in all of its bitterness and fury, because they have insulted God as far as it is possible to insult God. God's holiness demands righteous judgment, and it is therefore imperative. There is no alternative. Since God made Adam, God has desired to bless mankind, reason with men, forgive them. But since Adam, men have decided against God, have made their own plans - and like Judas, they have gone "**their way.**"

Therefore God has no alternative. He must destroy wicked men; and in the final judgments He will completely rid this earth of all wickedness. The righteous character of the mission of these seven angels with the vials is signified by their apparel: "**pure and white linen.**" (See also Revelation 19:8.) They are wearing golden girdles, which signify divine righteousness in their action (Isaiah 11:5, Revelation 1:13). When John saw the Lord in Chapter One, He wore a golden girdle. The word "**beasts**" in verse 7 does not refer to an evil or wild beast as heretofore in chapter 13. One of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels the vials filled with God's wrath.

Verse 8: "**And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.**"

There are three distinct steps in this judgment of the seven angels who held the seven vials and came out of the temple of God, which was opened in Heaven:

1. The angels are commissioned and equipped in the temple - the sanctuary of Almighty God (verse 6). That does not sound like the lovely "grandfather-God" the liberals and modernists talk about today, does it?
2. One of the living creatures gives to each of the angels a golden bowl . . . a vial . . . filled with the fury of the wrath of Almighty God. That does not sound like the God of modernists of today, does it?
3. The angels cannot act until God gives them the command to move and to pour out their vials (Revelation 6:1). The eternal, ever-living God is the God of judgment. That does not sound like the tender, heavenly "Father of all men, all men are brothers, no one is bad, all men are good." That does not sound like some of the Sunday morning essays of today, does it?

God is longsuffering. He is patient. He is good. He is kind; but He is also a consuming fire. Paul warns us in Romans 11: "**Behold the goodness and the severity of God.**"

The Psalmist cries out, **“God is angry with the wicked every day”** (Psalm 7:11). Nahum warns, **“God will not acquit the wicked”** (Nahum 1:3). And Paul the Apostle thunders out, **“God is a consuming fire”** (Hebrews 12:29).

Please read these words slowly and carefully, and give heed to this statement concerning God’s power and God’s judgment:

“See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me.

**I KILL, I MAKE ALIVE;
I WOUND, I HEAL:**

Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the Blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: for He will avenge the Blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land (Palestine - the land given to Father Abraham for an everlasting possession) and to His people” (Deuteronomy 32:39-43).

Modernists will not preach about a God of judgment - only a God of love. No, there is entirely too much blood here to fit the modern Sunday morning sermon. But whether they preach it or not, whether they believe it or not, God is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). God deals in blood and fire, and if you are not covered by the Blood, then you will be engulfed in the fire. If you fail to receive His mercy and grace, then you will suffer His wrath and fury, and you will be judged when God performs **“HIS STRANGE WORK”** (Isaiah 28:21).

It makes no difference what you have heard, what you have read, what preachers have said, nor what seminaries have taught: The Bible is God’s Word, and that Word is forever settled in Heaven. All hell cannot change it. There is a hell . . . a hell of fire and brimstone. There is a judgment day, and all will be there. My advice to you, precious friend, is that if you are not as sure you are saved as you are sure you are breathing, then bow on your knees this moment and stay there until you can say,

“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!”

Yes, you can KNOW you are saved! And if you do not know it, you are not saved. Read II Timothy 1:12, I John 3:14, Romans 8:16.

~ end of chapter 15 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Seven Vials of the Wrath of God

Revelation 16:1

1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

This chapter opens with a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, “**Go . . . your ways.**”

Each angel had a specific set of orders. They were to go their separate ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. There is no mistake regarding the place where the contents of the vials are to be poured.

As we closed chapter 15, we saw the temple in Heaven filled with smoke . . . smoke from the glory of God. The temple was so filled that nothing inside could be seen and no one could enter there. Nothing could deter the coming judgment. There was a heavenly blackout, so to speak. There was no place for intercession, no place for a blood offering. There was no place for mercy!

Judgment in its final bitterness must come immediately . . . there could be no further delay. During the pouring out of the vials of wrath, God is hidden in the dark cloud of His glory, inside His temple . . . His house. God cannot be found until the seven angels have completed their missions - the pouring out of the contents of the vials given to each of them. Read Exodus 40:34-35, where, in the dedication of the tabernacle, Moses could not enter into the tent of the congregation “**because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.**” In I Kings 8:10-11, when the temple and its services were inaugurated, the priests could not enter, “**for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.**”

In our chapter in Revelation, it is not the glory of the Lord that fills the temple, but “**the smoke of the glory of the Lord.**” We have the glory of God in judgment here. In Revelation we have the terms, “**voice . . . voices . . . strong voice . . . loud voice . . . great voice.**” Each of these terms has a special significance. Where you find “**voice**” in Revelation, it is in reference to Christ, to God, to angels, to the living creatures, to the altar, or to the throne, etc. The word “**voices**” is found eight times in Revelation, and in seven of these times they have to do with God’s judgment (Revelation 4:5; 8:5-13b; 10:3, 4; 11:19; 16:18).

“**Strong voice**” in Revelation 18:2, “**loud voice**” in Revelation 5:2, and “**great voice**” in Revelation 16:1 and 21:3 all describe the character of the voice which is speaking. It is either the “**great voice**” of God Himself, or else He is speaking through an angel.

This “**great voice**” which came from the temple (the holiest spot of all) is tremendously stirred to holy wrath by those things which have been taking place on earth during the last half of the Tribulation, when Antichrist sounds out such blasphemy as Heaven, earth, nor hell have never known. God’s wrath burns fiercely, and that fierce wrath must be poured out. The number of angels is seven, signifying divine completeness. These seven vials are not filled with incense - but with wrath and fury. They were filled in the temple by Almighty God Himself . . . the holy, righteous One of Heaven and of earth. The seven angels stand by, vials in hand, ready to move upon God’s command. The “**great voice**” gives that command: “**Pour out your vials upon the earth!**” (The same voice announces the completion of the judgments in Revelation 16:17.)

Note the command to go and pour out - not “**in part**” - but to the last bitter drop. “**Empty your vials to the last drop, upon the earth!**” (Read Zephaniah 3:8, Psalm 69:24, and Jeremiah 10:25). The seven last plagues seem to be an answer to Israel’s prayer, “**Render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord**” (Psalm 79:12).

These seven vials are to be poured out upon all the earth - not just on one locality, but every square inch of this earth.

THE FIRST VIAL

Revelation 16:2:

2. “**And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.**”

In this verse, the first vial is poured out upon the earth. We know where and what the earth is, and there is no point in spiritualizing this statement. When the angel poured out his vial, a running sore came upon men who bore the mark of the Beast and upon them who worshipped his image.

In Revelation 8 we read, “**The first angel . . . the second angel . . .**”, etc. But here in Revelation 16:2 we read only “**the first,**” signifying that the contents of the vials are rapidly poured out, that judgments are short and follow in rapid succession. “**Except those days should be shortened, there would be no flesh saved**” (Matthew 24:22).

The first vial contained running, grievous sores, which reminds us of the Egyptian plague in the days of Moses. The sores in Egypt were the sixth plague, and the first to be inflicted upon man. (The previous ones were not directed to the bodies of men.) The sore in Moses’ day was a terrible, loathsome disease. Read Deuteronomy 28:27-35.

The God of Moses' day is the God of Revelation. The God of Pharaoh's day is the God of this day. If God poured out sores upon the ungodly men of Egypt, it will be no hard task for Him to again inflict people with running sores.

The Beast had influenced all the earth. The group designated here consists of the Beast-worshippers and those who had received his mark. These vials are to be poured out upon all the earth, and from that I gather that the mark of the Beast (and the Beast-worshippers) reaches throughout the universe. It began in Jerusalem, but quickly spread to the four corners of the earth.

The mark of the Beast is a ticket for those who wear it to be covered with running sores. At the time the vials will be poured out, there will be a very small remnant of God's elect on earth. Again I quote, **"Except those days were shortened, there would no flesh be saved"**; not one person would be spared.

The sores will be **"evil and grievous"** - a bad ulcer.

The Greek word signifies a sore that gives off highly offensive odors. Words cannot describe the despicable condition and the awfulness of such a plague. Will YOU be here? Dear friend, if you are not saved, you could be. If you are born again you will not be. If you do not know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are born again, bow your head and give your heart to Jesus right now.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." This terrible judgment of sores precedes the fall of Babylon which occurs in verse 19. The everlasting torment of the Beast worshippers (chapter 14:9-10) succeeds the fall of Babylon.

Notice please, the vials and the trumpets are alike in some respects but different in others. In the first four of each, the sphere of operation is the same . . . the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains of water, and the sun. But in the trumpet judgments the area is restricted to **"a third part."** The area affected under the vials is altogether different. No third or fourth part is mentioned. The whole earth will be affected . . . every square inch of it . . . and the Judgments under the vials are much more severe than the trumpet judgments.

No one escapes the judgments of the vials of the wrath of God.

Will you be covered with running sores one day, or will you be with Jesus when this terrible plague comes to earth?

THE SECOND VIAL

Revelation 16:3:

3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the Blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

I believe the vials will be poured out in rapid succession.

The first vial will be poured, and the second vial will immediately follow. In Exodus 7:17-25 the rivers of Egypt turned to blood . . . literal blood, not spiritual nor symbolic blood! Some symbolize the Blood, but why should I? I believe the sea will actually turn to blood **“as the blood of a dead man,”** just as the Bible tells us. It is so strange to me that some people have a hard time believing what the Bible has to say. They read it and they ask, “What does that mean?” The answer is clear: The Bible says what it means, and means What it says. In the words of Paul, **“Let God be true, but every man a liar.”**

There is no need to try to explain away the running sores, the blood of a dead man, and the literal baking and burning of the backs of men. There is no need to try to explain away God’s Word. If God sent real blood, real fire, real lice, real flies, real frogs, real darkness, real death to Egypt, then can He not do it again? Has God changed? You know the answer: **“God changes not!”** (Hebrews 13:8).

God has not changed His mind about sin, nor will He ever do so. One day the Mediterranean and other seas will change to the blood of a dead man. That will be a rotten, stinking, deplorable condition. All the fish, whales and all the sea monsters will die and begin to decay. Think of it! I am certainly glad I will not be here!

THE THIRD VIAL

Revelation 16:4-7

4. **And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.**
5. **And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.**
6. **For they have shed the Blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.**
7. **And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.**

In these verses we have the outline of what will happen when the third angel pours out his bowl of the fury of God upon this earth. Moses stretched out his hand upon the waters of Egypt, and all the waters in the river were turned to blood. The fish in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt (Exodus 7:20, 21). In Egypt, one river turned to blood; but in Revelation 16:4 every river on earth turns to blood, every fresh fountain of water turns to blood. The earth will have nothing but blood to drink!

MAY I HAVE YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION:

Every time you drink a glass of cold, sparkling, crystal-clear water, whether you be sinner or saint, you should breathe a prayer and say, “Thank you, God, for the water.” There is no water in hell; the rich man has been begging for one drop of water for more than 1900 years!

When the third angel pours out his bowl of God's wrath upon this earth, there will not be one drop of fresh drinking water left. All waters will be changed into pure blood.

People will go to their iceboxes, open the door, take out a pitcher - no, it will not be tomato juice; it will be congealed blood!

They will go to the faucet and open it. At first they will say, "There is rust in the pipes." But it will not be rust - it will be blood! The longer they run it, the redder it gets. They will go to the fountains, mash the button - and blood will spurt forth.

In the name of all that is reasonable, if you are not saved can you afford to take a chance on being left if the Rapture should take place in the next sixty seconds?

You do not know that it will not. I am not trying to prove that it will - but I can prove that everything in the Bible that needs to be fulfilled before the Rapture of the Church has been literally fulfilled, is being fulfilled, before your very eyes this moment.

In Revelation 8:10-11, a third of the rivers became wormwood and many died because of the bitterness; but here the blood is universal. As the judgments come nearer the end, they become more severe, and they are worldwide. All of this terrible thing will begin in Jerusalem, but it will spread to the four corners of the earth.

No water to drink! Have you ever been thirsty? REAL thirsty? I was reared on the farm and I thought I knew what thirst was, until I went to the mission field and we went back into the jungles to visit the Pygmies in French Equatorial Africa. We traveled by truck, then by river boat, then by dugout canoe. Then we walked for thirty miles. Our water gave out, and we dared not drink the water in the streams because of the filth, germs and parasites.

The missionary warned us and watched us lest we drink the water. It was clear, it looked good - but it was filled with disease.

We walked for more than half a day in the hot African sun, and I discovered the real meaning of thirst. When we arrived at the missionary's home, we drank every drop of water in the house! The dear missionary's wife was forced to boil water, even for the evening meal. We emptied every container he had. Beloved, that is one time I said grace over water!

As I drank, I thought of hell and of the peoples on earth when every fresh fountain turns to blood.

Do you know the Lord? Are you born again? If you are not, then my dear friend you are headed for a place where there is no water, and never will be! God help you to give your heart to Jesus. Read II Peter 3:9, John 3:16-18.

When the angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains and they became blood, the angel of the waters said: **"Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus."**

The angel of the waters was in perfect agreement with God's divine judgment. He justifies God's act by saying, "**For they have shed the Blood of saints and prophets**"; therefore, "**Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.**"

Then another angel from the altar of God said, "**Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.**" The angels are saying, "Amen! Lord God Almighty, you are right! Let them drink blood. They shed the Blood of the saints; give them blood to drink! They are worthy, they deserve it!"

You may rest assured, sinner or saint, you will receive from the hand of God in judgment, exactly what YOU deserve - no more, no less. You will get what is coming to you. Men deliberately spurn God's love and refuse His mercy. God has stretched out His hand . . . they have paid no attention. Men set at naught God's counsel; they will not listen to His reproof. Therefore, God will pour out His fury upon them and He will laugh at their calamity. Read Proverbs 1. Men who take pleasure in sin and ungodliness must be damned (II Thessalonians 2:8-12; Deuteronomy 32:39-43; Isaiah 28:21).

THE FOURTH VIAL

Revelation 16:8-9:

8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

In Revelation 8:12 the heavenly bodies were affected. "**One-third**" were blacked out. But here it is altogether different. The power of the sun is increased until the terrific heat and blazes of fire from the sun scorch and burn the backs of men, roasting them. What a horrible thought! God takes His mighty hand, pushes the sun so near the earth that the sun-rays scorch the backs of earth's inhabitants! God created the sun, and it would be a small thing for Him to put it close enough to earth to scorch men. Both Moses and Malachi speak of a day in which it will "**BURN AS AN OVEN,**" when men shall be "**DEVOURED WITH BURNING HEAT**" (Deuteronomy 32:24, Malachi 4:1).

Hear this solemn declaration: "**The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant . . . therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left**" (Isaiah 24:4-6).

Remember again: "**Except those days be shortened, there would be no flesh saved.**"

Some Bible teachers spiritualize this fire. God pity them! When this angel pours out his vial of wrath, the sun is smitten and sends forth rays that are so hot they burn men as if a blowtorch were turned on their backs.

The dwellers of the earth will be scorched with terrific heat. They are oppressed, burned, killed by the strong rays of the sun. They are smitten with sunstrokes, overwhelmed with heat, suffocated. And yet some Bible teachers spiritualize this judgment when the fourth angel pours out his vial of the wrath of God! God help them! I am glad I will not be standing in their shoes at the judgment of God. God, in this one of the last plagues, takes the beautiful, life-giving, earth-warming sun and turns it into a giant ball of tormenting fire. Can you imagine it? Can you picture it in your mind? Can you picture men and women with their backs, faces, arms, legs, a mass of giant blisters . . . parched, dried skin burned with intense heat. Can you imagine a sight like that?

You would think that everyone on earth would fall on their faces and cry out to God for mercy and beg God to save them - but according to the Word of God, those who are burned “**repented not to give Him the glory.**” Instead of repenting, they blasphemed God for sending such plagues upon them. You know why? They are sold under sin. They are marked for hell. They knew the truth but refused to accept it. They accepted Antichrist instead of Christ, and they bear the mark of the Beast.

They worship him . . . they were true to their god (the Antichrist) and therefore they are doomed and damned with him. What a terrible, horrible end for mankind - and yet millions will come to this fiery, blazing end.

When men know God but refuse to glorify Him as God; when men change the truth of God into a lie; when men refuse to keep God in their knowledge, God gives them up. Read carefully Romans 1:18 ff. The most dangerous thing in this world is for a man to know the way of God, hear the way of truth, and boldly refuse to follow God in truth.

THE FIFTH VIAL Revelation 16:10-11:

10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

You can see from this plague that all seven vials are poured out in rapid succession during a very short period of time. The people still have their sores. They received the sores when the first vial was poured out. Now the fifth vial is poured out, and the sores are still with them.

Get this picture if you can: First, men who have the mark of the Beast are covered with running, “**grievous**” sores. Next, the sea turns to the blood of a dead man, and all life in the sea dies. Then, all the fresh water is turned to blood and people have only blood to drink. To make conditions worse, the sun then burns men so that they are scorched with blistering heat. God then blacks out the entire universe, and people move about in gross darkness. Their pain is so unbearable they **GNAW THEIR TONGUES AND CURSE GOD!**

Isaiah foresaw that day and he wrote about it: “**Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.**” (Isaiah 60:2).

Joel saw that day: “**The day of the Lord cometh . . . a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness . . . the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. . . .**” (Joel 2:1, 2, 31).

Nahum saw that dreadful day. He said that God will pour out His fury like fire upon the people. “**Darkness shall pursue His enemies**” (Nahum 1:6-8).

Jesus said, “. . . **In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall . . .**” (Mark 13:24, 25).

There will be total darkness over all the earth. There will be no moon, no sun, no stars - only inky, black, total darkness.

There are some who spiritualize the darkness and symbolize the gnawing of tongues because of pain.

But as always, unless God definitely tells me that it is symbolic or spiritual, I read it and take it literally - just as I accept the virgin birth, the crucifixion, the shed blood, the resurrection. I do not spiritualize those things; why should I spiritualize the darkness, the blood, the sores - and the fact that people will be in such agony they will chew their tongues and the pain will not be noticed, compared with the other torment they will be enduring at that time!

The last time the entire earth was totally blacked out was when Jesus hung on the cross. He was paying the sin-debt. He took the sinner’s place . . . outer darkness forever. Jesus suffered all the agony, pain and misery of an eternal hell for you and me. No, He did not go to the fires of hell, but He suffered all the agony, even the darkness.

Verse 11 is very needful and enlightening. These people who are in such agony do not fall on their faces and beg God for mercy. They curse God and blaspheme His name. They do not repent. These people have been sent strong delusions. They believed The Lie - they must be damned.

THE SIXTH VIAL

Revelation 16:12:

12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

There is only one “**great river Euphrates.**” Since the sores were literal, the blood, the heat and the darkness were literal, why should not this be a literal river?

It is! You will recall that God on one occasion rolled back the Red Sea (and on another occasion, the River Jordan), in order to prepare a way for His people.

These miracles were a blessing to God's people - but they also brought judgment upon the enemy. When God rolled back the waters of the Red Sea, He prepared the way of deliverance for Israel, which also was a way of destruction for Pharaoh and his mighty army, who were trying to destroy Israel. When God rolled back the River Jordan, He prepared the way for the destruction of the wicked city of Jericho and the giant confederation of the Canaanites.

The Euphrates River has been a great dividing line for ages, dividing the countries of the east from those of the west in that part of the world. This river is 1780 miles long, from 300 to 1200 yards wide, and its depth ranges from ten to thirty feet. Most of the year it is even larger, depending upon the rainfall. It was the boundary of Solomon's kingdom. It is spoken of as the northeast limit of the land promised to Israel (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 11:24; Joshua 1:4).

History testifies to the great hindrance this river has afforded to armies down through the ages.

The drying up of the Euphrates, as set forth in our present study, will prepare the way and open the door to allow the gigantic eastern armies to cross the country and assemble around the Antichrist.

This will be the "**great day of God Almighty.**" Isaiah saw this day when he said, "**With His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river (Euphrates) and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry shod.**" Read carefully Zechariah 10:11 and Jeremiah 51:36.

At the drying up of the river, John sees something else:

In I Kings 22:20-22 we read, "**And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.**"

The Lord gave permission for a lying spirit to be in the mouth of Ahab's prophets. They prophesied lies to him, he went up to Ramoth-gilead, was killed, and the dogs licked his blood. A spirit from hell was allowed to go forth to inflame and deceive Ahab and to cause him to walk directly into a death trap. So it will be with the kings of earth when the three evil spirits shall deceive them and bring them in for the battle of "**God Almighty.**"

In the case of Ahab it was "**one evil spirit,**" but in our Scripture in Revelation it is "**three unclean spirits,**" which are termed the "**spirits of demons**" and are likened unto frogs - loathsome, filthy, disgusting, bred out of the quagmire of the universe. These are sent out on their terrible mission.

THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS

Revelation 16:13-16:

13. **And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.**

14. **For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.**

15. **Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.**

16. **And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.**

At this period of the reign of the Antichrist, all the kings of earth have bowed to his commands and are allied with him in all-out war to crush the remnant of Israel who have refused to accept the false messiah or to receive his mark. In order to congregate all these kings and their armies in one place at one time for the last great slaughter, God does two things:

1. He dries up the great river Euphrates that would hinder their movements toward Jerusalem.
2. He allows three demon spirits to go out and draw the kings and their armies to Jerusalem for the battle.

God has not changed since Old Testament days.

These spirits have power to work miracles - satanic miracles - and through these miracles the multitudes who are following the Antichrist will be deceived. Through the power and unusual miracles of the spirits, all the followers of the satanic trinity will be stirred up to declare war on the Lamb and His followers who are in Jerusalem.

The whole satanic system responds, and unites to march to Jerusalem for the great battle - and they will find the going easy since Euphrates, the great natural barrier, is dried up.

This is not the only mention of these evil spirits.

Paul warns that in the last days seducing spirits will come, teaching lies. Read the account in I Timothy 4:1-6.

With holy irony the Holy Spirit dictates these memorable words to Joel: **“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord”** (Joel 3:9-11).

Here is a word-picture of that great gathering for the great battle: **“ . . . The heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing . . . The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision (confusion)”** (Psalm 2:1-4).

Read the entire second Psalm for the picture of that great day when the armies of Christ and Antichrist meet around Jerusalem in the valley of Armageddon.

In verse 15 John gives a solemn warning: **“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”** Why is this strange announcement here?

The voice of Jesus is making this announcement. These words sound like the words which Jesus Christ our Lord spoke to the Church concerning the Rapture, but since the Church was raptured almost seven years previous to this Scripture, how does this announcement apply here? For whom is Jesus coming? Revelation 15:2 gives a picture of the group for whom Jesus is coming at this stage in the pouring out of the seven vials.

During the reign of Antichrist, not all will bow down and worship him, nor will all receive his mark. Most of those who refuse to do so will be killed, but some will live through it all, up to the pouring out of the seventh vial. It is for these faithful ones that Jesus comes just before the great Battle of Armageddon begins. They will be supernaturally removed from the earth, and those who have been killed will be raised and given a new body. Revelation 6:9-11 gives a picture of these martyrs - but they must be faithful unto the end if they would be in that number (Matthew 24:13).

Final judgment cannot be poured out until every righteous one is out of the range of God’s fury.

It was thus in the days of the flood. Not one drop of rain fell until Noah was in the ark and “the Lord shut the door” (Genesis 7:1-16).

It was likewise in the days of Sodom. Lot was a just (righteous) man (II Peter 2:6-8), and God could not destroy Sodom until Lot was safely outside the city.

Read the entire nineteenth chapter of Genesis, noting especially verse 22: **“Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither!”**

The Church - the Bride of Christ - will not go through one day of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:10; 4:1-3). So it will be in the darkest hour of all human history . . . every God-fearing person must be removed before Almighty God thrusts in the sharp sickle (the Word) to reap the earth. **“And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”** (Revelation 16:16).

Armageddon means *Mount of Megiddo*, which takes in the plain of Jezreel, the great valley that runs through the middle of the Holy Land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. It is approximately two hundred miles long and ten miles wide. The name comes from a Hebrew root which means “*to cut off*,” and that is exactly what God will do in that great hour! This valley has been a place of slaughter down through the ages. It was the great battlefield of the Old Testament. Judges 5:19 tells us that **“the kings came and fought . . . by the waters of Megiddo.”** II Chronicles 35:22 tells us that **“Josiah came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.”**

The sixth vial brings all the kings of earth, with their armies, to the valley of slaughter. All is now ready for the last vial to be poured out. What a sight! Jerusalem is now surrounded by armies; there are millions of soldiers with their kings. They are determined to wipe the names of God and Jesus from the earth and from the memory of man. But alas! What a deluge of blood they are to enter. Two hundred miles of blood - six feet deep and ten miles wide (Revelation 14:20).

Are YOU saved, dear reader? Amen! if you are; but woe be unto you if you are not! Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved NOW! (John 5:24, Romans 10:9,10).

THE SEVENTH VIAL

Revelation 16:17-21:

17. **And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.**
18. **And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.**
19. **And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.**
20. **And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.**
21. **And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.**

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, IT IS DONE!”

From the seat of the Judge of all, we have the announcement that it is done. This is the climax! When Jesus paid the supreme price for the redemption of sinners, just before He died He cried, **“IT IS FINISHED!”** On the Cross He finished redemption for the soul. Nothing more can be added. Redemption of the soul is complete in Jesus. And now, the judgment of the earth is done. It, too, is finished! Jesus Christ is about to rid the earth of the dragon, the Beast, and the false prophet. The contents of the little seven-sealed book are completed. Every minute detail has been carried out and the whole creation at last will stop **“groaning and travailing in pain”** (Romans 8:22). **IT IS DONE! HALLELUJAH!**

The events which follow the pouring out of the seventh vial are without parallel in human history.

Never has there been such calamity, confusion, chaos, discomfiture, discord, agitation, upheaval and such cataclysmic manifestations upon this earth as will be when the seventh vial is emptied! The air will go into mighty convulsions. There will be lightnings, thunderings, and voices. This vial is poured into the air; the air is first affected, and then the judgment moves down to earth.

Many of the prophets foretold these days when the heavens would undergo terrific judgments. Read Psalm 102:25,26 and Isaiah 51:6.

Matthew 24:29 and Hebrews 12:25-26 refer to the shaking of the powers of the heavens. Peter tells us that the heavens shall pass away with a great noise (explosion) and the elements will melt with fervent heat (II Peter 3:10-12). (This refers to the first and second heavens, where the clouds and stars are, not to the abode of God, which is the third Heaven - II Corinthians 12:1-4). Isaiah says that the Lord of hosts shall visit **“with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, and with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire”** (Isaiah 29:6).

Psalm 50:3-4 tells us, **“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.”**

In Revelation 17 the kingdom of Satan is crumbling.

He has been prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2) for six thousand years, but his rule is about over. The elements have turned on him and the air is turned into liquid fire!

The situation on earth is no better: **“And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.”** This is the time of which Isaiah was speaking when he said the Lord would arise **“to shake terribly the earth”** (Isaiah 2:19-21). Haggai recorded it in these words: **“Yet once . . . and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations . . .”** (Haggai 2:6, 7).

Revelation 16:19 gives us some idea of the terror and the greatness of this earthquake: **“And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.”**

Please note that the **“great city”** (Jerusalem) is shaken into three parts; and that all the other cities are reduced to total ruin.

Can you imagine an earthquake so great and so powerful that it levels all the cities of the earth? Jerusalem is now protected from total ruin because it is in part possessed and appropriated as being the Lord's (Revelation 11:1,2). This earthquake will be so powerful that the Mount of Olives will break in half, with one half moving toward the east and the other toward the west. Read Zechariah 14:4; 13:8-9. Here we have two parts of the land cut off, destroyed . . . one part is preserved . . . **“I will bring the third part through the fire.”** I believe this verse refers to the time of our Scripture in Revelation 16:19.

All the cities of earth are ruined in this gigantic earthquake . . . yes, even those great and powerful cities of Rome, Cairo, London, and New York! Can you imagine the death and destruction of such an hour?

This is it! This is the end of the systems of the devil and his henchmen . . . Verses 20 and 21:
“And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

Men must spend billions of dollars on bombs, planes, ships and guns in order to carry on war; but not so with God. He uses mountains for tanks and islands for torpedoes!

In chapter 6, the mountains moved out of their places, and when men prayed and begged the mountains to fall on them and hide them **“from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne,”** they refused to obey; but now it is different. The Tribulation is about over. If those days were not shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake God will shorten them.

Jeremiah 4:23-26: **“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.”**

But that is not all:

From the sky fell hailstones weighing about a talent. Talents varied in weight at the time of the writing of Revelation. The Jewish talent of silver was 115 pounds, while all others were 135 pounds. An Egyptian talent was 86 pounds. In Antioch, they used talents of 390 pounds. So, whatever the weight, these hailstones are tremendous, even if they weigh only the smallest talent.

Have you ever been in a hailstorm? The largest hail I have ever seen was about an inch and a half in diameter . . . about the size of a hen egg. I cannot imagine pieces of ice that will weigh between one hundred and four hundred pounds, falling out of the clouds! Imagine the chaos this will bring upon this old earth! But what effect did this great deluge of hail have upon men? **“And men blasphemed God because of the plague of hail.”**

It would seem that by this time, someone would be praying . . . but no, they have sold out to sin and the devil for eternity, and there is no repentance for them!

What about YOU, dear reader? Are you saved? Do you know Jesus? Have you crossed the deadline? Please get this picture of what sin finally pays in wages:

These people who are cursing God in Revelation 16:21 are those who chose Antichrist instead of Christ.

They accepted the mark of the Beast and worshipped him.

Whom have YOU accepted, dear reader? At whose feet are you worshipping? You are either on God’s side or on the side of the devil, for there is no middle ground.

These people were marked to receive the outpouring of the vials of God's wrath, and the first vial covered them with vile, running, odoriferous sores. Then the sea was changed into the blood of a dead man and every living thing in it died. This means that every beach and shoreline was filled with dead, rotting carcasses. What a foul time that will be!

But that is not all: In the midst of all this, they are given nothing but blood to drink. All the fountains of water are turned into blood! Their misery is then increased by heat which is so intense that it literally blisters their skin and burns them into such agony that they curse God because of the heat.

God then blacks out the universe, and in the total darkness they gnaw their tongues for pain. What agony!

But the worst is yet to come:

From the removing of the first seal in Revelation 6:1 to the outpouring of the last vial in Revelation 16:17 every phase of judgment becomes more and more severe. Undoubtedly the seventh vial is what Heaven saw when it was silent for the space of half an hour (Revelation 8:1).

Giant hailstones fell from Heaven . . . pieces of ice weighing more than a hundred pounds each. No wonder there would be no flesh left on earth if those days were not shortened!

But thank God, the born again will not be here, for we will be in the air with our blessed Lord. Thank you, Jesus, for saving my soul! Thank you, Jesus, for making a way of escape! Do you know Him, dear soul? If you do, then bow your head right now and thank Him for saving you. Then pray for others who read these lines, that they, too, may be saved. Dear sinner, repent and be saved right now!

~ end of chapter 16 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots; The Last Form of Gentile World-Power Revelation 17:1-7:

- 1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:**
- 2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.**
- 3. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.**
- 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:**
- 5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**
- 6. And I saw the woman drunken with the Blood of the saints, and with the Blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.**
- 7. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.**

The fall of Babylon was announced in Revelation chapter 14. Under the seventh vial the judgment of that guilty system takes place. The events in Revelation 14:8 through the remainder of the chapter take place AFTER the pouring out of the seventh vial. This is an important help in proper understanding of the various parts and visions of the book.

The character of Babylon, her relationship to the Beast and to the kings of the earth in general, together with details of her judgment are then unfolded in the two following chapters (17 and 18). It must not be supposed that the subject matter of these chapters follows on from the seventh vial. The account is not consecutive.

The subject of Babylon is of great importance and plays a prominent part in Revelation. To understand who and what Babylon is, we will adhere strictly to the Word of God, and pay no attention to what we have heard by way of man. Join me here in earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit will be our guide as we proceed.

The devil is a “master counterfeiter.” For everything God has that is good, the devil has a counterfeit.

There is the Trinity of God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Satan has his trinity: the Dragon, the Antichrist, the False Prophet. God calls and ordains preachers . . . so does the devil (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

There are two women in Revelation: One righteous - the mother of righteousness and purity (Revelation 12) - about whom we have already studied; the other unrighteous - the mother of harlots and abominations (Revelation 17). One - of God; the other - of Satan.

By making comparisons and by reasoning, we will find out who this woman is, in Revelation 17:

Both women mentioned above are mothers: The first brought forth a Son, who is to rule all nations. The second is the mother of harlots.

Both women are splendidly dressed: The first was wearing heavenly garments, “**clothed with the sun**”; her clothing is “**light**” from Heaven. The second woman is “**arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls.**” Her clothes and jewels are all earthly, and from the earth.

The first woman has the moon (the power of darkness) under her feet. The second woman “**hath rule**” Over the kings of the earth.

Both mothers suffer: The first battles with the dragon to save her child from being devoured. The dragon pursues her and drives her into the wilderness. The second woman suffers at the hands of the ten kings who supported her, but who now make her naked, desolate, eat her flesh and burn her with fire, while God in all His power and fury judges her and visits her with plagues, death, and utter destruction.

Both women fill a great place in world affairs: One pure, the other a harlot; one hated by earth’s powers, the other loved!

- One produces masculine nobility - the other produces feminine impurity.
- One is helped by celestial wings - the other is carried by dragon power.
- One has upon her head a crown of twelve stars - the other has upon her head the name of the destroyer, and is drunk with the blood of saints and prophets.
- One finally takes up her abode in the heavenly city surrounded by all saints of all ages. The other suddenly goes down to eternal ruin in the hot wrath of Almighty God.

These two women are rivals in every respect, and are just as opposite in character as day and night. The first woman we have already identified. Chapter 12 gives the picture of Israel bringing forth the Man Child. “**Salvation is of the Jews.**” Jesus came forth out of Israel.

We will now identify the second woman, “**the mother of harlots**”:

The outstanding thing said about her is that she is a harlot . . . **“the Great Harlot.”** She advertises her harlotry by wearing on her head the name **“Mother of Harlots”!** In the Word of God, harlotry stands for “debauched worship - idolatry - false devotion.” When people worship as God that which is not God, but a god of their own making; when people give their hearts to idols; when they set up systems, doctrines, rites and rituals to replace what God has commanded and revealed in His Word, in Scripture, that is called whoredom, adultery, fornication. Read carefully Jeremiah 3:6, 8, 9; Ezekiel 16:32; Hosea 1 and 2; Revelation 2:22.

When God’s divine laws and ordinances are broken down, the sacredness of marriage and morals goes with it. Some religions on earth today are hotbeds of immorality. The law of God, the first and greatest commandment, Jesus said, is to **“love the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength”** (Mark 12:29,30). To bestow such honor on a god of our own making is spiritual harlotry!

This woman in Revelation 17 has turned the hearts of kings and multitudes of kings’ subjects to gods other than Jehovah God and Christ Jesus. She is the mother of every “ism” and false religion that has been born since Cain thought he could satisfy God with an offering of his own choosing. That takes in every church, religion and cult that does not give Jesus Christ and His verbally inspired Word pre-eminence in every detail of worship.

This scarlet-clad female is **“THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF EARTH.”** That dates back a long way. She conceived and gave birth to the first spiritual adulterer. She is the mother of them all, just as Israel (nationally speaking) is the mother of our Lord and Saviour.

When and where did the **“mother of harlots”** begin? We read in the tenth and eleventh chapters of Genesis that the beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, was Babel . . . or “Babylon.” It was in the land of Shinar where the people of earth dwelt and **“were all of one speech.”** The Scriptures imply that these people all came together under the leadership of Nimrod - which name means *“rebellious panther.”* That is exactly what he was . . . he was a forerunner of the Antichrist. At his suggestion and under his leadership the people determined to build a city and a tower to reach up into Heaven . . . into God’s house, if you please! They intended to get to Heaven in their own way and by the labors of their own hands.

Bible history tells us that Nimrod was a mighty organizer. He enslaved the people and made them work for him for mere bread. He was the first earthly king; he founded “king craft” and tyranny. He said he saw a golden crown in the sky, he had one made like it, and he wore it - setting himself up as a form of deity. Without a doubt, many worshipped him as God. The Bible tells us that the people who were going to build a tower into Heaven wanted to **“make a name for themselves.”** They wanted to be independent of God.

They wanted to organize and become one, never to be separated and scattered over the face of the earth. Read carefully Jeremiah 13:11; 33:9; Ezekiel 39:13 and Zephaniah 3:20. History goes further to say that Nimrod made a great statue of his wife, Semiramis, and set it up in the capital of his empire. That capital was “Bab-el,” or our word Babylon.

The word Babel means “*gate to god*” . . . not the true God of Heaven and earth, but Nimrod’s image-god.

It was a denial of God’s way to Heaven and a denial of salvation by grace. No doubt this was the beginning of image worship. It is possible that the image of Nimrod’s wife was the first image of a woman to be set up in a temple for worship.

Nimrod was a Heaven-defying founder of a new religion, bypassing the true God of Heaven. It is a mistake to think that idolatry was the gradual outgrowth of well-disposed but unenlightened human thinking. Idol worshippers came into prominence suddenly. Idolatry was born in intentional rebellion against God. It was born in the heart of the forerunner of the false messiah, Antichrist.

God stopped the city, stopped the building of the tower, scattered the people to the four corners of the earth and brought about a confusion of tongues; but the people did not forget the idol worship Nimrod had taught them. Godless forms and rituals have been handed down through the ages, and the most remote tribe on earth has its idol. They worship the sun, the moon, trees, snakes, cows . . . “**the abominations of earth.**”

Even in nominally Christian America the influence of idol worship is reflected in the images seen on dashboards of automobiles, in jewelry worn today, and even in contemporary art and modern music.

The nations were “**drunk with the wine of her fornication.**” What is the wine of fornication? The wine of Babylon, “**mother of harlots,**” is none other than her debauching system of idol worship and carnal system of self-exaltation against God. Read carefully I Corinthians 1:26-31.

By actual recorded fact, more than two-thirds of earth’s population today are worshippers of idols. The spirit of Nimrod and Babylon is still living. The space program to reach the moon and bypass God to reach Heaven is the same spirit as that of Nimrod.

All the governments of earth today lean more to the spirit of Babylonianism (which represents everything opposed to God), than toward the Spirit of God. Earth’s governments will license men to sell products and indulge in business that will damn souls by the million. The spirit of Babel which symbolizes a political-religious system will be here until King Jesus puts it down forever. What about YOU, dear reader of this message?

Where will you be when the Scarlet Woman rides out? Will you be in Heaven with Jesus, on earth with Antichrist, or in hell with the screaming millions of the damned? It all depends upon whether you accept or reject the Lord Jesus. Read John 1:11-13; John 3:18; Hebrews 2:4; Romans 10:9, 10, 13.

Be saved ere it is too late, if you are not already saved. If you ARE saved, praise God for saving your soul!

THE LAST FORM OF GENTILE WORLD-POWER

Revelation 17:8-18

8. **The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.**
9. **And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.**
10. **And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.**
11. **And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.**
12. **And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.**
13. **These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.**
14. **These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.**
15. **And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.**
16. **And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.**
17. **For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.**
18. **And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.**

We found the following to be true of the Scarlet Woman:

1. She was marked by harlotry.
2. She was the mother of harlots and abominations.
3. She was born under Nimrod and ancient Babylon.
4. She made earth drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Now, in verse 6, the woman also is drunk . . . drunk on blood! Drunken from the Blood of saints and martyrs . . . witnesses of Jesus Christ. This definitely dates the woman back to the days of the prophets. She is no modern system or set-up. She was when the prophets were, and she shed their blood. She is responsible for every martyred prophet and saint down through the ages.

This woman is not pagan Rome alone. Millions of saints died a martyr's death before the days of pagan and political Rome. Rome is included, to be sure, but much more than Rome is included. Wherever believers suffer for their faith in Jesus Christ and are persecuted for that faith - many times even unto death - there the harlot of Revelation 17 is still living and operating against the Lord God, whether it be in pagan Rome, or among Jews, Catholics, Mohammedans . . . or a score of others which space will not allow us to name here.

This mother of harlots is sitting upon “**many waters . . . the waters are peoples, and multitudes, and tongues, and nations.**” This statement clearly shows that the teaching and harlotry of this woman are universal. You cannot find one tribe on earth today that does not have its religion and its gods. You may go to the darkest jungle and find there the influence of paganism and idol worship!

The woman was not only sitting upon many peoples - she was also riding upon a scarlet Beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

This is the same Beast seen in Revelation chapter 13. This Beast which John saw . . . was . . . is not . . . shall rise out of the abyss . . . then go into perdition! The people of earth wonder at the sight. The Beast is the ancient beastly Roman Empire, which was at its height when Jesus was born, and stood until 476 A. D. In John’s day it had been (Rome was born in 753 B. C.) and it was then existing. Since 476 A. D. Rome has not been a world power; but it will come into power immediately after the Rapture. It will be a ten-kingdom federation under the leadership of the Beast, and all the world will wonder at the giant kingdom. But it will go into utter destruction under the hand of judgment of the Lamb of God. Verse 8 describes past and future Rome - in spirit and in reality.

Verse 9 tells us that the seven heads are seven mountains. This certainly pictures the seven-hilled city of Rome, here indicated as the center of the woman’s almost universal authority and influence. This is where the Papacy has been located and where it has flourished for 1500 years.

Verse 10 says, “**And there are seven kings. FIVE ARE FALLEN, AND ONE IS, and the other is yet to come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.**” These seven kings mean different forms of government of the Roman Empire. Five are fallen (which are past forms of government). But in John’s day the empire had the imperial form of government which is the “**one that is.**” The one that “**is not yet but is to come**” is the final form of the revived Roman Empire.

Verses 12 and 13: “**And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the Beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast.**”

These ten horns refer to ten royal persons. The term “**horn**” signifies power (Revelation 17:6; Lamentations 2:3), and here refers to kings. There will be ten kingdoms and ten kings who receive authority “**one hour with the Beast.**” (That phrase, “**receive authority one hour with the Beast**” signifies that they all receive power at the same time.

They will exist together. It does not mean that they will reign for only sixty minutes; but during the course of one hour the ten-kingdom federation is set up, is fully united and agreed.) When the Beast reappears on the scene of action he will appear in a ten-kingdom federation.

The Roman Empire crumbled in A. D. 476, but will be revived in a day unknown to man. This revived empire will consist of ten kingdoms with individual chiefs.

The duration of the reign of these ten kings will be determined by the reign of the Beast. When HE is destroyed THEY will be destroyed with him . . . they are kings in name only, for they willingly place themselves in absolute subjection to the Beast. They will have one mind, and will be dominated by the diabolical power of the Beast, who will be the very power of Satan wrapped up in flesh.

These ten kings will be no more than puppets, completely controlled by the Beast. We see much of this going on in the world today, in Russia, China, and the places where Communism is in power, and all of this is the spirit which is a forerunner of the Man of Sin, the last world dictator.

Verse 14: **“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”** We have recorded here the final public act of the Beast with his puppets and allies. The great battle is fully described in Revelation 19:19-21.

We will study this passage more fully a bit later on. The angel here gives only the fact of the battle, passing over many outstanding intervening events - that is, the battle is just announced here; the war has not actually been entered into. The outcome is settled: **“The Lamb shall overcome them.”**

Complete victory is guaranteed before the conflict begins.

The Mighty Conqueror is King of all who reign, and Lord of all who exercise authority upon this earth. No power is allowed except by God’s permission. God is supreme; He is sovereign; all power in Heaven and in earth is His (Matthew 28:18). How silly, how foolish, for men and governments to enter into war against God’s Lamb and Almighty God. Read the second Psalm in its entirety. One day the Lord God Almighty will laugh at the enemies of righteousness when they are completely put down, once for all forever.

But who are **“they that are with Him”** in verse 14?

They are the host of heavenly armies, made up of all the redeemed in Heaven at that time. There will be other companies of saved persons in Heaven besides the Church (Hebrews 12:23), and when Jesus appears in the sky riding a great white horse, the whole body of heavenly saints will accompany their Lord. The armies will descend to crush earth’s ungodly hordes of the enemies of the Lamb of God.

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof . . . The meek shall inherit the earth.”

God did not create this earth to be populated by Satan and his emissaries. When final war is declared, all the saints will ride out with Jesus, on white horses. Read carefully concerning this universal gathering of heavenly saints (Jude 14; Zechariah 14:5; Revelation 19:14). Angels have their part in the heavenly conflict (Revelation 12:7), but the saints of God alone will form the conquering army of the Lamb of God . . . the army that will completely annihilate the Antichrist and his armies.

Those who take part in this gigantic conflict and who are led by the Lamb of God are spoken of as **“called, chosen, faithful.”** They are those who were called in time (I Timothy 1:9), chosen in eternity (Ephesians 1:4), and proved faithful in all and every relation of life and many of them faithful even unto death (Matthew 25:21-23; Revelation 2:10). Such terms as **“called, chosen, and faithful”** can apply only to redeemed saints.

Verse 15: **“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”**

In verse 3, the woman sits upon the Beast. In verse 1 the harlot sits upon many waters. Here we have the explanation of **“many waters”** and this explanation helps us to better understand the immense and universal influence the apostate church will then exercise over the people of the entire earth. The nations and people - seven outside the Roman world - will be ensnared, captivated and allured by the harlot. She sits on a throne, demonstrating greatness, richly adorned with the glories of the world, but without the affections of her deluded followers. There will be much display of loyalty, but no real loyalty of the heart.

This one advertises herself as the true church, and through her favors and smile she leads millions into everlasting ruin and destruction, which was her one aim in the beginning. Her supreme desire will be for gold (Revelation 18:12). Her least concern is for the souls of men (Revelation 18:13). I believe you will agree that Rome is courting the world today. In this hour concessions are being made by Rome that have not been made for centuries.

Protestants are no longer called heretics - but “brethren who have erred from the faith.” (Another book could be written here, but time and space will not permit.) You mark it well: Rome has never changed at heart. There have been many outward changes (man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart); but Rome has the same heart today that she has always had - and always will have until completely destroyed by the Lamb of God.

Verses 16-17: **“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the Beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”**

Perhaps you did not fully understand in the previous verse when I stated that millions will follow the woman outwardly, but not from the heart. God will put it into the hearts of these people to fulfill His plan and program in the destruction of apostate religion. The woman is the head of all apostasy in that particular hour, and is now hated by the ten horns and the Beast. What a change!

It is clear that the Beast and the kings will exist after the destruction of Babylon. The Beast and the ten horns (kings) are the human instruments used by Almighty God to inflict vengeance on them who operate the guilty, bloody apostate system. (The secular power is reserved for destruction at the hands of the Lord God Almighty in person at His coming in power and great glory - chapter 19.) The ten horns (kings) will act in conjunction with the Beast in that they, along with him, hate the whore.

You remember when they were given position of chiefs, they had no mind of their own - they were surrendered to the will of the Beast - soul, spirit, mind and body. All will unite in supporting the Beast in his destruction of the woman. The world's glory, the world's might, and the world's power is but a passing fancy, a passing dream. **“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.”** Except the Lord build the city, they build in vain. All that is not founded and grounded upon God, fades and perishes. That will be true in that hour. At that time, Babylon will be flourishing on the highest pinnacle of pride and greatness the world has ever known. She will be at her zenith of power and glory, but she will be completely cut down. Her ruin and destruction will be complete and final. In righteous judgment her system and her peoples will be destroyed. The one thing I do not want you to miss is the fact that her partners in crime and blood when she was destroying the saints wholesale, become the instruments of her political overthrow and of her complete downfall!

First - the harlot will be hated. This refers to the kings and great men, and to the peoples who loved her and worshipped at her feet in lust. Now they loathe and despise her!

Second - the harlot will be made desolate. Her wealth and everything physical that she possesses will be utterly destroyed and wasted (chapter 18:10).

Third - the harlot will be made naked. She will be stripped of her purple royal robes - and will appear before the masses (many waters) as the abandoned woman that she is, in her true character and shame (Ezekiel 23:29; Revelation 3:18). Her moral nakedness and shame will appear before all!

Fourth - her enemies will “eat her flesh”. The abundance of her wealth, her riches, all that she gloried in, will be devoured by her late admirers who have now become her bitterest enemies (James 5:3; Psalm 27:2; Micah 3:2,3).

Fifth - the harlot will be burned with fire. This denotes social and political ruin. The main element used by Almighty God in the destruction of literal Babylon was water - not fire. (Read all of Jeremiah 51.) The Babylon we are now studying (the mystical city) shall be utterly “burned with fire” (Revelation 18:8). Both Babylons are doomed to everlasting desolation and destruction.

One has fallen; the other is sure to fall! The powers that will destroy Babylon pour out their vengeance and fury on the guilty system under which they have so long been enslaved. Here the veil is pushed back. We learn that regardless of what these powers thought they were doing, they were simply carrying out divine orders and fulfilling God's divine will. God decreed the destruction of the worst system ever to exist upon the face of the earth, and the Beast and his puppet kings are God's instruments in destroying His greatest enemy: **“God hath put in their hearts to do His will!”**

Note - **“their hearts”** and **“His will.”** These ten kings heartily enter into their work of destruction. Not knowing what they are doing, they will fulfill and accomplish the purpose of Almighty God.

The hearts and minds of the destroying kings led by the Beast will be fully united. They will love the service to which they are appointed. They will be divinely set apart for the purpose of executing a fixed determination and a fixed judgment. I am sure such a statement is not readily accepted by all, but as proof of what I have just said, let me remind you that God raised up Pharaoh, hardened his heart - and destroyed him!

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. FOR THE SCRIPTURE SAITH UNTO PHARAOH, EVEN FOR THIS SAME PURPOSE HAVE I RAISED THEE UP, THAT I MIGHT SHEW MY POWER IN THEE, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE DECLARED THROUGHOUT ALL THE EARTH. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? NAY BUT, O MAN, WHO ART THOU THAT REPLIEST AGAINST God? SHALL THE THING FORMED SAY TO HIM THAT FORMED IT, WHY HAST THOU MADE ME THUS?” (Romans 9:14-20).

The ten kings **“give their kingdoms to the Beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”** The ten kings will be in absolute subjection to the Beast. There are ten but they are coexistent with the reign of the Beast.

They voluntarily place themselves, their kingdoms, and their rule, into the hands and under the rule of the Beast, who becomes their master, allowing them but a shadow of royalty. They are only instruments in his hands. The real power of that day will be in the hands of the Beast (Revelation 13:2-7).

The ten kings had previously given their power to the woman but now when the Beast turns on the woman, so do the ten kings. They then are in perfect submission to him.

“God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform,” and it will be a happy day in your life and mine when we can completely rest in Jesus. We will enjoy perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3) when we rest in Him. In recent years, many of us wondered, many of us wept, when certain political victories were won in this great country of ours but we must remember that God could have prevented it, for He is sovereign. But He allowed it, and in the by-and-by we will understand why.

That does not mean we are compromisers, nor does it mean that we are not to continue to fight the fight of faith. We are to be good soldiers even if it costs us our heads; but when the enemies of God have seemingly won a victory, we must always remember that Romans 8:28 is still in the Bible, and there is no power except of God. Even the devil could have no power at all unless God permitted him the power that he exercises. God works unseen, but nevertheless He works . . . yes, even in our political, educational, and religious set-up of this day. You may rest assured that If God be for us, “who can be against us?” The little flock will be victorious over the hordes of the enemies of Jesus Christ in the final consummation of all things.

Here God uses ten kings and their leader to destroy the enemies of righteousness; and later, the Beast and the kings will meet the same fate. God has a blueprint (Acts 15:13-18). **“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning,”** and He will follow His divine plan.

When all things are finished, He will look upon them and say, **“IT IS GOOD!”**

ROME: THE SEAT, THE CENTER, OF THE WOMAN’S AUTHORITY

Verse 18: **“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”**

Babylon means *“confusion,”* and is used symbolically many times by the prophets (Isaiah 13:1). Study this portion carefully. Here in Revelation we are to distinguish two Babylons.

First, Ecclesiastical Babylon, which is apostate Christendom and will be headed up under Rome. Second, Political Babylon, which is the empire of the Beast and his satellites.

This will be the last form of Gentile world dominion. In Daniel we read of the beginning of the times of the Gentiles. When the Beast and the ten kings are destroyed, that will be the end of the Gentile domain.

In our present chapter, Ecclesiastical Babylon is referred to as **“the great whore,”** and at that time will be the one object of worship. Study II Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Revelation 13:15. The power of Political Babylon will be destroyed when the Lord returns in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God.

In verse 18 we learn that Rome, the city built on seven hills, is the home of Babylon, and the place where, in the future, the systems of Babylon will be fully developed and finally destroyed. History substantiates the fact that Rome has produced the most blasphemous doctrines ever taught. After the Rapture there will be a fuller development of Romish error and apostasy; therefore, we know that Rome is the city here referred to. The woman is not Rome alone, but the systems which have their seat and home base in Rome. The Romish system will be the delegate of the devil in religious corruption and putrefaction in the end of the ages (Revelation 16:19). From Rome her power will be demonstrated against the peoples of Christendom.

I readily confess that chapters 17 and 18 are the two hardest chapters in Revelation for me. Let us sum up what we have studied in chapter 17:

Babylon is briefly referred to in Revelation 14:8 and in Revelation 16:19. In chapters 17 and 18 we have a fully detailed description of the character and the doom of Babylon; but there is another subject of judgment besides that of Babylon: The Beast.

This tremendous apostate secular power occupies a very important and outstanding place in this prophecy. The two main subjects in chapters 17 and 18 are Babylon (the religious system), and the Beast (the civil apostate power energized by Satan himself).

The former occupies the chief place in this chapter; the Beast is more prominent in chapter 13, but here is regarded as secondary, having to do with Babylon the harlot. In the outset of chapter 17 the harlot is the powerful one.

Chapter 17 is divided into two parts:

First, John saw a vision (verses 1-6); and second, he gives to us the interpretation of that vision (verses 7-18). The interpretation goes much further than what is seen in the vision. The same principle is discussed in Daniel 2 and in Matthew 13. The interpretation adds instruction to that found in the dream of Daniel 2 or the parable in Matthew 13.

John first beheld the great whore, ripe for judgment (verse 1). She is called “**Babylon the Great,**” because of the widespread and horrible confusion of which she is the head. She is also “**the great whore**” because of the hypocritical and frightful system she holds over the souls and bodies of men. Her terrible character is described by the word “**whore.**” She is called a woman because the term “**woman**” implies subjection (I Corinthians 11:3), and this harlot sets herself up as the bride of Christ - or, as the Church, the true Bride. She is definitely a counterfeit; the true Bride is described in Ephesians 5:23-25.

In the case of this woman, her every move is hypocritical, diabolical, intended to lead men to destruction. Jesus, the true head of the Church, came to SAVE men, and His Church is made up of holy, righteous, spotless born again believers.

This woman cares nothing for Christ, nor will she bow to His headship nor to His authority. She is one hundred percent diabolical in her hypocrisy. The whore sits upon “**many waters**” (verse 1). These many waters signify many peoples . . . multitudes of peoples (verse 15). The woman will cast a spell over these multitudes, luring them to everlasting ruin and destruction.

Keep in mind that the devil is making his last drive against the God of gods, Lord of lords, and the King of kings. He is using a woman here to do it.

The kings and inhabitants of the earth are deceived by the woman and are drawn to her. From this we gather that her influence will be universal, and that the whole world will have direct connection with the whore. “**The kings of the earth**” are not the same as the ten kings in verse 12. The ten kings will have to do only with the Roman Empire . . . the civil power of the day; but the kings of the earth signify the whole world. We can understand why liberals and modernists are crying today for a world church. After the Rapture, there will be a world church, and the woman will be the head of it.

The woman is seen sitting upon a “**scarlet beast.**” This is the same beast with the same power seen in chapter 13. The ancient Roman Empire which has been defunct for many centuries is here witnessed by John on the scene of prophecy covered with the glory and government of the entire world, and this will be fulfilled after the Rapture. The Roman Empire will again control the world, and all roads will once more lead to Rome!

The woman is arrayed in scarlet. In Revelation 12:3 the dragon bears the same color. Man has always sought eagerly after the pomp and glory of this world. The imperial power in that day will be subject to the woman. The Beast to whom the dragon commits universal authority and his own diabolical power is servant to and tool of the woman. In the beginning of her reign, the secular power (the secular Beast and his ten puppets) will support her.

The Beast upon which the woman sat is further described as “**full of the names of blasphemy.**” It is the Beast who is described as full of the names of blasphemy.

As despicable as the woman is, she is not guilty of daring and open blasphemy. Deceit, corruption, violence, pride and evils beyond description are ascribed to Ecclesiastical Babylon - the whore; but blasphemy and the public denial of Almighty God and His Christ are not acts of the woman; these are acts of the Beast upon which she rides. The names of blasphemy on the heads of the Beast in Revelation 13:1 point out the executive governing authority with this awful character of guilt and blasphemy. The fear of God is completely gone.

The empire in all its parts is wholly given up to the most horrible iniquity and blasphemy man could ever conceive.

When the Beast comes on the scene of action (Revelation 13) he is said to have “**seven heads and ten horns.**” This term is repeated several times. The mention of the Beast in Revelation 13:1 is in similar terms to that of the mention of the dragon in Revelation 12:3.

In the case of the dragon, his heads - not his horns - are crowned. In the case of the Beast (in Revelation 13:1) the horns are crowned, but the heads bear the names of blasphemy. However, in chapter 17, neither the heads nor the horns are crowned (Revelation 17:3). Such, then, is the general character and description of the Beast who will be the main supporter of the false, corrupt religious systems dominating the empire that will come into world-wide power after the Rapture, and the head (or seat) of that government will be in Rome, while the influence of the empire will permeate the whole wide world.

It seems strange that the Beast on which such great power is conferred by Satan (Revelation 13:4-7) should be willing to allow himself to be used of the woman; but her dazzling splendor and seductive influence will be as the glistening of the shining serpent who came to Eve in the Garden, and even this giant power who will be at the head of the civil world government will bow at the feet of the harlot for a season.

The woman is clothed in splendor, adorned with all that the world values (verse 4). She holds a golden cup in her hand, and that cup is full of abominations and the unclean things of her fornication. All the people of earth who drink of her cup (and multiplied millions will) will be morally ruined. Upon her forehead we see stamped, in clear view of all, her name and character: “**Mystery**” of iniquity.

The second part of her title: “**Babylon the Great.**” This speaks of the havoc she will play with the peoples of earth in that day of her glory. She will fill Christendom with innumerable evils and with hopeless confusion.

This has been true ever since Rome (Babylon) came into existence almost sixteen centuries ago, but after the Rapture she will bring in such confusion as the world has never known.

There is a third part to the title of the woman: “**The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.**” Every hellish system which copies the ways of the woman - every system which accepts her doctrines, including the Romish system - makes up Babylon. Babylon means confusion; the Romish system has always been confusion.

This woman is the mother, the source, of every evil religious system. There is only one true religion, and that is Christianity, purchased at the tremendous price of the Blood of Jesus. Every religious system that does not bow in total submission to the Blood and the finished work of Jesus is a part of the systems of Babylon.

This woman is the head of a bloody system. “**I saw the woman drunken with the Blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus**” (verse 6). In case you have any doubt as to what system has shed enough blood to intoxicate to the point of drunkenness, you read *Foxe’s Book of Christian Martyrs*. If you have not read this tremendous book, you should read it; you will learn some things that will make your blood run cold in your veins! If you cannot find a copy in your city, if you will write to us we will happily give you information as to how you may obtain a copy. Every believer - especially now - should read it.

This woman is drunk with blood. She professes to be the spouse of Christ; and yet she has murdered the saints and the prophets - the witnesses of Jesus Christ who were redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb.

During the first part of the Tribulation period there will be a great number saved whom the spirit of Babylon will butcher. The Beast is the one who will actually put the saints to death during the time of the woman’s glory, but she is the power behind the Beast at that time. “**And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations**” (Revelation 13:7). This refers to the first Beast - the revived Roman Empire - and the power is given by the second Beast, which is the ecclesiastical dictator in the end time. The woman is the final bloody, deplorable picture of this ecclesiastical power.

In the second part of chapter 17, the mystery of the woman and of the Beast who carries her, is explained for us. I praise God that the Holy Spirit gave us the last half of this chapter. This mystery is double - the woman and the Beast. I made the statement earlier in our study that for everything God has that is good, the devil has a cheap counterfeit.

We read concerning the true Church, “**the mystery concerning Christ and the Church**” which has to do with Christ (the head) and the born again believers (the Bride) of the true Church. But here we read concerning the mystery of the woman and the Beast which carries her. In the true Church, Christ is mentioned first as the head, and we, the members of His body, are mentioned second; but in our present Scripture the woman is mentioned first, and the Beast carries her.

This is the counterfeit. Jesus is the True . . . and the Truth: “**Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.**” Those who follow the woman are led into captivity and destruction.

The mystery of the Beast is explained first (verse 8).

“**The beast that thou sawest was, and is not.**” The Beast, therefore, existed as one vast empire under a long line of imperial rulers. “. . . **and is not.**” At the time John saw the vision and penned down this prophetic truth, the Beast has no political existence. The countries and nations once within the empire, remain; but the empire as a glorious power ended in A. D. 476. Rome crumbled and that ancient empire of world-wide fame for many centuries ceased to exist, although parts of it have never ceased to be. This Beast “**shall ascend out of the bottomless pit**” (verse 8).

Many years after I was converted, I could not understand why great Bible teachers taught that the Roman Empire would be revived, and at the same time taught that the coming of the Lord Jesus is imminent. I learned in my early Christian experience that Jesus can come at any moment; no man knows the day nor the hour.

Then I asked myself, “How could the Roman Empire be revived?” The truth of the matter is, the Roman Empire exists today in broken parts. The countries and territories that composed the old Roman Empire are still there, and the spirit of the people in most of those places would be very happy to accept a world dictator.

The Empire will not be revived until after the Rapture. (Nothing needs to take place before the Rapture. Jesus can come at any second. There is not one word of Scripture that needs yet to be fulfilled before Jesus comes.) But before He comes in the Revelation to destroy ecclesiastical and political corruption, the Roman Empire must and WILL be revived. The Beast will be the head, the ten king will be his puppets, and their territory will make up the giant empire of Rome again. All the world will wonder at this gigantic Beast - except the elect (Revelation 17:8), who will understand.

At the end of his bloody reign, he “**will go into perdition.**” This describes the everlasting doom of the Beast (Revelation 19:20). He will be cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are. So the Satanic trinity will be placed in the lake of fire and brimstone (chapter 20).

The seven heads are seven mountains. These mountains refer to the hills on which Rome is built. The seven kings signify various forms of government of the Roman Empire. These heads are seven kings, five of which had fallen. Some Bible scholars consider the reference to point to the first five emperors of Rome (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero).

After John mentions the five fallen phases of civil and political government, he continues by saying, “. . . **and one IS.**” (That is the imperial form of government that existed in John’s day - the sixth head.) However, another “**is yet to come . . . the seventh.**” The seventh one will continue for a brief season.

“AND THE BEAST THAT WAS . . . AND IS NOT . . . EVEN HE IS THE EIGHTH, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” (Revelation 17:11). And the eighth, which is of the seven and goeth into perdition, is the man who heads the empire - the Antichrist, the little horn of Daniel chapter 7. That will be Satan’s man who will arise out of the abyss.

Next we have the ten horns of the Beast (verse 12).

The ten horns are kings who come within the scope of the kingdom of the Beast. The duration of his reign will determine the duration of their reign. They all have one mind, one purpose and one heart. They yield themselves wholeheartedly and unreservedly into the hands of the Beast . . . they are at his service (verse 13).

The Lamb of God then appears and declares war.

The Beast, the ten kings and their armies are on one side; the Lamb of God and the mighty host of Heaven are on the other side (verse 14). This is the war described in Revelation 19:11-21. In chapter 17 the last act of the Beast and his ungodly associates has not actually come. It is seen by John, but it does not happen until Revelation 19:11-21. There are other events that transpire between the account given here and the actual battle.

There is no guesswork concerning the outcome. The King of kings will be victorious and the Beast with his henchmen will be put down.

The waters John saw, upon which the woman sat, signify multitudes of people, nations, tongues (verse 15).

The tremendous moral influence of the woman extended far beyond the Palestine area . . . it reached the ends of the earth. The masses of mankind were organized and brought under her influence. The **“many waters”** in verse 1 become evangelists of the woman, and lead untold multitudes to follow her. The ten horns (kings) finally turn against her whom they have supported, worshipped, and bowed down to. The Beast and the ten kings then destroy the woman. They reduce her to a state of complete desolation, and they confiscate her wealth.

“The love of money is the root of all evil,” and the glory of things seen has been the damnation of millions - and will be until the consummation of all things.

In verse 17 we see God’s will and God’s words carried out. The ten kings unite with the Beast, who is the real authority, and together they destroy the systems of Rome . . . the scarlet woman with all of her despicable doctrines and practices.

Verse 18 clearly points out the city where all these horrible things will originate - the city from which they will spread to the ends of the earth, and from which final judgment will be poured out and multitudes will be destroyed when the Lamb of God leads the armies of Heaven against earth’s ungodly reprobates.

Chapters 17 and 18 describe the harlot of Satan.

Chapter 19 through the remainder of the book has to do with the Bride and the future home of the Lamb, the Bride, and the peoples of earth who were not deceived by the counterfeit Christ and the Beast.

~ end of chapter 17 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Fall of Babylon

THE EARTH WEEPS, HEAVEN REJOICES

Revelation 18:1-20:

1. **And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.**
2. **And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.**
3. **For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.**
4. **And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.**
5. **For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.**
6. **Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.**
7. **How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.**
8. **Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.**
9. **And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,**
10. **Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.**
11. **And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:**
12. **The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,**
13. **And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.**

14. **And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.**
15. **The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,**
16. **And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!**
17. **For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,**
18. **And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!**
19. **And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.**
20. **Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.**

Verses 1-2: **“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”**

Babylon is still the subject - but here we have the introduction of a new set of circumstances.

In this chapter, the Beast is not once named, nor do we find the ten kings mentioned. The chapter is given over entirely to the destruction of Babylon. Human agents disappear; the ruin of that awful system of corruption is the predominating theme of the entire chapter.

The chapter opens with **“And after these things I saw ANOTHER ANGEL.”** This angel is not to be confused with the seven angels who had the vials of the seven last plagues. This angel descending out of Heaven suggests the heavenly character of the action he is about to take. **“Having great authority,”** he comes down from Heaven to earth to perform an act of judgment such as has never been known - nor ever will be known again.

All angels are not identical - some are more distinguished than others in service and in their angelic position - but all angels are mighty (II Thessalonians 1:7; II Peter 2:11).

At specific times God bestows special power upon certain angels to perform certain duties.

Universal authority is never ascribed to an angel. The Lord Jesus is the appointed heir of all things (Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 1:2).

Christ as Creator of all things certainly has a right to lay claim to universal dominion. As Creator, the claim of the Lord Jesus to universal dominion is not a conferred claim . . . God the Father did not confer it upon Him but it is sovereign and independent (Colossians 1:16), It is founded on the rights and glory of His person as God.

The angel referred to here is probably the one to whom God has committed the judgment of Babylon. The angel announces the fall of Babylon; he has authority to deal thoroughly with the subject of the destruction of Babylon - the most ungodly, rotten religious system ever to exist upon the face of this earth. **“The earth was lightened with his glory.”**

This certainly is a testimony that God is on the scene, and it is God who is acting in this judgment that is about to come. The fall of Babylon will be a public event. The smoke of her burning (verse 18) will be seen - it will darken the heavens and announce to the whole wide world that the great system of Babylon is being destroyed. But “the earth lightened” - not by the reflection of the sun, but by the glory of the angel seen descending out of Heaven.

This will Witness to the fact that whoever the actors are in the judgment, it is God, the Righteous Judge, who is the head of the judgment of Babylon. Personally, I believe the angel here is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ . . . the same angel of whom we studied in Revelation 8:3 and 10:1.

- Christ - the Angel-Priest - on behalf of His suffering remnant (chapter 8) will no doubt be the one to mete out final judgment to Babylon.
- Christ - the Angel-Redeemer - is seen taking possession of His rightful inheritance, the earth and the sea, in chapter 10.
- Christ - the Angel-Avenger of His people - is here (chapter 18) seen taking vengeance on the most deadly enemies God’s people ever had . . . the system of Babylon during the last half of the Tribulation.

The angel cried with a loud voice, and the cry he sent forth was the welcomed proclamation of Babylon’s destruction. The angel made the announcement with such surety as though it had already taken place, yet we know that it will take place in the future. The angel said **“Great Babylon has fallen, has fallen.”**

The fall of that mighty system which, while guilty of gross falsehood and treason against the Lord Jesus Christ, yet bore His name, is here publicly announced. The actual fall is yet future. In the previous chapter we saw the Beast to whom the power of civil authority was given, and who for a time became the willing slave of the woman. She sat upon the Beast in pride. She was an object of wonder and admiration to all except those who knew her true character because their eyes had been opened by God.

God has always had a remnant - and always will have a righteous remnant here on earth until the consummation of all things.

The Beast had for a season yielded power to the woman, but he becomes restless under her restraint and chafes under her intolerant sway. Then too, the woman is very wealthy, and the civil and apostate power of the Beast covets the wealth of the woman.

Thus the ten kingdoms with their kings, together with the Beast and the whole material strength of the revived empire, unite her destruction. The ten kings are even more active in her destruction than is the Beast himself.

The woman is stripped of all her possessions, her wealth, her treasures . . . all that she has is taken from her.

The woman (the system she represents) will be brought down to the lowest depths of degradation, to the lowest insults that can be heaped upon her. She will be the object of scorn and contempt by those who, only a short while before, sought her favors and courted her smile. When the ten kings have finished with her, she will be a total wreck. The apostate civil authority will win the complete victory over her.

Then, after the victory over the woman, the ten kings yield themselves and their kingdoms into the hands and unto the fate of the brutal Beast who will be the world dictator at that time. As bad as the situation under the woman will be, after her destruction a much worse condition will follow under the unchecked will of the brutal Beast, Satanically inspired and empowered.

Verses 2-3: **“And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.”**

Here is described the condition of Babylon after and consequent to her political downfall. She was overthrown but not totally destroyed. The destruction will be sudden:

“She shall be utterly burned with fire” (verse 8). **“Utterly burned with fire”** is subsequent to the burning mentioned in Revelation 17:16. The Spirit makes the statement as though it had already happened, and of course it will happen exactly as prophesied. Babylon, having lost her place of supremacy, having been torn to pieces by the very powers which once formed her strength, is now reduced to a state of desolation described in dynamic language.

The description is no doubt borrowed from the prophet Isaiah:

“It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged” (Isaiah 13:20-22).

The city has become the habitation of devils (demons), making the city the dwelling place of creatures out of the abyss. Who these demons are, we do not know.

Whether they are angels who left their first estate, or a special class of miserable beings, we do not know. We only know that the city is inhabited by creatures from the underworld (the pit). The abyss is the dwelling place of the emissaries of Satan.

Then is mentioned every unclean and hateful bird. Unclean birds and birds of prey and birds of darkness symbolize the many and various agents of the devil. Study Matthew 13:4-32; Jeremiah 5:27; and especially Isaiah 34:11-15. Thus Babylon becomes a cesspool of corruption and abomination in the sight of a holy God.

Next we find the grounds of God's judgment poured out upon Babylon. These are:

“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

The peoples of the prophetic earth will drink eagerly from her golden, intoxicating cup filled with abominations. She has seduced the nations from their allegiance to the true God and God's Christ, to herself and her lust. The peoples who make up the religious systems of that day will be completely captivated by her splendor, her services, and her display of gorgeous vestments. They will be totally ignorant of the true Spirit of God.

After the Rapture those who have heard the Truth and rejected it will be sent **“strong delusion.”** They will believe **“the Lie”** . . . **“that they all might be damned”** (II Thessalonians 2:7-12).

Today, religions of “works” are growing like wildfire - while the true, blood-bought religion of Calvary moves so slowly. If a minister organizes a church and preaches the Blood of the cross, members are added very slowly; but if some cult organizes with an attractive religion of works, or “salvation” that can be purchased with money or deeds, that religion will grow rapidly.

“The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her,” and this is another reason why God is about to pour out total destruction upon Babylon. The persons who were the heads of the ten kingdoms that will make up the revived empire must be distinguished from **“the kings of the earth.”** The ten kings who make up the empire will hate the woman and burn her with fire (Revelation 17:16). But not so with the kings of the earth . . . they weep over her fate (Revelation 18:9).

They (the kings of the earth) commit fornication with Babylon. They love the systems of the harlot. The apostate church loves the world for the wealth she can obtain from the riches of the world; and, of course, the world gladly welcomes the love of the apostate church because she promises to open the door of Heaven to all who PAY WELL. She dangles “the keys of St. Peter” before the kings of the earth, and declares that she is “the Vicar of Christ,” the “intercessor between God and man”; and because the apostate church exalts herself to this height of spiritual dictatorship the kings of the earth and the great men of the earth flock to her and pour much wealth into her coffers.

There is a third group mentioned here: **“the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.”** This group follows the apostate system for gain. There has always been a class of people who join religious systems for what they can get out of religion. They use the church as a stepping stone to advance their business interests. Babylon will offer great temptation to such people. The abundance of her luxuries will certainly attract the merchants of the earth and the merchants will become rich thereby. Therefore, when the system is destroyed, these merchants will weep and wail over the ruin of their source of riches.

I ask you a solemn, sane, sensible question: Is religion becoming “big business” today?

Verses 4-5: **“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”**

In verse 4 another voice from Heaven speaks: **“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”** In verse 1, an angel descends from Heaven to announce the fall of Babylon. In verse 4, a voice is heard IN Heaven. The voice is the expression of the mind of God, announcing to the people of God to come out of this hellish system.

No doubt in the very closing days and hours of time there will be true believers - not in the sense that we are believers in this day of grace, but people who have trusted God will be in the systems of Babylon - probably to avoid persecution and martyrdom; but now they must come out. They must make a complete break if they are to escape the plagues that will be poured out upon the systems - the plagues of death, mourning and famine (verse 8).

“ . . . That ye have no fellowship in her sins.” If they continue to fellowship with her sins, they must also share the plagues. The warning is sounded out from Heaven. The full judgment of Almighty God cannot fall upon Babylon until every person who embraces God’s righteousness is completely out of her. Not one drop of rain fell until Noah and his family were safe in the ark and **“God shut them in.”** Not one spark of fire and brimstone fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah until Lot and his daughters were safe outside the city . . . and then God burned it to ashes. God is a just God - He is righteous.

He cannot perform unrighteousness; and even in this terrible hour those who believe in Him as the true and only God must come out of Babylon before full judgment can be poured out.

In verse 5 we learn that the sins of Babylon have reached unto Heaven - and God **“hath remembered her iniquities.”**

That suggests that the sins of Babylon are so many, heaped one upon another, that they reach all the way from earth to Heaven. In Genesis 11:4 we read concerning the first Babylon, **“And they said, Go to, let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven.”** Now it seems that they have built an empire of sin that has reached Heaven and God is about to crush this giant, evil force . . . once, for all, forever, never to allow it to be revived again.

Verse 6: **“Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.”**

Babylon is to be rewarded as she has rewarded the people of God . . . and double the reward, according to her works. The verse further states, **“in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.”**

In severity, God is going to pour out double what Babylon has meted out to the saints of God whom she butchered and tormented during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation period.

Verses 7-8: **“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”**

The principle of judgment is next shown in the first part of verse 7 . . . not only in relation to what Babylon has done and will do to the saints . . . but she will be judged for what she is herself. At this time the woman will have been degraded from her public place of authority and power. She will have been demoted by the kings of the Roman world; but in spite of her humiliation she maintains her pride in her heart . . . her spirit is not broken. Her haughtiness is asserted in spite of the fact that she sits in the dust of disgrace as compared to the former glory of her reign.

The kings of the earth will weep over her, but they cannot help her. The boasting of the woman is from within. She says in her heart, **“I sit a queen.”** Her public downfall will already have taken place at this time; but in spite of her downfall she believes in her heart that she will rise again to sit as a queen. She continues by saying, **“I am not a widow.”**

She expects to once again sit upon a throne and reign. Facing utter destruction, the judgment of God hanging heavy over her head, she yet cries out, **“I shall in no wise see grief!”** The devil does not easily acknowledge defeat; he fights to the last bitter second before his complete downfall.

Utter destruction of the woman is signified in the words, **“she shall be burned with fire.”** This goes much further than the political downfall recorded in chapter 17:16.

The fire here will make an utter end to Babylon with all her ungodly systems. The mighty God Jehovah will be the judge, to mete out final and eternal judgment to Babylon.

Verses 9-10: **“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.”**

The lamentation over the great Babylon is demonstrated by all classes. All will be affected by the downfall. The merchandise listed as having to do with Babylon is twenty-eight different articles.

The first listed is gold; the twenty-eighth article is souls. The downfall of Babylon will seriously affect the whole commercial and social life of the world at that time, and it is on this account that the judgment is so deplored by those who shared the glory and the wealth of the woman, and profited by her ungodly practices.

The kings of the earth lead the mourning. Bear in mind that this does not refer to the ten kings who unite with the Beast to destroy the woman. The kings of the earth referred to here are the distinguished leaders in Christendom throughout the world, and are definitely a separate group from the ten kings who make up the Roman Empire. The kings of the earth stand in awe and fear.

They, witness the awful destruction of the mighty system of evil with which they had been so closely identified, and in which they had lived in luxury and splendor. They tremble and fear at the awfulness and suddenness of the judgment of Babylon: “. . . **for in one hour is thy judgment come!**”

Verses 11-13: **“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.”**

The next group named . . . **“the merchants of the earth.”** They sorrow over the destruction of Babylon - not because of their love for the system, but because of the trade they had with the system. This gigantic system brought much wealth to the merchants of the earth, and now the source of their wealth is destroyed. Notice the varied character of the merchandise: The products named signify that it is a world-wide system.

The fact that she trades in these many commodities signifies that she has great influence over commercial Babylon as well as the civil setup of the day. She attracts to herself the world's riches. Think of the gigantic setup of this great combination of secular and religious trading in the different commodities named, even to the souls of men.

The bodies and souls of men are named last (verse 13) as of least account.

The various articles named here are listed under seven divisions:

1. Valuables and ornaments such as gold, silver, diamonds, rubies, pearls . . . all kinds of precious stones.
2. Costly wearing apparel. Fine linen is named, with purple, silk and scarlet. One need not stretch the imagination to point out that certain religions outstanding in our day and growing like wildfire in America deal in these commodities . . . scarlet, purple, linen, all kinds of religious garb!
3. Furniture is named . . . vessels and different pieces of furniture manufactured from precious wood, ivory and precious metals. Churches today are more and more becoming places of furniture, ornaments, etc.

4. Rich odours are named . . . ointments of all kinds, frankincense, cinnamon.

5. Items that make for luxurious living are named. . . fine meat, sheep, beasts of all kinds, wheat, flour, oil, wine, intoxicating drinks. More and more religions are eating and drinking today. That is no secret.

6. Horses and chariots are named.

7. The last commodity named is “**the souls of men.**” Certainly today religion is making merchandise of the souls of men.

Religions that sell the right to Heaven are growing in numbers by the thousands . . . religions that teach that you can live like you please, do anything you want to do, come to church at the appointed time, make an offering, confess your sin and then go right back and commit the same sin over and over and over again. That is making merchandise of the souls of men.

Religious leaders accepting money to pray for and intercede in behalf of wicked sinners is nothing short of merchandising in souls.

This is the age of big business, big politics, big religion . . . big . . . big . . . big!!!

As prophesied in God’s holy Word, in the very end of time there will be a world government and a world church. All other aspects of life will head up under these two main world powers.

Verses 14-17: “**And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.**”

The weeping of the merchants is interrupted by an episode given to us in verse 14, but the mournful strain is continued in verse 15 . . . the complete and entire ruin of the merchandise of Babylon. The merchandise and commodities that bound to her both king and peasant having been destroyed, now leave her wrecked. Her resources are gone. She is utterly and entirely despoiled of her former means of self-indulgence. Her source of enjoyment is gone - in fact, all that ministered to her haughtiness and pride is cut down. Everything essential to her existence has perished and it all came with one sudden blow from the hand of divine judgment.

In verse 14 she is directly addressed from Heaven above: “**And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all!**”

Heaven is here announcing to this woman that her playhouse is wrecked forever, and she is down, never to rise again.

In verse 15 we see the merchants standing afar off, crying out, bewailing the fact that the riches they enjoyed are taken away.

Their testimony is recorded in verses 16 and 17: **“Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls! FOR IN ONE HOUR SO GREAT RICHES IS COME TO NOUGHT. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.”** And then all together send up one great wail of sorrow.

Verse 18: **“And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!”** And then the whole company goes into a spasm.

Note the descriptive language of verse 19: **“And they CAST DUST ON THEIR HEADS, AND CRIED, WEeping AND WAILING, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.”**

The merchants express their lamentation in words similar to those of the kings as recorded in verse 10.

However, there is one difference: The kings, in their lamentation, cried out, **“In one hour is thy judgment come.”** But the merchants cry out, **“In one hour so great riches is come to nought.”** The merchants are thinking only of the gain they derived from the systems of religion set forth by this terrible woman. The Lord Jesus told us when He was on earth, **“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”** Paul added, **“The love of money is the root of all evil.”**

Verse 20: **“Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.”**

We have heard the voice from Heaven, first in verse 4 and now in verse 20. In this latter case Heaven is called upon to rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Note the difference: On earth there is lamentation, weeping, moaning, groaning; but in Heaven, there is rejoicing and praise. All Heaven unites in the song of victory and triumph. There are three classes pointed out in Heaven:

1. **“Thou heaven.”** I believe this to mean all the angels, cherubim and heavenly creatures.
2. The holy apostles.
3. Prophets.

This takes in all heavenly creatures - whether they be angels, spirits, believers, Old Testament saints, New Testament saints, prophets or whoever. They are called upon to rejoice and sing praises because God has judged the greatest enemy of righteousness that has ever existed or ever will exist, and she has suffered at the hands of Almighty God.

UTTER RUIN AND EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON

Revelation 18:21-24:

21. **And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.**
22. **And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;**
23. **And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.**
24. **And in her was found the Blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.**

I trust you will study carefully Jeremiah chapter 51 and Revelation 18 together. In Jeremiah 51 we have a similar dramatic description of the overthrow of Babylon; however, here an angel of might is the great destroyer. Both the literal and the mystical cities are to be utterly destroyed by violence. In verse 21 we read, **“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone.”** I believe this is the same angel referred to in Revelation 10:1. I believe it is none other than the Lord Jesus in angelic form. The stone is cast down with terrible violence into the sea, signifying that thus will Babylon be utterly and totally destroyed, never to rise again. Such destruction Sodom and Gomorrah suffered in the days of old - no trace of those two cities has ever been found. They were totally destroyed, and Babylon will suffer the same fate.

In verse 22 we learn that the musicians will play no more in Babylon. The voice of harpers, trumpeters and pipers will be heard no more. No craftsmen will be there. All industry, all music, will be utterly crushed and destroyed.

In verse 23 we learn that the light of the candle will shine no more. The voice of the bridegroom will be heard no more in Babylon. The merchants of the earth and the great men were deceived through the sorceries of Babylon. All the nations were deceived. And when the last check will be made, according to verse 24, much blood will be found . . . the Blood of prophets, the Blood of saints, and the Blood of all that were slain upon the earth. (The last statement refers to the terrible, bloody slaughter during the height of the reign of Babylon - both civil and religious.) How complete the destruction! Babylon is left joyless in utter darkness and total silence. She stands out as a giant monument of the vengeance of Almighty God. All species of wickedness and ungodliness had sat enthroned in the midst of that great city which religiously bore the name of Jesus Christ; but at last when she has filled her cup to the brim, God rises in His fierce anger to perform His strange work. His indignation burns. His vengeance is poured out upon Babylon. The great city falls, never to rise again.

As we look around us today it seems that wickedness is winning the victory. Ungodliness is growing on every hand. Unrighteousness is flourishing. The wicked are flourishing like the green bay tree - but they shall soon be cut down.

They shall wither as the grass. The day of the vengeance of Almighty God is just ahead of us. The righteous will win in the end. If God be for us, who can be against us? The meek shall inherit the earth because the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

God did not create this earth to be inhabited by demons. God created this earth to be inhabited by the meek, and one glorious day righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters now cover the sea. There will be no Babylon, no harlot, no bloody Beast, no Antichrist, no devil on earth. They will all be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10).

~ end of chapter 18 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Heaven Rejoices Over the Judgment of Babylon; etc.

Revelation 19:1-6:

1. **And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:**
2. **For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath Judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.**
3. **And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.**
4. **And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.**
5. **And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.**
6. **And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.**

In this chapter we will study the marriage of the Lamb and the judgment of the rebellious nations.

The term “**after these things**” is a formula used in Revelation. It appears in chapter 4:1, 18:1, and in our present verse. It refers here to the fall and total destruction of Babylon as recorded in Revelation chapters 17 and 18. The same event is viewed very differently in Heaven from upon the earth.

On earth, the cry of sorrow and mourning is heard, while in Heaven we hear praises and “alleluias.” It was announced in Heaven the moment Babylon fell. To me, that signifies that the righteous will have a ringside seat in the sky and will be eyewitnesses to the entire affair between Christ and Antichrist. All Heaven praises God for the mighty victory.

I often make the statement in my meetings that I feel sorry for the dear people who cannot bear a little noise in their Gospel services. I do not believe in fanaticism nor foolishness - but I believe in praising God in the Spirit.

In verse 1 we hear much people in Heaven saying, **“Hallelujah! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God!”** He is due all praise, all honor, all glory, and He is all-powerful. God has never had the praise and honor due Him, but at this point and throughout eternity to follow He will be praised by the heavenly host, and His enemies will be in the lake of fire.

In verse 2 the multitude cries out, **“For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the Blood of His servants at her hand.”**

In verse 3 we hear a second **“Hallelujah!”** There are four of them in the first six verses of this chapter:

“And again they said, Hallelujah! And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.”

This is not only physical burning and smoke as we know fire and smoke, but this is spiritual burning . . . judgment from Almighty God . . . everlasting destruction. The judgment poured out on Babylon will not be as if Paris, London or New York were burned after a great bombing by the enemy. It will not be just a big city going up in smoke, burned to an ash-heap, with that being the end of the city. The burning here is the judgment of Almighty God on a kingdom of ungodliness, a system of debauchery, a gigantic organization both political and religious - the system of Anti-God, made up of politics, business and religion. The smoke of a literal city like New York could not ascend up forever and ever as does the smoke of Babylon. Babylon is the mother of all Anti-God . . . politics, religion, business . . . anything contrary to righteousness, holiness and purity.

In verse 4, the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fall down and worship God, saying, **“Amen! Hallelujah!”** Here is the third **“hallelujah.”** Yes, all Heaven - every creature from the least to the greatest - will join in the praises. I repeat - I feel sorry for precious people who cannot endure a little noise in religion. I wonder what they will do on this great day of rejoicing?

We learned in Revelation 4 that the four and twenty elders represent the Church, made up of all born again people. The Bride will be happy, for it will be time for her to return to earth with Jesus, to reign in the glorious kingdom of righteousness.

Verse 5: **“And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.”**

The throne of God puts its stamp of approval upon the rejoicing that is in progress in Heaven when Babylon is totally destroyed. All the wicked are in terror; all the saints are filled with joy! All who serve and fear God are invited, small and great, to join in the glad song and the praises - a great relief after the dark, dark picture unfolded on earth during the reign of the counterfeit trinity. Here the terms are sufficiently broad to embrace every soul and every creature in Heaven . . . angels, servants, cherubim, seraphim, whosoever abides in the land of the celestial. This call is not addressed to an unwilling host. All are ready and anxious to praise Jehovah, who is worthy of all praise.

There is also a new cause for joy, a new ground of praise and adoration: The marriage of the Lamb is about to be announced - that great event for which the Church has been waiting and yearning for many centuries. The final announcement of the marriage is about to be sounded out, when John records the first verses of Revelation 19, bursting forth with praise and adoration to the Lord God.

Verse 6: **“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the Voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!”**

John uses terms here that all can clearly understand.

Most of us have been to the ocean or to great falls, and have heard the continuous roar of **“many waters”** breaking against the shore or rushing over the rocks and through the rapids. Even a little child knows the voice of **“mighty thunderings.”**

In our summer thunderstorms the roar and rumble of the bursting thunder always reminds me anew that on that glorious morning the praises in Heaven will be such as no mortal has ever heard! The noise will be beyond human imagination. Think of it! millions of the redeemed, billions of angels, and all the heavenly host will all be shouting in thunderous voices **“Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!”**:

All Heaven thunders out, **“Hallelujah!”** four times.

The ground for the hallelujah's and praises is clearly stated: **“For true and righteous are thy judgments!”** In chapter 15:3 we saw the harpers on the sea of glass singing **“Righteous and true are thy ways.”**

And in chapter 16:7 the altar is heard saying, **“True and righteous, are thy judgments.”** In the former, God's ways are, in view, while in the latter (as also in our present Scripture) the judgment of God on His enemies is in question. It is a fundamental truth of the Word of God and one to be firmly believed and maintained, that all the Lord God's dealings with His creatures . . . whether in grace or in judgment . . . are characterized by holiness, truth and righteousness. God cannot do wrong.

These essential attributes of the divine being have been conspicuously displayed in the judgment of the great harlot whose two great sins are named once again (and for the last time).

Her sins were that:

- (1) she corrupted the earth with her fornication,
- (2) she was the instigator of the shedding of the Blood of many, many saints.

God has already avenged the Blood of the saints . . . **“and hath avenged the blood of His servants (bondmen) at her hands.”**

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

Revelation 19:7-10:

7. **Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.**
8. **And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**
9. **And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.**
10. **And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**

In these verses there are two main subjects:

1. God is assuming His kingly power.
2. The Lamb is taking His Bride - the New Testament Church - unto Himself and the marriage is about to occur.

While the heavenly host sound out thunderous praises unto the Lamb, the moment has not yet arrived for the Lord Jesus to sit upon His throne. All is in preparation, however, getting ready for that grand and glorious event when the Lord Jesus will reign. Yes, that blessed moment for which all creation groans and waits (Romans 8:22), that blessed moment for which the Church hopes and prays and for which the weary tribes of Israel look with eager expectation, is soon to come to pass. But two events must take place before the throne of the world can be occupied by Christ:

- (1) Babylon with her hellish systems had to be judged and destroyed in earth,
- (2) the marriage of the Lamb must be celebrated in Heaven.

Then Jesus will return to this earth, and we (the Bride) will return with Him.

In verses 7-10, Babylon having been judged and destroyed, the marriage is about to take place. All Heaven is jubilant. Isaiah 9:6-7 is about to be fulfilled:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end”
(Luke 1:31-33).

Part of this glorious announcement to Mary has been fulfilled: She did conceive, she did bring forth a son, she called His name Jesus, He was great, and He was called the Son of God.

The Lord God has not yet given to Him the throne of His father David, nor does He reign today over the house of Jacob; but, praise God, HE WILL!

The throne of David is a historical fact just as truly as is the throne of Caesar; and one day King Jesus will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem, He will reign over this earth - and hallelujah! we, the Bride, will be married to the Lord Jesus and will reign with Him!

Verse 7: **“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.”**

The Lamb’s wife (the New Testament Church) is identified with the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22, 23) and is to be distinguished from Israel. There are those today who rob Israel of her promises and give them to the Church; but this is spiritual thievery. In the Old Testament, Israel is the adulterous wife of the Lord. She will be restored (Isaiah 54:1-10; Hosea 2:1-17).

Israel is identified with the earth . . . an earthly people with earthly blessings (Hosea 2:23).

When Israel (the repudiated, adulterous wife of the Lord) is forgiven and restored, she could not be called either the virgin (II Corinthians 11:2, 3) or the Bride (Revelation 21:9). God have mercy on religionists and teachers who warp and twist the Word of God to fit their denominational beliefs and the traditions of their religious fathers!

Please notice the wording in verse 7: It is not “the marriage of the Bride,” but **“the marriage of the LAMB.”** It is HIS joy that is especially in view - not the joy of the Bride. Never forget, precious believer, God saved you for Christ’s sake (Ephesians 4:30-32; 2:6,7). God saves us for the sake of His only begotten Son, in whom He is well pleased.

No details of the marriage are given. We know it takes place on the eve of the Lord’s return to earth in power. (This is the Revelation - not the Rapture.) The Rapture takes place in Revelation chapter 4:1-4, and is described minutely in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and John 14:3. The marriage of the Lamb is the disclosed secret of Ephesians 5:32. The Scriptures clearly teach that the Bride is not Israel nor a remnant of Israel - but is definitely a Gentile bride, called out from all races. The Church is made up of **“whosoever will”** . . . not a specific group nor a specific nation.

The promises to Abraham will be fulfilled in every minute detail. As I have already pointed out, Israel was the wife of the Lord (Jeremiah 3:14-20; Isaiah 54:1); but JEHOVAH divorced Israel because of her iniquity. She will be reinstated by JEHOVAH, but a divorced wife could never be referred to as a virgin. It is not a divorced wife to whom the Lord Jesus will be married, but a virgin **“without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.”** Read Leviticus 21:13 and 14, and compare verse 13 with II Corinthians 11:2. Then read Ephesians 5:21-33. Study this last passage carefully. The Church will be a glorious Church, having neither spot nor wrinkle. She will be a Church holy and without blemish. Certainly that could not be said of Israel.

WHO MAKES UP THE BRIDE?

I answer emphatically, all saints, all born again people, all believers, all blood-washed people between Acts 2 and I Thessalonians 4:17. Never let anyone tell you that during this Day of Grace one specific group makes up the Bride, while others will be friends of the Bride, servants, etc. I do not deny that there will be friends of the Bridegroom, and there will be servants; but they are made up of other groups, not the saints between Pentecost and the Rapture. Acts 2 marks the beginning of the Church on earth, and I Thessalonians 4:17 marks the termination of the Church on earth. The four and twenty elders represent the redeemed of the Church, seen in Heaven immediately after the translation (the Rapture - Revelation 4:1-4).

The four and twenty elders who represent the Church, the redeemed in Revelation 4, are mentioned for the last time in verse 4 of our present chapter. The twenty-four elders share and share alike; there is no division among them. All twenty-four are identical.

There are very special blessings promised to the saints of this dispensation (Matthew 11:11; Hebrews 11:40). The saints of this dispensation are all baptized into one body by the one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12, 13).

However, there are other blessings named in the Bible which will be poured out upon all believers, from Adam to the last person to become a recipient of God's mercy and grace.

In our present chapter the term "**elders**" disappears and we see the various companies of saints taking their places in relation to the Lamb of God, the Bridegroom. The Church is imperishable because Christ is its head and foundation.

We are members of His body, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:23; 5:22-32). The New Testament Church, the Bride, is the nearest and dearest object to the heart of Christ, and is the apple of His eye.

Israel is the apple of the Lord's eye (Zechariah 2:8).

Jesus loved the Church with an unchangeable love. He laid down His life for the Church, He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25-27). The Church on earth has weathered many storms, and has longed for her lover, the Bridegroom, to appear in the clouds and call her up to meet Him in the air.

We who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan and travail, looking for that glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who will appear in the sky. The trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will be raised and we will hear Him say, "**Come up hither!**" We will be caught up to meet our Saviour in the clouds in the air.

THE LAMB'S WIFE MAKES HERSELF READY

Note in verse 7, "**His wife hath made herself ready.**"

There are two kinds of fitness, and the New Testament Church is the subject of both:

1. God, in the exercise of His sovereign grace, makes the Bride ready for Heaven and the glories of the Pearly white City. We read, **“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light”** (Colossians 1:12). Only God in His omnipotence, through His sovereign grace, could make the New Testament Church without spot or wrinkle, in order that she might enter the spotless Pearly white City.

2. All believers must make themselves ready ere they enter eternal glory . . . the home of the redeemed.

That is, before the saints are ready to reign with Christ, certain difficulties must be righted.

The Bible very clearly teaches that some who stand before Jesus will be ashamed of themselves:

“And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear (when He comes again), we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (I John 2:28).

Certainly this verse refers to believers. There must be, therefore, a period of preparation at the judgment seat of Christ where the Bride will be given an opportunity to prepare herself, to be cleansed; and the believers will be rewarded according to the record of their works.

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

All mistakes and misunderstandings will be rectified, the dross will be burned, and the saints will be rewarded for faithful stewardship. This will precede the marriage of the Lamb. Thus, His wife has made herself ready, and will pass from the judgment seat of Christ into the loving presence of the Lamb, to become His Bride forever.

Verse 8 tells us that the Bride will be **“arrayed in fine linen, clean and white,”** the fine linen being the righteousness of the saints. In the Word of God, garments are symbols of righteousness. In Isaiah 64:6 we read that all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, thus symbolizing self-righteousness. Philippians 3:6-8 gives a description of the very best a moral and religious man could perform under the Law; however, since the grace of God appeared in Christ Jesus, the garment in its better sense symbolizes the righteousness of God upon all them that believe (Romans 3:21; II Corinthians 5:21).

In Revelation 15:6 we read that the angels who had the seven vials filled with seven plagues were arrayed in pure linen, which here expresses the righteous, holy character of their mission. Their linen signifies that they represented God’s holiness in righteous judgment.

Contrast the fine, white linen of the Bride with the gaudy garments worn by the harlot. The garments of the harlot signified her character, and the same is true of the pure white linen worn by the Bride, signifying that she is spotless and without blemish.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself, A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT, OR WRINKLE, OR ANY SUCH THING; BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE Holy AND WITHOUT BLEMISH” (Ephesians 5:25-27).

At last the relationship God intended between His people and His only begotten Son has come to pass . . . the Bride can now enter into the enjoyment of eternal companionship and union of the closest nature with the Lamb. The Church and the Lamb will be united never to be separated, nor will there ever be any friction between the Lamb and His Bride. All evil and sin will have been eternally imprisoned.

The next great event in store for the Church is the Rapture (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). After the Rapture we will all appear at the judgment seat (II Corinthians 5:10; I Corinthians 3:12-15).

After the judgment seat, the marriage (Revelation 19:7-10). After the marriage, we will return with Jesus to reign in the Kingdom (Revelation 20:6).

The best is just ahead. I am so glad I am one of God’s children! If you are not, you CAN BE if you will simply trust the Lord Jesus and receive Him by faith. He will write your name in the Lamb’s book of Life (Romans 10:9,10).

Verse 9: **“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”**

John heard the familiar command, **“Write.”** This is more or less a spiritual exclamation point denoting the importance of the communication about to be given:

“Blessed are all who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

This is not said of the Bride. Her blessing is of the highest order and is expressed in the simple words **“bride”** and **“wife.”** No one could have more joy nor a closer union with the Bridegroom than does the Bride; unspeakable joy is conveyed in the term **“bride.”** However, the guests are pronounced **“blessed.”**

Who ARE the guests?

They are friends of the Bridegroom, and as friends of the Bridegroom they enjoy a deeper and dearer character of blessedness and joy than they would if they were friends of the Bride. John the Baptist, forerunner of Jesus Christ, announced the coming of the King and clearly stated that he was a friend of the Bridegroom (John 3:29). John the Baptist was martyred before the Church was formed, but he will no doubt become one of the most honored guests at the marriage supper in the sky. The Old Testament saints constitute the large company of guests, each Old Testament saint being a friend of the Bridegroom, rejoicing in His presence and at the sound of His voice.

No doubt angels will be spectators, but they cannot be guests because they are “**ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.**” They are special creations of God (Hebrews 1:14). Angels never knew the joy that our salvation brings. They will not be part of the Bride, nor will they be guests and friends of the Bridegroom.

In verse 9 we read of “**the marriage supper of the Lamb**” and later, in verse 17, we hear the angels calling the fowls in the midst of Heaven to come and gather together for the supper of the great God. This supper will be a supper of judgment - and in great contrast to the supper of the Lamb.

The last part of verse 9 assures us that the information given can be depended upon: “**THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF God.**”

The basis of our faith and the grounds upon which we preach these things are not speculation. God has spoken - “**Let God be true, but every man a liar.**” There are those who spiritualize, symbolize, and explain away Revelation; but we can depend upon what God has said. In the Old Testament era, God spoke through holy men - the prophets. In the New Testament, God has spoken “**IN HIS SON**” (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

How precious, blessed and assuring it is to have these words of confirmation of these grand and glorious heart-gladdening, soul-stirring truths concerning the glorious events just ahead. How glorious it is to have these words come from Jehovah God Himself.

Evidently John was overwhelmed by the communications he had just received from Almighty God. He fell on his knees before the messenger to worship him. But you will note that this act was checked: “**See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God.**”

For man to worship even the most exalted of God’s creatures is idolatry, and God forbids it. Worship God, and God alone. Love Him with all your heart, soul, spirit and strength, and worship Him only. Angels worship God; the saints worship God. A second time John was about to worship the messenger (Revelation 22:8,9), but again worship was prohibited.

The statement, “**I am thy fellowservant**” placed the messenger in the same category with John . . . they were both servants of their God, to serve Him and worship Him only. Certainly the spirit of the messenger at whose feet John would have worshipped does not correspond with the spirit of some officials, priests, popes, etc., on earth today. They permit men to kiss their hands and feet and fall upon their knees before them in homage and respect, which certainly in a sense constitutes worship.

Millions the world over bow down to images instead of worshipping God through the one Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus, who now sits at the right hand of God the Father to make intercession for us (I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:1-3; I John 2:1,2). Any person who bows before any other person in worship or in prayer is committing the sin of idolatry. We are to worship God, and God alone.

The statement in verse 10, **“I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus Christ,”** should not be confusing to anyone who will compare Scripture with Scripture.

That is the only way we will ever understand God’s Word.

In Revelation 12:17 we find the same statement, referring to the Jewish remnant that will be on earth during the time of Tribulation and up to the consummation of all things. In that verse we find the same words: **“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”**

The statement simply means that the messenger here is a fellowservant having the testimony of Jesus, and the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The testimony of Jesus bears witness to His resurrection, His presence in glory, and His coming again and all the blessed things connected with that day, so fully revealed in God’s Word.

Thus the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

All prophecy concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, and all intelligent, scriptural proclamations of the coming events are a testimony concerning Himself.

HEAVEN OPENED

In the last section of chapter 19 (verses 11-21) we see Heaven opened. There are three main divisions in these last verses:

1. We see the mighty heavenly Monarch, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His victorious army - verses 11-16.
2. We see the multiplied millions of birds of prey called to feed upon the slain, to partake of the great supper of God - verses 17 and 18.
3. We see the complete overthrow and destruction of the opposing army and the leaders of the army consigned alive to the lake of fire and brimstone. All of their followers are slain - verses 19-21.

Verses 11 through 16 record a very special and important scene. There have been many and varied displays of the Lord Jesus Christ thus far in Revelation.

All of them are given for us **“upon whom the ends of the world are come”** (I Corinthians 10:11). The present vision, in character, extent and results, is second to no vision thus far.

Here we do not have the Lamb of God on a throne, as in chapter 5. Instead, we see Him as the great Warrior-King, victorious in battle, conquering in mighty power.

The appearing of Christ in the sky, riding upon a white horse with the armies of Heaven, will be a gladdening sight to the saints on earth. However, it will be a terrible sight to the armies of Antichrist - yea, the mighty men of earth and all who have been against God's Christ.

"I saw heaven opened." In chapter 6, verse 2, we saw the rider on a white horse. The rider had a bow in his hand, a crown was given unto him, and **"he went forth conquering and to conquer."** The rider of that white horse is the Antichrist; but the rider of the white horse in Revelation 19 has **"eyes as a flame of fire."**

On His head are many crowns, and out of His mouth went a sharp sword. This identifies this rider as the same person whom John saw standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks in the very beginning of Revelation. This rider is also the same One whom we saw to be **"the Son of Man"** in previous places throughout the book.

The name of the rider of the white horse in Revelation 6 is not given, but the rider of the white horse in Revelation 19 cannot be mistaken. His name is called **"THE WORD OF God."** On His garments and upon His thigh He has a name written: **"King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."** Certainly no one could misunderstand the identity of this rider.

It was prophesied that Jesus would ride into Jerusalem upon a young donkey: **"Behold thy King cometh unto thee . . . lowly, and riding upon an ass, upon a colt, and the foal of an ass"** (Zechariah 9:9). We know this was literally fulfilled to the letter; the account is found in Matthew 21:4-11. Insofar as we know, Jesus only rode upon an animal one time during His sojourn here upon earth. That one time was upon an humble ass; but see Him in Revelation 19! He is not riding an humble little donkey - He is riding a great white charger!

Perhaps someone is saying, "Preacher, do you not know that this is figurative language? Who ever heard of horses in Heaven?"

Horses and chariots of fire were seen in the heavens in the days of Elijah and Elisha, and if in that day, why not again? (See II Kings 2:11; 6:13-17.) Many times in my meetings, I tell people, "You take care of your end of preparing for eternity, and God Almighty is capable of handling His end of it. You prepare to meet God, and God will take care of the horses. You take care of your sins by committing them to the shed Blood of Jesus Christ!"

People are going to hell, searching the Bible with a magnifying glass, trying to figure out this and that. We are not to figure out anything. **"The just shall live by faith."** We are to study, and leave it to the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

The book of Revelation is full of action - action in Heaven, in the air, on the earth. The scenes in Heaven are numerous. John heard voices, singing; angels and glorified saints were seen on every hand. John saw the elders and heavenly creatures bowing in worship to Jehovah; thrones, crowns, robes, living creatures, books, harps, and much more. These things tell us of the eternal happiness and ceaseless activity of Heaven's teeming millions. Up to this point we have had glimpses into Heaven, but now Heaven is open. In chapter four we read, **"I saw and behold a door open in heaven."**

Now, Heaven is open. In Revelation 4:1 the door was opened that John might enter in. Here in Revelation 19 Heaven is opened that the millions of horsemen may pass out into the sky. There are four times in the New Testament where we read of Heaven being opened: Matthew 3:16; John 1:51; Acts 7:56 and Revelation 19:11. On all four occasions the opening of Heaven is in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. Two of these instances are past; two are yet future.

THE CONQUEROR AND HIS ARMY DESCRIBED

Revelation 19:11-16:

11. **And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.**
12. **His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.**
13. **And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.**
14. **And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**
15. **And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**
16. **And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**

The first thing John saw was “**a white horse.**” This signifies victorious power. The name of the rider was “**Faithful and True.**” No one but the Lord Jesus Christ could bear that title. He was faithful to the Father in every minute detail and **He is the Truth.**

He judges, and in righteousness makes war. He is coming to settle the destinies of the world and its inhabitants. The rider of the white horse is not only a mighty warrior and conqueror; He is also a righteous Judge. He is coming to judge in righteousness, as well as to destroy in blood. God “**hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead**” (Acts 17:31).

Here the appointed day is about to dawn. The Man ordained to judge in righteousness is the Commander-in-Chief of the armies of Heaven approaching the earth. This is a war like no war that has ever been fought up to this hour. It is not a war for the love of conquest or to enlarge a king's territory. It is a war to put down evil and enthrone righteousness on earth, in order that there may be peace on earth, good will toward men, and the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters now cover the sea. Jesus is about to prepare the earth for the reign of righteousness promised - but up to this point never fulfilled. The night Jesus was born the angels announced the birth of a King, and added, “**Peace on earth, good will toward men.**” That has never been, but it will be when King Jesus puts down the armies of Antichrist, sits on the throne of His father David, and reigns in righteousness.

In verse 12 we read, “**His eyes were as a flame of fire.**” He is approaching earth to observe all, to search out every hidden evil, and to execute righteous judgment. His eyes “**a flame of fire**” denote omniscience - nothing shall escape the all-seeing eye of the One who sits on the white charger.

“ . . . **On His head were many crowns** [diadems].” The word used here for “**crowns**” is not the same word used referring to the crowns of the saints in chapter 4:4, 10. The word here translated “**crowns**” expresses royal dignity and denotes absolute and supreme authority.

In chapter 12:3 the dragon has seven diadems on his head . . . the same Greek word used here. In Revelation 13:1 the Beast has on his horns ten diadems. Thus, the Beast and the dragon will exercise great and Supreme power during their reign; but note that there is only One who can be entrusted to exercise absolute authority and dominion. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. (Read Psalm 8). Seven diadems the dragon wore. Ten diadems the Beast wore. But “**ON HIS HEAD WERE MANY DIADEMS!**” This signifies that He is supreme over all governments, and in the end all authority and power will crumble under His mighty hand.

Verse 12: “. . . **He had a name written that no man knew, but He Himself.**”

There are divine names such as God, JEHOVAH, Christ, Jesus, Lord, Saviour, which express the relationship between Jehovah God and His creatures; but here is a name not revealed to man. Christ the Son, in the fulness of His divine nature and eternal existence, can alone be known by the Father (Matthew 11:27).

Christ has been forever. He was, and ever will be. There is no name to express such eternal existence - past, present and future. Christ alone can understand the fullness of who and what He was in the eternity behind us, of what He is in the present, and of what He will be throughout the eternity ahead of us. The finite mind of man cannot comprehend the fullness of the eternal Godhead.

Verse 13: “**And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God.**” the blood on the garments of the rider of the white horse is not His own blood, but the blood of His enemies. He has come to deal with the opposing armies of Antichrist who have gathered themselves together in war against the Lamb.

In Isaiah 63:1-4 we read concerning the victorious return from the land of Edom, from the capital city Bozrah.

With vengeance in His heart, and His righteous garments stained with the Blood of His enemies, the Lord is seen in this battle; but here in Revelation, His garment dipped in blood is witnessed even before He enters into the great conflict. This is a certain guarantee that righteous vengeance shall be meted out to the fullest extent upon the millions gathered against the Lamb of God, led by the Beast and the false prophet. There is no doubt concerning the victory of this battle. The Lamb came the first time in humility, riding upon an ass; but He will come this second time riding a great white charger, to drain the blood of His enemies. He must reign until all enemies have become His footstool - and He will!

This does not sound like the “grandfather-God” the liberals and modernists love to preach about, does it? Oh, yes, God is love, God is longsuffering, tender, good and kind; but God is a consuming fire, He is angry with the wicked every day.

Verse 13 closes with “**His name is called the Word of God.**” From the pen of eight sacred writers, God gives us the New Testament. John is the only one of the eight who applies this title to the Lord Jesus Christ. As The Word, Christ represents the Lord God in His being, in His character and in His righteous and holy works.

In John 1:1 we read, “**In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**” Therefore, in the beginning we see “**The Word of Life.**”

In John 1:14 we read, “**And the Word was made flesh.**” The Word was in the beginning. Nineteen hundred years ago the Word took a body. As the Word, Jesus has personal, independent, eternal existence (John 1:1, 2). As the Word, He is maker of all things, and without Him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3; Hebrews 1:1-3).

As the Word, He is the revealer of God . . . He is the One who makes God known to man (John 1:14).

Our words should be the expression of what we are. The words of Christ were the absolute expression of what He ever is (John 8:25). As the Word, Jesus reveals God in His essential nature as the Light of the World, as Love, and as the only begotten Son. As the Word, Jesus declares the Father. The first without the second would leave a great blank. The finite mind cannot take in or understand a God who has no beginning and no ending, by whom all things were made, and in whom all life consists. The finite mind of man simply cannot conceive the magnitude of an eternal spirit (God is a Spirit); but Jesus (the Word) took a body and brought God to man. God was in Christ (II Corinthians 5:19) reconciling the world unto Himself.

The title used here in Revelation 19:13 (“**His name is called the Word of God**”) has singular significance, It is God who is here seen moved into action – the Lord God, Almighty God!

The very nature of God demands the judgment of those on earth who attempt to frustrate His purpose to place His Son as King on Mount Zion and to place into His hands the government of earth:

In Isaiah 9:6-7 God promised a King upon whose shoulders the government would rest. In Luke 1, Jesus was promised the throne of David, and He must occupy that throne. When the armies of Antichrist attempt to stop the King of kings, Jehovah God goes into action as “**THE WORD OF God.**”

Christ, the Word of God, is the absolute and final expression of God in righteous judgment about to take place just before the beginning of the Millennium, the one thousand years of perfect peace on earth (Isaiah 11; Revelation 20:4-6).

Verse 14: **“And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”** The riders of the white horses were clothed in fine linen, white and clean. This is the heavenly attire of the saints that make up the Bride. It is clear that the Bride will accompany Christ when He returns to the earth.

We have here the fulfillment of the prophecy of Enoch: In Jude 14 and 15 we read, “. . . **Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.**”

What a sight! What a sight!! What a tremendous sight!!! If you can, let your imagination picture this: Look toward the sky, and there is the appearance of what seems to be a giant white thunderhead.

But it is moving swiftly, and as it comes nearer the shapes of horses and riders come into view. Out in front we see a great white charger, a tremendous animal, and the rider is most unusual. His eyes are a flame of fire. A great host is riding toward the earth.

Verse 15: **“AND OUT OF HIS MOUTH GOETH A SHARP SWORD, THAT WITH IT HE SHOULD SMITE THE NATIONS: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”**

This verse points out a very significant thing: The only weapon the heavenly host has is **“a sharp sword.”** The armies have no weapons, they will need no weapons.

The battle is THE LORD’S! **“Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations.”** The reference here points back to Isaiah 11:4. When Judas led the soldiers to arrest Jesus, Jesus simply spoke - and His enemies fell to the ground (John 18:5,6).

The Word of God smites, slays, destroys. The power of the Word is irresistible. God needs no hydrogen warheads, guided missiles, atomic submarines nor supersonic bombers! All God need do is utter the Word, and creatures disintegrate. God needs no weapons made with hands.

It is very interesting to note, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”** (John 5:24). But those who refuse to hear the Word will be destroyed by the very Word that could have brought them life. The Word brings life to all who believe; the same Word metes out death to all who refuse to hear it.

No wonder the devil has attempted to destroy the Word of God and discredit our Bible! Beware of the man who twists the Word to fit his religion.

Verse 15: “. . . **and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**” HE SHALL RULE! He shall govern (chapter 12:5). (Read Psalm 2 and Psalm 149:6-9).

The term “**with a rod of iron**” denotes that the ungodly, determined will of the nations must be broken and their power put down. Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is the only One who can do that. The fact that He (the Lamb, the humble One who has now become King of kings, the mighty One) treads the winepress of His fury and the winepress of the wrath of God denotes His utmost wrath. Almighty God is moved to fury. “**Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.**” We see three symbols of judgment in verse 15. First, a sharp sword. Second, a rod of iron. Third, the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God. “**I HAVE TRODDEN THE WINEPRESS ALONE, AND OF THE PEOPLE THERE WAS NONE WITH ME**” (Isaiah 63:3).

Verse 16: “**And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS!**”

His garment, the outward character of the Lord Jesus as beheld by others, bears a title of complete universal dominion. Instead of the sword on His thigh as recorded in Psalm 45:3, the name is written on His thigh and the sharp sword is in His mouth. One would naturally look for the sword on His thigh; instead, it is in His mouth, and on His thigh they read His name.

THE GREAT SUPPER OF ALMIGHTY GOD, THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON Revelation 19:17-18:

17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18. That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

In verses 7 and 8 we have the account of the marvelous, joyous marriage supper of the Lamb. In verses 17 and 18 we have the account of the great supper of God. The word “**great**” in verse 17 should be before “**supper**” and not before “**God.**” It is a great supper - we know He is a great God.

Verse 17: “**I saw an angel standing in the sun.**” This angel could be none other than the angel of the Lord. He is standing in the sun, denoting the center of governmental authority. He stands where all can clearly see him, and where he can survey the whole scene of conflict. The supper to which he invites the birds of the air immediately follows the battle of Armageddon.

The birds are invited to come. John sees in the Spirit what will literally take place when this great battle is fought. The great supper to which the birds are invited will be the bodies of the kings, captains, mighty men, horses, the riders of the horses, the bond, the free, the great and the small. Their bodies will be lying upon the Blood-drenched ground and the birds of prey will devour the flesh from their bones. This great multitude of human beings were slain by one sharp sword - the sword of the Christ who sits on the great white horse leading the teeming millions of white horses out of Heaven.

In verse 18 we read the word “**flesh**” five times in connection with this great supper to which the fowls of Heaven are invited. What a humiliating end to the strength, pomp and pride of the armies of Antichrist and the puppets who followed his power and rule! The vulture, the eagle and all other birds of prey will feed upon the flesh of kings, nobles and outstanding men of renown. **“That ye may eat the FLESH of kings, and the FLESH of captains, and the FLESH of mighty men, and the FLESH of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the FLESH of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”**

THE TOTAL OVERTHROW OF THE BEAST, FALSE PROPHET, KINGS AND THEIR ARMIES

Revelation 19:19-21:

19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

The day of the Lord has finally come. The Bible refers to this event as “**that day**,” and also as “**the great day**.” God is setting the stage and preparing for the Millennium, the glorious reign of peace on earth. Read Isaiah 65:17-19, 66:22; II Peter 2:13; Revelation 21:1.

The order of events concerning this gigantic episode is:

1. The return of the Lord in glory (Matthew 24:29,30).
2. The Beast and his hosts will be destroyed: The kings of the earth and their armies, and the false prophet which is the “**great and terrible**” (Revelation 19:11-21).
3. The judgment of the nations (Zechariah 14:1-9; Matthew 25:31-46).
4. The thousand years of peace, the Kingdom Age (Revelation 20:4-6).
5. Satanic revolt - the little season when Satan will be released after the Millennium to try them that are upon the earth (Revelation 20:7-10).
6. The second resurrection - the resurrection of the wicked, and the final judgment of the wicked (Revelation 20:11-15).
7. The DAY OF God - the time when the earth will be purged by fire (II Peter 3:10-13) and we will have a new Heaven, a new Earth, and the Pearly white City.

Let me point out something very significant: The description of the battle is mentioned very briefly, while many verses are given over to the description of the Great Conqueror, the Lord Jesus Christ, riding upon the great white charger. The battle is simply mentioned in verse 19, while many verses are given to the description of the conqueror. Jesus is worthy of all honor, praise, adoration and worship.

In verse 19 John saw the Beast, the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together.

Here John witnessed the gigantic confederation of the kings of the earth and peoples of the earth - the greatest confederation of people and kings ever beheld. This host will consist of multiplied millions. The Beast is named first, and is the center of the movement against the Lamb of God. All the material resources and wealth of the mighty revived empire make up what the Beast heads up.

Secondly, we have the kings of the earth - the very kings who wailed, moaned and groaned over the destruction of Babylon. The social and political authorities of Christendom unite with the Beast in this last tremendous attempt to overthrow God Almighty and His Christ. The battle started in Heaven when Satan brainwashed some of the angels, attempted to overthrow God, and was thrown out of Heaven (Ezekiel 28:1-19; Isaiah 14:12-17).

Next, we have mentioned **“their armies.”** This refers to the combined armies of the Beast and all of the kings, They are all **“gathered together.”** No Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler or Mussolini could bring together such a vast combination of power. Satan is the master mind behind this last movement against God. In Revelation 16:13-16 the veil is lifted and we witness the true character of this last drive. Three unclean spirits like frogs, originating from Satanic source and character, endowed with Satanic power to work miracles, **“go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”** The place where they will gather is named **“Armageddon”** (Revelation 16:16).

The Word of God is clear in making known the forces who oppose the Lamb. The place of the battle is also clear, and it is just as clearly stated that the teeming millions who make up the army of Antichrist come **“to make war against Him that sat upon the horse, and against His army.”** Search your history books; see if you can find one suggestion that such a battle has ever been fought. And yet some ministers have the audacity to teach that Revelation is behind us!

The Satanic trinity hates the Lamb, the rider of the great white horse, and makes war against His army of blood-washed saints who make up the New Testament Church. There has never been a battle such as this, nor will there ever be another battle like it! In Revelation 14:18-20 we read, **“Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood (not wine) came out of the winepress even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thou sand and six hundred furlongs.”**

That adds up to 200 miles of blood up to the horses' bridles . . . approximately six feet deep.

Isaiah speaks of the time when the land shall be soaked with blood (Isaiah 34:1-8). The prophet Zechariah says, **“I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle . . . then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations”** (Zechariah 14:1-3), In verse 20 we read, **“And the Beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image.”**

The term “**Beast**” usually refers to the empire, but here it refers to the personal chief of the empire. The character of the empire is molded by the Beast-ruler.

The empire and its ruling head, in interest and purpose, are one and the same. Of course, they can be distinguished as in Daniel 7, but here and elsewhere in Revelation the Beast-empire and its last great Imperial ruler are so vitally and closely connected that the former perishes in the everlasting ruin of its head.

The Beast (the man, of course) is cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone. The false prophet that was with him is the Antichrist, the combination of all religious apostasy.

These two work in perfect unison, counterfeiting God the Father and God the Son in the trinity of God. The Beast will supply the strength; the false prophet will supply the counsel to carry out the strength. The false prophet is by far the more energetic and the more powerful of the two, because he is energized by the devil and contains all the power of hell. “**Who (the false prophet) wrought miracles before him (the Beast),**” by which he deceived the millions who will receive the mark of the Beast and who worship his image.

He (the false prophet) deceived these millions by the miracles he performed, such as pulling fire down from Heaven. His desire was to bring world-wide worship to the Beast . . . his superior in temporal power although his inferior in craft deception, Satanic influence and demon power. The diabolical work of the false prophet will turn millions to the Beast.

The false prophet will be energized by the devil and his power will be second only to that of God.

At this time Satan will give to the false prophet the power that he offered Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-6: “**And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: FOR THAT IS DELIVERED UNTO ME; and to whomsoever I will I give it.**”

Satan offered this power to Jesus if He would fall down and worship him. The Son of God refused and withstood every temptation the devil hurled at Him:

The devil is jealous of Jesus, and always has been; that was the cause of his downfall in Ezekiel 28. He wanted to exalt his throne above the throne of Almighty God. He attempted, he failed - but he has never given up and will not give up until he is placed into the lake of fire and brimstone.

“**These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone**” (verse 20). Yes, this is literal fire a lake of it. There are not enough words in all the languages of all the world to describe the horror of such a doom! These two - the Beast and false prophet - are not killed as are their followers. Physical death does not come to them; they are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone while still living in the bodies they possess during their ungodly reign.

One thousand years later, Satan will be cast into the same lake (Revelation 20:10).

Certainly this proves that the wicked do not burn up, for when Satan is cast into the lake of fire, the Beast and the false prophet are still there, burning! Fire and brimstone denote torment that is unspeakable (Isaiah 30:33).

This will be a literal lake - not of water, but of fire, regardless of what religions, preachers, teachers, or whosoever may have to say about it.

Verse 21: “**And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.**” The pride of the armies of the Antichrist lies in the dust of the earth in death . . . butchered; but not with bullets nor atomic bombs - butchered with the sword that proceeds out of the mouth of the King of kings.

The voice of fury of the King of kings shall strike suddenly, taking the lives of chiefs, captains, kings, millionaires. They will die on the spot - a horrible death - and their flesh will be devoured by the buzzards! There will be enough for all the birds . . . “**and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.**”

The destiny of those who worship the Beast and join his army is revealed in Revelation 14:9-11 and Revelation 20:11-15.

In connection with the closing verses of this chapter, read Ezekiel 39:1-22, Matthew 24:27-28 and Joshua 10:1-11.

~ end of chapter 19 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER TWENTY

Satan Bound; etc.

In chapter 19 we saw the great white horse and his rider. In chapter 20 we will see the white Throne of judgment and justice. The great white charger sets forth victorious power in conquest and the final victory of the King of kings. The great white Throne denotes holiness, purity, justice and the final judgment of the wicked. The great white charger going forth to conquer precedes the great white Throne, and the victory of the rider prepares the way for judgment at the great white Throne.

In chapter 20 we will see four outstanding things:

1. The binding of Satan. He will be put in prison for one thousand years. We might say he will be placed in God's penitentiary (verses 1-3).
2. The reign of Christ and the saints for one thousand glorious years (verses 4-6).
3. We see Satan loosed for a little season to test those who will be born during the Millennium. He makes his last great drive to conquer the world and overthrow God. He comes to utter defeat and meets his eternal doom (verses 7-10).
4. In the last part of chapter 20 we see the judgment of the wicked dead. There are no righteous dead here - only the wicked dead. The righteous have already been judged for their stewardship, and have received their rewards at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

SATAN BOUND AND PLACED IN PRISON FOR ONE THOUSAND YEARS

Revelation 20:1-3

- 1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.**
- 2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,**
- 3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season.**

We need not speculate on the identity of the angel in our first verse, it is the angel of the Lord.

In Revelation 1:18 we read that Jesus has the keys of hell and death, and He would not trust those keys to anyone else. I believe He personally binds Satan and puts him into the bottomless pit, thus denoting by sealing the pit that the government of Almighty God is behind the prison term of Satan, and will see to it that he does not escape.

There could be no Millennium, no time of peace, as long as Satan is loose. We know that he is at present the god of this age. the prince of the power of the air, walking about as a roaring lion, and also disguised as a minister of righteousness and an angel of light. This is the day of Satan. Evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse. As it was in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot, so shall it be before Jesus returns to this earth to reign. There can be no peace on earth and good will toward men until Satan is in the pit, securely locked away to deceive the nations no more.

In verse 2 the angel **“laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.”** In this verse Satan is called by four different names: The Dragon, the Serpent, the Devil, and Satan. These names are given here in the same order in which they are mentioned in Revelation 12:9.

- **“Dragon”** symbolizes cruelty.
- **“Serpent”** signifies guile and cunning treachery.
- **“Devil”** is the deceiver, the tempter of men.
- **“Satan”** means the opponent, the enemy of Christ and His people.

Certainly we learn from these names that Satan is a person, and not just an influence or principle of evil.

- Satan is the **prince of the power of the air** (Ephesians 2:2);
- He is **the god of this age** (II Corinthians 4:4)
- He is **the ruler of the powers of darkness** (Ephesians 6:11,12).

He can assume any form necessary to damn a soul.

His position is so exalted that Michael, the archangel, would not accuse him, but said, **“The Lord rebuke thee”** (Jude 9). If Michael dared not bring an accusation against Satan, what angel do you think would attempt to bind him? Only the omnipotent Lord Jesus could do that. It is He who holds the key to the bottomless pit. This is the same angel we read about in Revelation 9:1-2.

The binding of Satan reveals to us the fact that Almighty God can stop the devil at the appointed time. He can stop him without armies. When the time comes, God will send one angel to seize, handcuff and bind Satan and place him in chains in prison.

The term **“a thousand years”** is found six times in Revelation 20: Verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Three of these times pertain to Satan, two are connected with the reign of the saints with Jesus during the Millennium, and the last one pertains to the time between the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked.

There is no such thing in the Word of God as a general resurrection. The dead in Christ will be raised first (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15). All six of the references above have to do with the same thousand years, but in different relationship.

This is not symbolic, but is literally one thousand years according to Bible years of twelve months. (A prophetic year is 360 days, not 365 days.)

According to Jewish belief and reasoning, the six thousand years now drawing to a close correspond to the six days in which God created the heavens and the earth. On the seventh day God rested from His labors. A day is as a thousand years with the Lord, and a thousand years as one day (II Peter 3:8). Therefore, by such reasoning, we have been on this earth about six days (almost six thousand years - 4,000 before Christ and almost 2,000 since). It must be about time for the Sabbath - the thousand years of peace. The Bible says, "There remaineth therefore a [Sabbath] rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). The people of God refers to all saints, but primarily to the elect of God, the nation Israel.

In the last part of verse 3 we read, "**After that he (Satan) must be loosed a little season.**" "After that" refers to more than the thousand years Satan will spend in prison. It means also after the destruction of Babylon; after the marriage of the Lamb; after the battle of Armageddon here on earth; after the destruction of the Beast, the false prophet and all who follow them; after the binding of Satan, sealing him for one thousand years.

After all these things, he must be turned loose for a little season. Someone may ask, "Why? After Satan is placed in prison, why would God release him?" Remember, Israel will be in her own land for one thousand years in natural bodies. She will build houses and inhabit them; she will plant vineyards and eat the fruit thereof. She will multiply by the millions.

Read and study all the verses in Isaiah chapters 65 and 66. At the end of the Millennium there will be millions on earth who have never been tempted. If God did not permit them to be tested as were Adam and Eve, and you and I, then God would be a respecter of persons - and we know He is not (Romans 2:11).

Therefore, all who are born during the Millennium must be tempted. Satan will be loosed for a little season, but the Word of God does not tell us how long the "**little season**" will be. To these people, Satan will offer the same things he offered Adam and Eve in the Garden, the same things he offered Jesus in Matthew 4 and Luke 4. In his last desperate attempt to overthrow God's throne and exalt himself above the stars of God (Isaiah 14) Satan will offer power and glory with himself to all who will follow him. Many (the number as the sands of the sea) will rally around Satan in his last great attempt to take the Holy City, to crush the saints and Israel in the earth that has been freed from the curse for one thousand years.

THE REIGN OF CHRIST DURING THE MILLENNIUM

Revelation 20:4-6:

4. **And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**

5. **But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.**

6. **Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.**

Who are they who will reign with Christ in heavenly glory here on earth for one thousand years? There is much speculation and much disagreement as to who these are. Some say they are saints; some say they are angels. We will come back to this subject a little later.

The sovereignty of Christ as MAN (Psalm 8) and as KING (Psalm 2) is Bible truth. A royal reign to be displayed for one thousand years here on this earth is unquestionable according to Scripture. The prophets of old saw it in a vision. Judah sang about it. The prophecy from Isaiah to Malachi speaks of its glory, blessing and splendor. The earth is to be delivered from the curse under which it has so long groaned and travailed.

God created Adam and gave the earth to him. Adam subleased it to the devil, and when the lease runs out the sub-lease is no good. One day Adam's day will be over and the day of the Lord God Almighty will come in. He will literally banish Satan from the earth: and the earth will be delivered from the curse. **"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever"** (Revelation 11:15).

In Revelation 11:15 the reign was announced. In chapter 20 it has actually come to pass. Verses 4 through 6 are extremely important and unique, for here, alone, is revealed a summary of those who will share with Christ in the Millennium, in the reign of righteousness and glory here on earth. **"I saw thrones"** - Daniel in exile and John the Beloved in exile saw thrones in a vision . . . the same thrones. When Daniel saw them they were unoccupied; John saw them occupied: **"They sat upon them."**

In Daniel 7:9 we read, **"Till the thrones were cast down."** We might paraphrase it thusly: "Till the thrones were placed." Daniel beheld until the thrones were established. He does not lead us into the Millennium, but simply to the beginning of it. He breaks off his prophecy at the beginning of the Millennium where one **"like unto the Son of man"** receives from the Ancient of Days the universal and everlasting kingdom (Daniel 7:13,14).

The thrones seen here are not to be confused with the twenty-four thrones of Revelation 4:4. The thrones Daniel saw (Daniel 7:9) and the thrones John sees in Revelation 20:4 both point to the Millennial government here on earth.

In verse 4 we read, “. . . **and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.**”

The question now arises, “To whom do the pronouns they and them refer?” The Scriptures do not teach that angels or heavenly creatures will reign here on earth: **“For unto the angels hath He NOT put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak”** (Hebrews 2:5). The government of earth during the Millennium is to be administered by Christ and His heavenly saints (I Corinthians 6:2,3). “THEY” refers to the Church, the Bride of Christ - “kings and priests unto God” - and possibly to the Old Testament saints. To this, some agree and some do not. Some declare that only the Church will reign with Him. Others suggest that the Old Testament saints may be included.

“Judgment was given to them.” This is the fulfillment of **“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?”** (I Corinthians 6:2). These words are easily understood. No one need be confused here. The saints will sit with Jesus when He judges the world, and will judge with Him.

“. . . And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God.” John sees, in the Spirit, souls - not persons, but souls of the martyrs. In Revelation 6:9-11 we read of the souls of the martyrs under the altar, crying out, asking how long God will permit the reign of the Antichrist . . . how long before their blood will be avenged. They are given white robes and palms, and instructed to wait a little season until their fellow servants should be killed. The souls John saw under the altar are the same souls he sees here, plus those who will be butchered during the reign of the Antichrist.

Notice the description the Spirit gives concerning these souls: **“Them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus . . . for the Word of God . . . which had not worshipped the Beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.”** These all lived and reigned with Christ one thousand years.

All of these were beheaded after the Rapture of the Church so we know that at least two groups will reign with Christ during the Millennium: The Bride and the martyrs described here. No doubt the majority of these will be butchered during the last three-and-a-half years of the Great Tribulation.

Note carefully that John first sees the souls, and in the same verse, **“they lived.”** The resurrection takes place immediately after the marriage supper of the Lamb, and just before the beginning of the Millennium.

Verse 5: **“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”**

The **“resurrection of the just”** is mentioned in Luke 14:13-14, and the **“resurrection of life”** is definitely distinguished from the **“resurrection unto damnation”** in John 5:29. Here in Revelation 20:5 we learn for the first time the interval that separates the two resurrections: One thousand years. When Jesus comes in the Rapture, only the righteous will be raised (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

When He comes in the end of the ages, only the wicked will be raised and will appear before the great white Throne to be judged. The doctrine of a general resurrection - a time when the good and bad, just and unjust are raised - is certainly disproved by, this text.

In John 5:28-29 we read, **“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”**

The **“hour”** referred to in this verse embraces one thousand years! Before the Millennium, the righteous will hear His voice. At the close of the Millennium the wicked will hear His voice. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. In John chapter 11 He called Lazarus by name. Had He simply said, **“Dead, come forth,”** every dead person would have come forth; but He called one man, and one man came out of the grave. When Jesus calls the righteous to meet Him in the air, only the righteous will be raised. Then one thousand years later the wicked will be raised.

I know some will disagree, but I ask you to honestly see this Bible fact. In John 5:25-27 we read, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, THE HOUR IS COMING, AND NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.”**

In verse 25, note **“the hour is coming, and now is.”** Please be reasonable and face the fact that the hour referred to in this verse is the day of Grace, and has already lasted more than 1900 years. The wording is, **“the hour is coming, and now is.”**

The dead referred to here are spiritually dead, not physically dead. All sinners are dead (Ephesians 2:1; John 5:24). When a dead sinner hears the voice of the Spirit and believes the Word, that dead sinner is raised to life, born of the Spirit, a new creation.

The hour referred to in John 5:25 has already lasted 1900 years. Why should it be difficult for anyone to believe that the hour in John 5:28 will last a thousand years? Regardless of what you believe, it is true, clearly taught in God’s Word.

Therefore, between the resurrection of those **“who have done good”** and the resurrection of those **“who have done evil,”** is a thousand years. **“The rest of the dead”** are the wicked referred to in Revelation 20:13. Not one saint of God will be raised in the last resurrection. The judgment at the great white Throne is final, eternal, and has to do with the wicked dead.

There is a resurrection of the just which is the first resurrection and consists of at least three distinct companies as concerning the time of their resurrection. This began with Christ, the first fruits (I Corinthians 15:23). **“Afterward, they that are Christ’s at His coming”** (the Rapture). (Read I Thessalonians 4:6).

Then on the eve of the introduction of the Millennial Kingdom we have the resurrection of the martyred saints of the Tribulation.

But with the wicked dead it is far different. All the wicked from Cain to the last person to live and die the death of a sinner will remain in their graves until after the Millennium, and then they will be raised. The resurrection of the wicked will be the last closing scene of the resurrection of the dead.

They will be judged, cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, then the eternal ages will begin with not one trace of wickedness on earth, in Heaven, or in any of God's new creations. All wickedness will be in the lake of fire.

In verse 6 we read, **“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”**

Certainly any thinking person could not miss the fact that only holy people will have part in the first resurrection. Only people who cannot be affected by the second death, only those who shall be priests of God and Christ will be raised in the first resurrection; and if there is no second resurrection, why would the Holy Spirit refer to **“the first resurrection?”**

Why did not the Spirit simply say “the resurrection in general?” The answer is clear. The Spirit leaves no untied ends. All is finished so that we may perfectly understand what the Word of God teaches.

In I Corinthians 15:51-54 we read of the resurrection of the body. This mortal will put on immortality, and the living will be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The dead will be raised in glory, the bodies of the saints (whether alive or in the grave) will be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body (Philippians 3:21; I John 3:1-3). Paul desired to have part in the first resurrection (Philippians 3:11), and the resurrection of the dead is taught in both the Old and New Testaments.

The salvation of the believer is complete now so far as the redemption of the soul is concerned. Jesus came the first time to redeem the soul; He is coming the second time to redeem the body, and no saint will receive a glorified, eternal body until the Rapture and the first resurrection.

The resurrection of the wicked is not a resurrection unto life, but unto eternal damnation. The righteous who share in the first resurrection are raised to receive glorified bodies in which they will live and rejoice forever. The wicked are raised to be cast into the lake of fire which is the second death. Christians do not die - the body rests in the dust, the spirit returns to God who gave it. The wicked, die forever. They die physically, and they, will die spiritually throughout eternity in the lake of fire. The righteous are raised to die no more - the wicked are raised to be cast into the lake of the **“second death”**! But the second death has no claim on those who are partakers of the first resurrection.

In verse 6 we learn . . . “but they shall be priests of God and of Christ.” Both the holy (I Peter 2:5) and those who possess the royal character of priesthood (I Peter 2:9) shall be in the first resurrection and shall reign with Christ in His kingdom for one thousand glorious years.

THE KINGDOM ON EARTH

Read these glorious words: **“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea”** (Isaiah 11:6-9).

In these verses we have a description of something that seems unbelievable: A wolf and a lamb will dwell together, a leopard and a baby goat will feed together. A child will lead a lion, a bear and a cow will feed together, young bears and calves will lie down together. A lion will eat straw like an ox; a baby will play with a snake. There will be no killing, no destroying in God’s holy mountain. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord! Yes, this will literally happen right here on this earth. There are those who spiritualize it, but they are nothing short of spiritual thieves and robbers. God pity them when they stand before Him to receive their reward!

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:31-34).

This kingdom is certainly earthly, a visible kingdom on earth, the Millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will sit on the throne of His glory. There will be a government. God will rule in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ: **“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end”** (Luke 1:30-33).

In these verses there are seven **“shalls,”** four of which have been fulfilled. Mary brought forth a Son’ He was called Jesus; He was great; He was called the Son of the Highest. These have literally been fulfilled and why should not we believe that Jesus will sit on the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob?

Daniel describes the event: **“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days (God Almighty), and they brought Him near before Him. and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed”** (Daniel 7:13,14).

Jesus promised His disciples, **“In the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”** (Matthew 19:28). The place of government will be in Jerusalem. The temple (the sanctuary) will be rebuilt in the New Jerusalem (Ezekiel 48:10, 20, 21). The new temple is described in Ezekiel 42:15-20.

The prophet Zechariah tells us, **“In that day (the Millennial day) living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea (Red Sea), half of them toward the hinder sea (Mediterranean): in the summer and in winter shall it be”** (Zechariah 14:8). Study carefully Ezekiel 47:8-12.

When Jesus returns in the Revelation (not in the Rapture) when every eye shall see Him (Revelation 1:5), He will come back to the Mount of Olives from which He ascended (Acts 1:9-12).

Zechariah describes exactly what will happen: **“And His feet (the feet of Christ) shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south . . . ALL THE LAND SHALL BE TURNED AS A PLAIN FROM GEBA TO RIMMON SOUTH OF JERUSALEM: AND IT SHALL BE LIFTED UP AND INHABITED”** (Zechariah 14:4, 10, 11).

When Jesus steps on the Mount of Olives, it will **“cleave in the midst.”** Some suggest that an earthquake will bring about the splitting of the mountain, but I do not agree; I believe that when the feet of Jesus touch the mountain it will split wide open. We read, **“Behold, the Lord cometh forth out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place”** (Micah 1:3,4).

These great physical changes will make the land of Palestine level and make room for the New City and the glorious reign of the Lord God Almighty.

SATAN LOOSED FOR A LITTLE SEASON: DOOM OF GOG AND MAGOG; DOOM OF SATAN

7. **And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,**
8. **And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.**
9. **And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.**
10. **And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

In verse 7 we learn that when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be set free for a season, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog. His purpose in deceiving the nations is the same as it has always been.

- When he led some of the angels astray he desired to overthrow God.
- He suggested to Eve that God was unfair, knowing that if she ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she would be a little god.
- Satan demonstrated jealousy in the Garden of Eden.
- He accused God of being jealous, not wanting Adam and Eve to have knowledge, while all the time Satan himself was jealous of God!

At the close of the Millennium, Satan goes to the nations, deceives millions, **“the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.”** Who would dare to estimate the grains of sand by the sea? This vast army will be made up of people born during the Millennium. Do not forget that Israel and the nations who befriended her will be in their natural bodies for one thousand years and there will be millions born during the Millennium who will never have known temptation because Satan will be in the pit throughout the one thousand years reign of Christ.

In verse 9 we learn that when Satan has deceived a great number as the sand of the sea, they march upon the breadth of the earth and completely circle the camp of the saints and the beloved city of Jerusalem. When the city is completely cut off from all outside help and completely compassed about with teeming millions of soldiers that make up Gog and Magog, when it seems that the case is hopeless and the Holy City will be wiped from the face of the earth, a tremendous miracle from Almighty God occurs: **“FIRE CAME DOWN FROM God OUT OF HEAVEN AND DEVoured THEM!”**

Again the Creator is greater than the created. Remember, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by Him”** (John 1:1,2). Satan was not created a devil; he was created **“the anointed cherub that covereth.”** He was perfect in wisdom, perfect in beauty, and perfect in all of his ways from the day he was created until iniquity was found in him (Ezekiel 28:14, 15).

Satan became the dragon, the deceiver, when he thought to overthrow God. God is the greater and finally annihilates the last great army to gather against the beloved city and the saints of God. It is true that **“the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me”** (Psalm 69:9), and any persecution directed at the saints of God is directed toward God. In this case, God fights the battle by simply sending fire down from Heaven and devouring the multimillions gathered in battle against the Holy City and the saints.

Who is Gog? Who is Magog? Study carefully Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. The reference in these chapters is to the fast growing power of Russia and Communism.

The true Russians descended from Japheth, a son of Noah (Genesis 10:2). The capital cities of Russia are named in the first verses of Ezekiel 38: **“Meshech”** is Moscow the capital of Russia, and **“Tubal”** is the city of Tobolsk: chief city of Siberia.

Referring to Gog and Magog, Ezekiel says, “**The chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.**” The literal translation reads, “Prince of Rosh Meshech and Tubal” Thus, Russia is identified in Scripture as the land, the vast northern empire. Gog is the ruler, head of the great Russian empire. Ezekiel goes further to tell us of Persia, Ethiopia, and many other nations coming under the leadership of Gog, “**like a cloud to cover the land.**”

At that time the new State of Israel will be without walls, having neither bars nor gates; and it will seem that they will be an easy foe to conquer. Israel is becoming one of the wealthiest nations on earth, and according to Ezekiel 38:10-13 the great northern army will descend upon Israel to plunder and destroy. Gog will be the last czar of Russia.

When God sends fire down out of Heaven and devours the army around Jerusalem, there will not be one sinner left upon the face of the earth. Only Satan will be left, and God is about to deal with him. His doom was fixed in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:15, when God enlightened Lucifer that the seed of the woman would crush his head. He is the last of the evil powers to be destroyed. The Beast and the false prophet are already in the lake of fire, and now John sees in the Spirit what will literally take place: “**AND THE DEVIL THAT DECEIVED THEM WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHERE THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET ARE, AND SHALL BE TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT FOR EVER AND EVER**” (Revelation 20:10).

The dragon was the first creature to sin, the first to be cast out of Heaven. Sin was born in the heart of Lucifer, “**the shining one.**” The Beast and the false prophet are already in the lake of fire; they were placed there at the beginning of the Millennium and are still there when the Millennium closes. After one thousand years of burning they are still burning . . . proof of the Lord’s words in Mark 9:49: “**Everyone shall be salted with fire.**”

Salt is a preservative. Here in the lake of fire are two men who have been “salted” with fire - not consumed, not burned up - but preserved IN torment, BY torment, TO BE tormented forever and ever throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Regardless of what you have heard, read, or been taught, hell is a place of literal fire, a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth. Hell is a place “**where the worm never dies,**” a place of unquenchable fire, a place of “**fire and brimstone.**” “**They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**”

They refers to the devil, the Beast, the false prophet, and all who have followed them. Day and night signifies that the torment is without intermission . . . continuous, unceasing. For ever and ever Signifies eternity . . . never ending existence.

Regardless of what some denominations teach, hell is a place of everlasting, unending punishment. I beg you, dear friend, if you are not born again, please prepare to meet God. Do not take a chance on waking up in hell in the lake of fire and brimstone!

The devil finally comes to the end of his deceiving, destroying, damning crusade which began in Heaven when he decided to overthrow God and take the throne.

Jesus said, **“I saw Satan as lightning fall from Heaven.”** Since that day, Satan has been the deceiver, the damner of the souls of men. One day he will be roasting in the lake of fire with the billions whom he led astray. He will be tormented day and night. He will beg for a drop of water to cool his tongue. He will wail and scream and gnash his teeth. God help you, dear reader, not to spend eternity in hell.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

Revelation 20:11-15:

11. **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.**
12. **And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**
13. **And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.**
14. **And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.**
15. **And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

“And I saw a great white throne . . .” In verse 12 we read, **“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.”**

There are two separate visions here:

First, John saw the throne and the Judge.

Second, he saw the dead and their judgment meted out.

At the beginning of the Millennium there was a great judgment poured out upon the living. Now at the close of the Millennium there is another great judgment, which is the judgment of the dead.

The throne set up in Matthew 25:31 is not the great white Throne of Revelation 20:11. The former was set up before the Millennium, and the parties judged there will be living persons on earth - the sheep and the goat nations. The great white Throne judgment is set up to reward all the wicked dead according to their wickedness. The judgment in Matthew 25:31 has to do with nations; the great white Throne judgment has to do with individuals.

We read in the Bible of three great thrones:

1. In Heaven (Revelation 4:2), from whence this universe is governed.
2. On earth (Matthew 25:31). The nations will be judged here in respect to their treatment of the preachers of the Kingdom as set forth in Matthew 25:40-45.
3. The great white Throne, where the wicked dead will be judged (Revelation 20:11).

This will be the greatest of all judgments. Many things contribute to make it so:

- The outstanding feature being that of the dignity of the Judge Himself.
- The greatness of the occasion,
- The vastness of the scene.

The eternal consequences involved are also contributing factors in making this a judgment such as has never been, nor ever will be again. The great white Throne judgment is like no other ever held.

“**Him that sat on** (the throne).” Notice that a pronoun is used here. The Judge is not named, but we have no difficulty discovering who He is: “**The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son**” (John 5:22). The Judge is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The despised, hated, crucified Nazarene is now about to “**judge the quick and the dead**” (II Timothy 4:1).

The quick refers to the living He has already judged (Matthew 25:31). Here at the great white Throne He is about to judge the spiritually dead. Yes, the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ, sits on the great white Throne.

“**. . . From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them**” Please notice, the earth and Heaven FLED - not disappeared or passed out of existence or were annihilated.

The rest of the verse guards against such unscriptural interpretation of the Word, plainly stating that there was found no place for them. Upon the removal of the earth and the Heaven, the stage is set for the new Heaven, the new earth and the Pearly white City. There will be a complete change of the Heaven and the earth. All things will be made new (Isaiah 66:22; II Peter 3:13).

Between the passing away of the Millennial earth and Heaven, and the appearing of the new earth and new Heaven (not the third Heaven where God’s house is, but the Heaven just above us where Satan’s throne is now located), the great white Throne is set up and the judgment of the wicked follows!

I am sure someone will ask what happens to the saved Israelites and Gentiles on the Millennial earth . . . the saints, the redeemed. Where are they during this change? God takes care of His own. The Scripture is completely silent here and we dare not speculate; but God can preserve the righteous nations and saints until the new earth, new Heaven and Pearly white City come into existence. The great white Throne judgment is final and will have to do with all the wicked up through the last ungodly person to exist on this earth, and there will never be another ungodly person to invade the new Heaven, earth and the Pearly white City.

Verse 12: “**And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God . . .**”

The dead referred to here are the spiritually dead . . . unbelievers, ungodly men. There is a resurrection of the just - the first resurrection - which we have already discussed. We clearly saw that the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the wicked will not occur at the same time.

“ . . . **the small and the great** . . . ” This statement occurs frequently in the Old Testament, and is found five times in Revelation: Chapters 11:18; 13:16; 19:5; 19:18 and 20:12.

“ . . . **STAND BEFORE GOD!** ” Notice carefully - these people, small and great, rich and poor, wise and unwise, kings and peasants, are not standing on the earth; they are not standing on a cloud. They are standing before God Almighty, held in their position by His omnipotence! There is no place to hide . . . the mountains, caves and rocks are gone. The clouds, the atmosphere, the earth, have fled away. The guilty stand before God with no place to hide. They face God; there is no escape and no shelter. They must face Him who sits upon the throne!

In Revelation 4:1-4 John saw a throne, and around the throne he saw a rainbow . . . symbol of mercy.

- God placed the rainbow in the sky to assure Noah that the earth would never again be destroyed by water.
- Ezekiel also saw a bow in the sky.
- In Revelation 10:1 the Angel stands on the land and on the sea with a rainbow upon his head.
- In Revelation 4, when the believers are caught up to appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the rewards for things done in the body, there is a rainbow of mercy.

But here in Revelation 20:11, we see no rainbow. We see only the blazing white of God’s righteousness, holiness and purity. There is no mercy. Mercy is forever gone for those who stand before God at the great white Throne!

Dear reader, will you meet God at the throne where there is a rainbow of mercy? or will you meet Him at the great white Throne?

You are the only person who knows the answer to that question. If you are born again, you will meet Him at the throne of mercy. If you are not born again, you will meet Him at the blazing white Throne of His holiness.

Verse 12 continues, “ . . . **and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written In the books, according to their works.** ”

Every person on earth has his life and history recorded in the books of God’s great bookkeeping system.

Every thought, word and deed is recorded. Nothing is forgotten; nothing is too small to be entered in the records of Almighty God. Only infants and idiots are excepted. If a child passes away before he reaches the age of accountability, or if the mind never develops beyond the mind of a child, God’s grace takes care of the innocent.

But for all who know, and who pass into the age of accountability, every act is recorded in the books of Heaven.

Please note: Twice it is recorded that the judgment is “**according to their works.**”

Many ask, “If the righteous go to Paradise immediately at death, and if the wicked immediately drop into hell, then why the resurrection and the judgment?” The answer is clear to all who study and rightly divide the Word of truth: No person can receive his full reward until the consummation of all things.

The righteous die, the spirit returns to God who gave it, and rests . . . but “**their works do follow them**” (Revelation 14:13). Therefore, the righteous cannot receive their full reward until the last soul has received or rejected the Lord Jesus. Every person who contributes money, time, prayers, or whatsoever, to the winning of a soul, has a part in the reward for winning that soul.

The same is true concerning the wicked. Those who die in sin will be rewarded according to the extent of their wickedness. There are degrees of reward in Heaven and degrees of punishment in hell.

To whom much is given, of him much shall be required. They that know to do good, and yet do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. They that know not, and commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. God is a just God, and you may rest assured that Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Pilate, Herod and their kind will suffer a greater degree of punishment than will a teen-age boy who was reared in a bootlegger’s home and was never taught about Jesus Christ.

God will give justice to every mortal who has lived and died. The righteous will get exactly what they deserve . . . each individual will receive his or her reward - no more, no less. The same is true concerning the wicked. Each sinner will receive his or her reward according to the extent of his wickedness.

Please notice, “**books (plural) were opened.**”

These books record the deeds of the wicked . . . thought, word and deed. And then another book is opened - the Book of Life. The dead are not judged from the Book of Life, but are judged “**out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**” Read Luke 12:47,48; I Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10.

In verse 13 we read, “**The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.**”

By “**death**” we are to understand that the grave will give up the bodies; and, of course, the sea will give up the bodies that were buried at sea. By “**hell**” we understand that the compartment of the underworld (Hades) where the souls of the wicked dead will remain until the resurrection of the wicked, will deliver up the dead. Then both death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire.

Death and sin will not be found in the new earth.

Let me point out here that all wicked spirits drop into hell immediately at death. Hell (Hades), located in the center of this earth (Revelation 9:1 ff), is a prison to hold wicked spirits until the consummation of all things and the beginning of the eternity of eternities. At that time, hell itself will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the eternal abode of wicked spirits.

At the great white Throne the wicked will not be judged to see whether or not they are entitled to eternal life; that has already been settled. Here they will be judged to ascertain the degree of their punishment.

The fallen angels will be judged at the great white Throne. They are now **“reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day”** (Jude 6), when they, too, will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

In verse 13, death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire, and this is the second death. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:26 that death is the last enemy to be destroyed. Death itself will be cast into the lake of fire and there will be no death after the great white Throne judgment. None will die in Heaven or in earth.

“The second death” and **“the lake of fire”** are identical terms (Revelation 20:14). Both terms are used to describe the eternal state of the wicked. The second death is not annihilation of the soul. Revelation 19:20 compared with Revelation 20:10 proves this. After one thousand years in the lake of fire, the Beast and the false prophet are still burning, undestroyed! They burn forever and ever . . . through the ages of ages, throughout the unending eternity that lies ahead.

Verses 12 through 15 assure us that there will be no mistake at the judgment. The books are there, the Book of Life is there, the records are all there, and all will be judged according to the record. All who are not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire and tormented forever and ever. There will be no back-talk at the judgment; the record will speak. Paul said, **“Let God be true, but every man a liar”** (Romans 3:4).

God’s record cannot lie. He knows every minute detail of our lives, and those details are on record. The only way to keep them from being brought out in the judgment is to have them covered by the precious blood of the Lamb. Are your sins covered by the Blood, dear reader?

If not, God grant this be the happy moment when you bow your head and surrender wholeheartedly and unreservedly to the Lamb of God. God grant that not one person who reads these lines will stand at the great white Throne judgment! May you be washed white in the precious Blood of Jesus, and be in that number when the Bride is caught up to meet Jesus in the air.

~ end of chapter 20 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The New Heaven; The New Earth; The New Peoples; The New Jerusalem; etc.

- 1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.**
- 2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**
- 3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.**
- 4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.**
- 5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.**
- 6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.**
- 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.**
- 8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.**
- 9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.**
- 10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,**
- 11. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;**
- 12. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:**
- 13. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.**
- 14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

15. **And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.**
16. **And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.**
17. **And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.**
18. **And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.**
19. **And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;**
20. **The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, anamethyst.**
21. **And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.**
22. **And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.**
23. **And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.**
24. **And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.**
25. **And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.**
26. **And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.**
27. **And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

SEVEN NEW THINGS

In Revelation 21 and part of 22 we will find seven new things:

1. The new Heaven
2. The new earth
3. The new peoples
4. The Lamb's wife, the new Jerusalem
5. The new temple
6. The new light
7. The new Paradise and the river of the water of life

Revelation 21 opens with “**And I saw a new heaven.**” John wants us to know for sure that he knows what he is talking about. He saw it, he was there, he witnessed it. The word is singular - Heaven. In Genesis 1:1 we read, “**In the beginning God created the heaven** (singular).” There are three heavens now: The atmospheric Heaven, the starry Heaven, and the third Heaven, which is God's house (II Corinthians 12:1-3). God's house will not be made new. It is the atmospheric Heaven that will be made new.

The devil has his kingdom in the Heaven just above us where the atmosphere is; the very air is filled with demons.

Both the Heaven and the earth will be made new and will be adapted to the new creatures who will inhabit them. The Heaven of heavens, God's dwelling place, will never undergo any change at all.

God's house is perfect, unmarred and unscarred by sin.

Neither evil nor enemy shall ever invade God's new Heaven and new earth. Righteousness shall dwell therein - not reign, as in the Millennium. (Read Isaiah 66:22; II Peter 3:13).

The last part of verse 1 tells us, “. . . **the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.**”

This statement refers to Revelation 20:11: “. . . **from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.**” This dissolution (not complete annihilation) will take place through the melting process of fire (II Peter 3:10). The world and the works will be burned up, the elements will be on fire, the air will explode. When the new Heaven and earth come into being there will be no more sea, no more great oceans - restless, destructive, never calm or still. The great separating medium of the continents is essential to both animal and vegetable life now; but the sea will not be needed in God's great new economy.

During the Millennium the sea will still be here . . . we read of nations, rivers, seas; but in the eternal ages there will be no need for a sea. The removal of the sea will give immense land surface exceeding greatly the surface of earth's land today. There will be countless hosts of Gentiles and the entire nation of Israel who will dwell on the new earth.

Verse 2: “**And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**” Again John says, “**I saw,**” assuring us that he was there and he knows for sure what he is writing about.

The new Heaven and the new earth that John saw are not described; however, the Pearly White City is described in minute detail.

There is no doubt in my mind that the earth will be a magnificent place - one giant garden of flowers, shrubs and everything that an eternal God can and will provide to make life complete and abundant. The new earth will be one giant paradise (the word means “*Garden of Pleasures*”). God has no joy in the death of the wicked; it is not His will that men suffer. He has great joy in blessing His people, and no good thing will He withhold from them who love Him, serve Him and walk with Him.

The term “**holy city**” occurs three times in Revelation: Chapters 11:2; 21:2; 22:19. The first time it refers to the literal city that will be here on earth during the coming crisis. The other two refer to the Holy City after the battle of Gog and Magog.

The Church is referred to as **“the New Jerusalem, the holy city.”** (Read Revelation 3:12.)

In the New Testament there are three Jerusalems: The heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22), the earthly Jerusalem (Revelation 11:2) and the New Jerusalem, **“the holy city”** (Revelation 21:2-10).

The term **“new Jerusalem”** is in contrast to the literal city of Jerusalem in Palestine, which has played such an important part in the history of the world. The term “new” is used three times: The new Heaven, the new earth, the new Jerusalem.

John saw the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven. Jesus told the disciples (John 14:1 ff, **“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”** Jesus ascended back to the Father (Acts 1:10,11), and for 1900 years He has been preparing a home (the new Jerusalem, the Pearly white City) for His Bride. The only earthly term known to Heaven that could give us some idea of the splendor, beauty and magnificence of the city, is used by the Holy Spirit to suggest to us what the city appeared **“like unto”** as compared to earth:

“Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

There are not enough adjectives in all the languages of all the world to describe the magnificence of the city John saw coming down from God out of Heaven! Those of us who are born again will occupy that city in the by-and-by. John saw the city **“coming down from God out of Heaven.”** He does not say - nor does he suggest - that it came to rest upon earth’s surface. It is my belief that the Holy City will be suspended between Heaven and earth, and I will point out later the reasons why I believe this. Yes, the Pearly white City will be a literal city - not mystical or spiritual. We will occupy a literal city.

In verses 1 and 2 we see two of the seven new things: The new Heaven and the new earth. In verse 3 we see the third new thing:

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

The word **“behold”** denotes that we should pay very close attention to the amazing fact that the tabernacle of God is with men.

- God visited Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden,
- He walked in the Garden in the cool of the day and talked with Adam.
- God appeared to the patriarchs of Israel,
- He dwelt in darkness in the unseen and innermost part of the tabernacle of old.
- God was in Christ in the days of His flesh (II Corinthians 5:19),
- He dwells in the Church today by His Spirit;

But the actual dwelling of God with His creatures on the new earth will take place when the first Heaven and the first earth are passed away and the new Heaven and new earth come into being.

In verse 3 we find fulfilled, **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”** (Matthew 5:8). In II Corinthians 6:16 we read, **“God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”**

Concerning the new peoples who will occupy the new earth,

First, God’s tabernacle will be with them.

Second, God tabernacles with them - He moves in and out; He is literally moving along with them here on earth, and of course, they will not be confined to earth’s surface. We will learn later that they will have access to the Pearly white City.

Third, these new peoples are God’s people.

Fourth, God Himself - no mediator - just “God with them.”

Fifth, God will be with them forever.

This will be a fixed, permanent relationship between God and His people.

In verse 4, **“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”**

This verse has nothing to do with the Church and the Lamb of God.

It is not the Lord Jesus, but Jehovah God Himself who wipes the tears from the eyes of these people. This is not the Church, but a new people dwelling on God’s earth. The people of the new earth are assured that God **“shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”**

There will be no more death where God is. No more sorrow ever will be known by the peoples on the new earth. No more crying, weeping or wailing. There shall be no more pain, no more misery, because **“the former things are passed away.”**

God has brought an end to the curse that sin brought upon man. There will be no curse and no sin in the new earth, and sin is to blame for all sorrow, heartaches, misery, tears, pain and death. God will see to it that sin will never invade the new earth, and verse 5 explains why:

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

The one who sits on the throne said, **“Behold, I make all things new.”**

The Lord God is sitting on His throne, the throne of omnipotence, the throne of absolute sovereignty; and sitting upon that throne, God declares His will: “. . . **All things NEW.**”

God will not repair the old order; He will not improve on the old order; He will make all things brand-new. The whole creation, the entire eternal state, whether people, things, or whatsoever, will be made new. God Himself commands John to write. In Revelation 19:9 the angel commanded John to write, but here it is Jehovah God Himself.

What did God command John to write? “**BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.**” God then says “**Amen!**” to that statement by saying, “**For these words are true and faithful.**”

God demands our attention. This is not just a promise, but the divine declaration of the sovereign God who cannot lie. There will not be one trace of the old order left. Every minute detail of all things will be new.

Verse 6: “**And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.**”

The term “**It is done**” simply means that it is a settled fact.

John saw it in the Spirit but it was just as real to him as if he were living in the moment when all things will be made new. God said it - and what God declares is sure to come to pass. “**Behold, I make all things new . . . It is done!**” That settles it.

The greatness of the speaker is pointed out: “**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.**”

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. “**The beginning and the end**” tells us that all testimony on earth began with Jehovah God and will end in His glory. All creation, all promise, all prediction, all prophecy, all love, all testimony, grace, salvation and mercy have their source in Jehovah God, and in Him is their fulfillment. When God has anything to do with it, it cannot fail. To man it may seem a failure, but to God, not so. God is victorious in the end.

Anyone who is thirsty can be satisfied at the fountain of life. The fountain is God, the water is promised to all who are thirsty. The water of life is God’s gift freely given - it cannot be bought. Money does not talk at the throne of God. All good gifts come from God and are free (Isaiah 55:1; James 1:17).

Verse 7: “**He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.**”

Here we have a tremendous promise. Everyone who is an overcomer shall inherit “**all things.**” Not only will he inherit these things, but the relationship between the overcomer and God is very, very close - the relationship of a son to the Father.

To the overcomer God will be God, but the overcomer will be God's son, and certainly God loves as no finite mind can comprehend. We will never know the fullness of God's love until we have a glorified body. Then we will be able to understand; God help me to be an overcomer. God help you, dear Christian, to strive to master the members of your body and to present yourself to God; a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, which is our reasonable service to Him who loved us so much He gave His only begotten Son that we might become the sons of God, and through His grace and power be overcomers.

Verse 8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

In my meetings I preach a sermon using this verse as a text. My subject: YOUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS IN HELL. Let me give you a brief outline of this message here: No person would purchase a piece of property on which to build a home without first investigating the neighborhood. A thinking husband, planning a family, would not purchase a piece of property on the street of forgotten men, in a settlement of bootleggers, nor in a section of the city where gangsters and dopers live. A thinking husband and father-to-be would purchase a piece of ground on which to build a home in a respectable neighborhood of decent, honest, upright ladies and gentlemen, always checking as to whether or not there is a good school and a good church.

But if you are so unfortunate as to die in sin and drop into hell, your next door neighbors will be the following:

1. The fearful. The Greek word suggests "cowardly" . . . those who were afraid to confess Christ, afraid to identify themselves with Jesus, the Gospel, and Christian people; afraid of what others might say if they became a Christian. Have you ever been around anyone who is afraid of everything? To be around such a person takes all the joy out of life.
2. Unbelievers. The most numerous on earth today are the millions of unbelievers, and they will all open their eyes in hell.
3. The abominable. This denotes the filthy, despicable dopers, sex maniacs, alcoholics from the gutter on the street of forgotten men . . . in other words - every degenerate sinner who has died, or will die and drop into hell, will be your next door neighbor.
4. Murderers. How would you like to live in an apartment house filled with murderers? How would you like to live in a community where twenty-five murderers have their homes? If you go to hell you will live there with millions of murderers, including Hitler, Stalin and the gangsters whom you know have lived and been executed in America. Would you like murderers for your next door neighbors?
5. Fornicators. This points to the persons who practice illicit love before marriage - girls and young women who sell their bodies to ungodly, lustful men.

Some of you precious girls and ladies who read these words would scream and run for your life if you thought you were in the same room alone with a sex fiend; and yet - good, moral, clean, virtuous girls and ladies who are not saved will read these lines, and regardless of how clean they are, if they die without Jesus they will open their eyes in hell and live next door to every fornicator who has ever died or will die!

6. Sorcerers are named among those who will occupy hell. A sorcerer is one who professes to discourse with spirits of the other world. Under the Law, a sorcerer was put to death (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). God has appointed the lake of fire as the final destiny for all who practice witchcraft, spiritualism, devil-worship or any kind of sorcery.

7. All idolaters will be in hell. The teeming millions who worship idols, other gods - the heathen, past and present; great men who make gods of their business, their home, their wife, their lady friends or whatsoever . . . all idolaters will be in hell. Would you like to purchase a piece of property right in the midst of the jungle and build a home amid head-hunters and monkey-worshippers?

Think it over! If you go to hell you will live right in the middle of them forever!

8. Liars. I think a liar is one of the most detestable people on earth. You can watch a thief, you can put locks on your doors and put your valuables in a strongbox - but what can you do about a liar? A liar can destroy the reputation of a young girl, a young man, a minister, an evangelist, and can cause more heartache and heartbreak in sixty seconds than a lifetime can erase.

There will be no liars in Heaven; every liar who has ever lived and died will open his eyes in hell.

In closing the discussion here, let me add three other neighbors to the list: **“And the devil that deceived them was cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone where the Beast and the false prophet are, and will be tormented day and night forever and ever”** (Revelation 20:10).

Not only will you live next door to the fearful, the unbelievers, abominable ones, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters and liars, but you will also live next door to the devil himself, to the Beast and the false prophet - the Satanic trinity!

And if you go to hell when you die, after the devil is put into the lake of fire he will point his finger in your face and say to you, “Did you not know you did not have to come to this place of torment? Did you not know Jesus died for you? Did you not know that all you had to do to stay out of hell was to believe on Jesus and receive Him?”

Then he will laugh in your face and say, “You poor fool! You could be in glory with Jesus now!” The greatest torment in the lake of fire will be the continual reminder that God did not create hell for you (Matthew 25:41), nor was it God’s will that you spend eternity in hell (II Peter 3:9).

You will curse the day you were born, while you scream, beg, roast, fry, sizzle, gnash your teeth and beg for a drop of water to cool your parching tongue. God help you, friend, if you are not born again, to come to Jesus now and let Him save your soul. **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31). (Also read John 1:12,13; John 5:24; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5; Romans 10:9, 10.)

THE LAMB’S WIFE, THE NEW JERUSALEM

In verse 9, John is invited by one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, to come with him to see the Bride, the Lamb's wife. In verse 10, the angel carried John **"away in the spirit"** to a great high mountain, and showed him the Holy City, Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God. Please notice that John saw this in the Spirit, while we will experience it literally.

In verse 11 we learn that the city had **"the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."** John saw a city fifteen hundred miles long, fifteen hundred miles wide and fifteen hundred miles high, that shone like one giant sparkling diamond. The city was clear as crystal. John saw it in the spirit, but we will live in it.

In verses 9, 10 and 11 we have the account of John, penned down as he saw it in the spirit: He stood on an exceeding high mountain and saw with his spiritual eye the great city - the Holy Jerusalem - coming down out of Heaven from God.

Jesus said to His disciples, **"Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."** Thomas then asked a very timely question: "Lord, how do we get there?" Jesus answered, **"I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me"** (John 14:1-6).

Verse 11 tells us about the light of the city.

Verses 12 through 25 describe the foundations, walls, street, gates, etc. One could write a book on these verses, but I think I shall simply point out that this description given in verses 11-25 is the best God could do in the language of man.

It is impossible for me to think of a diamond fifteen hundred miles square - and yet this city will be just that.

Oh, yes - it will be a literal city; never let anyone tell you this is a spiritual application. In verse 12 we read, **"And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."**

Certainly it will take a great wall to support a city fifteen hundred miles high. The names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel are in the foundation because Jesus said, **"Salvation is of the Jews"** (John 4:22).

Gentiles were without hope, without God, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise; but Jesus broke down that middle wall of partition, and now the Gospel is to **"whosoever will"** - Jew or Gentile. But the oracles of God were given to Israel, and through God's chosen people the Scriptures came down to us.

Verse 13 gives the location of the gates of the city:

There will be three gates on the east, three on the west, three on the south and three on the north - and that verse means exactly what it says. There will be three literal gates on all four sides of the city, making twelve gates. There will be a shining angel at each gate.

Verse 14 describes the wall and the foundations of the city.

Note that the city has twelve foundations, and in these twelve foundations the names of the twelve apostles. Someone may be asking, "Why twelve foundations?" The wall of the city will be fifteen hundred miles high and it will take a good foundation to support such a wall.

In verse 15 the one talking with John had a reed (a measuring stick) made of gold. A reed in that day was about ten feet long. With the measuring stick the city was measured and in verse 16 it is clearly stated that the city is foursquare. The Bible declares **"the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."**

There is no need to try to explain away a plain Bible fact such as we have just read. The city is as long as it is wide, it is as wide as it is long and exactly as high as it is wide and long. It is a square city - not a pyramid, not a sphere, not a rectangle - but foursquare. The measurement was twelve thousand furlongs. One furlong is 582 feet. Multiply 582 by 12,000, then divide by 5,280 feet in one mile, and you will get the exact size of the city - 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide, 1,500 miles high.

In verse 17, the wall of the city is measured - 144 cubits . . . or, 216 feet thick. Remember, there are 12 foundations, and the wall rests upon them. I gather that the foundations graduate in thickness, the twelfth one being extremely thick; and they graduate on up to the beginning of the wall which will be 216 feet thick. Think of a wall 216 feet thick - and yet it must be thick and strong because the city is pure gold, with all kinds of jewels and diamonds.

Verse 18 describes the materials used in building the wall.

It is hard for the finite mind to take in these things, yet we know God created this universe and He owns all the jasper, gold, rubies, diamonds and precious stones. The wall is of jasper and the city is PURE GOLD - so pure that it is transparent, as clear glass. I am glad I am going there, aren't you? I am glad that one day I will see that city. It is hard for me to understand it now, but I will have a glorified body then and I can appreciate it.

In verse 19 the foundations of the city are described. These foundations will be garnished with all kinds of precious stones . . . every type of priceless stone will be used in the foundation. The stones are named: The first foundation is pure jasper; the second, sapphire; the third is chalcedony; the fourth foundation is emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysopterus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

I admit I do not know what some of these precious stones look like; I have never seen them - but I know they are beautiful and one day I will see them in the foundations of the Pearly white City. These stones are not all the same in color. The jasper is bright and glistening, the other stones are varied colors. Think of the magnificence of the foundations and the city of pure gold! It is beyond human imagination.

Verse 21 enlightens us concerning the gates:

There are twelve of them, and with only three on each side of the city they would be of tremendous size. Each gate is one giant pearl! **“And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.”** Note that the Scripture does not say streets (plural). We will all live on Main Street - there will be no back streets. Only one street - and that street is pure gold . . . gold so pure as to resemble clear glass. This is not symbolic. The Scripture does not say **“as it were”** pure gold. The Word simply states in understandable language, **“THE STREET OF THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD”!** One day I will walk on that street, and so will you if you are born again. God pity the spiritualizers who try to tear down the magnificence of God’s eternal city - a literal city.

Verse 22 reveals the fifth new thing in God’s new economy: **“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”**

The thought of a temple of necessity confines the presence of God to a specific location or building, thereby placing some worshippers near to Him and some far away, as was the case when the temple stood on Mount Moriah. Here, **“no temple”** signifies that full and free access to God at all times will be granted to one and all.

The peoples in the Pearly white City will have immediate access to God without the aid of priest, mediator, or the tabernacle. God will abide in the Pearly white City, and also the Lamb who will have made good His glory, in whom the Godhead dwells (Colossians 1:19) and by whom Jehovah God is expressed fully and completely (John 17:23). There will be no need of a temple, no need of a meeting place, for God will be everywhere as He dwells with His people.

Everyone will live next door to Jesus! Everyone will live next door to God! God and the Lamb will make themselves known throughout each and every square inch of the vast city, and the light of the city will illuminate all things made new. There will be no house of worship in the Pearly white City. God will be there, and God and the Lamb will be the temple. We will worship any time, all times, anywhere and under all circumstances. No mediator as we have today, no temple as in the Old Testament era.

In verse 23 we have the sixth new thing: **“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”** Jesus said, **“I am the light of the world.”** Where Jesus is there can be no darkness, and there will be no darkness in eternity. There will be no morning, noon and night, but one long day of eternal light, eternal glory, eternal bliss. Jesus and God will be the light - not only of the Pearly white City, but of all things made new. Shekinah glory will illuminate every square inch of all things made new.

Verses 24-26: **“And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of (the city) shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.”**

I am sure someone is asking, “Who are these saved nations?” These are the peoples who refused to follow Gog and Magog when Satan was loosed for a little season.

I pointed out that there will be billions born during the Millennium. When Satan is loosed and goes to the four corners of the earth to test and try men, a number “as the sands of the sea” will follow him; but there will be millions who will refuse his leadership. There will be kings and great men who will refuse to follow him, and they will make up the saved nations. Also on the new earth will be the nations who were friendly to Israel during the reign of the Antichrist, together with the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

The new earth, then, will be occupied by Israel and the saved nations.

The Pearly white City will be the home of the New Testament Church, the Bride of Christ. The third Heaven (God’s house) will not be changed. Angels, cherubim and seraphim - and God Himself - will dwell there. God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Do not attempt to limit God to the new earth, the Pearly white City or the Heaven of heavens.

God is everywhere, and will be everywhere, throughout eternity. Do not question God’s being in the third Heaven, in the new earth and in the Pearly white City at the same time, because with God all things are possible and He is everywhere. The saved nations will bring their glory and honor into the Pearly white City. They will acknowledge the authority of Heaven, and will acknowledge that Heaven is the seat of all government. The Millennial kings and nations and Israel will walk in the bright light of the glorious city, they will gladly bring tribute into the city and present it to the Lamb and to their God, who will already have wiped away their tears. But they will not abide in the Pearly white City; their abiding place is the new earth. (The Pearly white City is the abiding place of the Church.)

God saves sinners FOR Christ’s SAKE, that through the ages of ages He (God) may display in the Pearly white City, the Bride purchased for the Son at the price of God’s own blood (Acts 20:28) in the veins of the man, Christ Jesus, who took a body and in that body conquered the world, the flesh and the devil, tasting death for every man, destroying him that had the power of death (Hebrews 2:9-14).

At the consummation of all things, when God makes all things new, He will display the Bride of the Son in the Pearly white City suspended between Heaven and earth. All the nations and all the peoples - yea, the angels and the cherubim - will walk and move in the light of the city, and the exceeding riches of the grace of God will be displayed in the heavenlies throughout the eternity of eternities.

The Church is the Pearl of great price.

God exhausted the riches of Heaven to make possible the salvation that you and I enjoy, the salvation that gives us a right to enter the city, the salvation that is ours by God's power, through God's grace, provided through His great love in order that His only begotten Son might have a spotless Bride throughout eternity.

Yes, the Church is the center and soul of God's activities on earth today. God is working through the Church - and again let me carefully point out that I am not referring to a building, but to the believers who make up the New Testament Church.

When the Rapture takes place God is not finished with the Church. The Church will be the seat of eternal government, light and knowledge throughout all eternity (Isaiah 9:6,7). God's government will never cease to be. The Pearly white City will be the capital of the King, occupied by the King of kings and His lovely, spotless Bride - the Church.

Revelation 21 closes with a solemn warning: **“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”**

Thank God for this verse! God will see to it that the episode recorded in Ezekiel 28 will never be repeated.

God will see to it that the tragedy of Genesis 3 will never be repeated. God will see to it that in NO WISE - under no circumstances nor by any means - will anything enter into the Pearly white City to mar, scar and defile. Nothing abominable shall enter there.

Revelation 21:8 tells us that all evil ones are in the lake of fire, eternally imprisoned and sealed, never to be released, and the devil is there, too. Satan had access to God's throne in the beginning when he was Lucifer, the shining one (Isaiah 14). But in the Pearly white City there will be no devil - nor in the new earth or the heavenlies. Satan will be in the lake of fire, the eternal prison of the damned. We need not worry about the sin-tragedy recurring. It will not, because God Almighty will have put down evil once, for all, forever. Satan's head will be crushed, his kingdom destroyed and his subjects in the lake of fire with him. Only those who have their names in the Lamb's Book of Life will be in the Pearly white City. The only way to get your name in that book is to be born again through the power of the Blood of the Lamb.

The Lamb's register - not the church book, not a book of religion, not even the book of physical life (all names are in that book). There is a distinct difference between the Book of Life and the Lamb's Book of Life. Be sure your name is in the Lamb's Book that registers all the names of all the redeemed.

~ end of chapter 21 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The New Paradise; The Bible's Last Message

1. **And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.**
2. **In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**
3. **And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:**
4. **And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.**
5. **And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.**
6. **And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.**
7. **Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.**
8. **And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.**
9. **Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.**
10. **And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.**
11. **He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.**
12. **And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**
13. **I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**
14. **Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**
15. **For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**
16. **I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.**
17. **And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**

18. **For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:**

19. **And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

20. **He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

21. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

THE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE

The angel showed John a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, originating in the throne of God, **“proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”** The throne is prominent in the concluding vision John saw. The river is pure . . . no germs, no disease, no pollution. It is not muddy - but bright and clean, clear as crystal.

In verse 2 John continues his description of the new Paradise by saying, **“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruit and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”**

There are those who symbolize the tree, the fruit, the leaves - but why should we spiritualize anything so clear, so understandable, as Revelation 22:2? In the middle of the street and on either side of the river, John saw the tree of life - rows of them. (The tree is referred to as singular, but there are many trees).

Each tree bears twelve different kinds of fruit, yields a harvest every thirty days, and the leaves are for the healing of the nations.

This is the same tree of life of which Adam would have eaten had he remained in the Garden of Eden. God drove Adam and Eve from the Garden in order to keep them from eating the fruit of the tree of life: **“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life”** (Genesis 3:22-24).

Had Adam obeyed God and refrained from eating of the forbidden fruit, he would eventually have eaten of the tree of life and would be alive today! God did not forbid Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of life; He commanded them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God knew that if Adam ate from the tree of life he would live forever in a body of sin - and thank God we will not carry these bodies throughout eternity; we will get a brand new body just like Jesus' body (I John 3:1-3).

In Genesis 3:15 God made provision for the spirit, but in Genesis 3:18 He made it very definite that the body would return to dust. Ecclesiastes 12:7 also tells us that the body returns to dust, and the spirit “**shall return unto God who gave it.**”

This tree in the Paradise of God will bear abundantly of luscious fruit, and the leaves are for the healing of the nations. The saints of the heavenly city will eat its fruit, the nations will use its leaves. If we desire to drink of the water of life and eat of the fruit of the tree of life, we will do so. Scripture seems to indicate that we will not have to eat, but we will be able to eat. After His resurrection Jesus ate literal food, and I believe the tree of life is for our pleasure and enjoyment.

Verse 3 is refreshing: “**There will be no more curse.**” The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the Paradise of God, and His servants shall serve Him throughout eternity. They shall see God’s face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.

Verse 5 tells us that “**there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.**” Chapter 21:25 also tells us there will be no night there . . . no darkness; eternity will be one long, endless day of brightness. There will be no need of the sun, for the Lord Jesus will be the light of all God’s creation forever and ever. Thank God for verses 6 and 7: Speaking to John the angel said, “**THESE SAYINGS ARE FAITHFUL AND TRUE: And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.**”

Throughout the book of Revelation John assures us that we can depend upon the truth of what is written. The book of Revelation is real, in spite of what is said by the liberals, the modernists, the haters of God and the spiritualizers. We are to read it and hear what it says. “**Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein . . .**” (Revelation 1:3). In chapter 22 verse 7 we have almost the same words: “**Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book!**”

Revelation is one of the most important books in the Word of God. The most important book to a young Christian - one who has just been born again - is the Gospel of John, which will enable one to be rooted and grounded in the faith. A young Christian should then read Galatians and make sure that he knows the grace of God minus works, law, or anything else aside from pure grace.

Revelation should then be studied, because a special happiness is promised to those who study it, hear it, believe it, live by it - and keep the things written in it! Perhaps someone is saying, “Surely the Spirit must have been mistaken, because verse 7 says, ‘**Behold, I come quickly.**’” No, the Spirit is not mistaken. If you are suggesting that it has been a long, long time and Jesus has not come, let me remind you that you are a sign that He is coming soon! Peter tells us that in the last days there will be those who will say, “**Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. FOR THIS THEY WILLINGLY ARE IGNORANT OF . . .**” (II Peter 3:4, 5a).

People who suggest that Jesus is not coming, and who say that things “**are as they have always been,**” are willingly ignorant - and willing ignorance is inexcusable. One day is as a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years is as one day (II Peter 3:8); so you see, the Lord Jesus has not yet been gone two days!

He is coming quickly - it could be today! Personally, I hope He will come today. I join in the last prayer in the Bible: “**Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**”

THE BIBLE’S LAST MESSAGE

In verse 8 John again reminds us, “**I SAW THESE THINGS AND HEARD THEM.**” John is not writing down what someone told him, nor what he thought he heard.

He saw and heard these things, and when he heard and saw, he fell prostrate on the ground before the feet of the angel who brought the message and showed him these things.

In verse 9 we learn that the angel refused to allow John to worship him. He said, “**I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.**” There is no person in Heaven or on earth who is worthy of our worship. We are to worship God . . . He is a jealous God and refuses to take second place. God wants us to love Him with all of our heart, soul, strength, mind, spirit, body . . . all that we are; and whatsoever we do, we are to do it all to the glory of God.

We are not to worship angels, cherubim, seraphim, prophets, saints . . . we are to worship God and Him only. The angel in verse 9 reminds John that he is a fellowservant. In Hebrews 1:14 we learn that angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; therefore, they are not to be worshipped.

In verse 10 the angel said to John, “**Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.**” This is quite different from the command given to Daniel. In Daniel 12, he was instructed to seal up the book and rest until the time of the end. Daniel did not understand what he had written, and when he asked, “**When shall these things be?**”

God told him to shut up the book until the time of the end. Daniel sealed the book; now his book is being opened “**unto us upon whom the ends of the world are come.**” The book of Daniel did not need to be opened a century ago, but now the time is at hand; and we need to see and understand that all prophecy and Scriptures point to the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, His coming is imminent.

Please read the entire chapter of Daniel 12, and compare it with John’s command not to seal the sayings of Revelation.

Verse 11: “**He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.**”

This verse indicates that the peoples formerly of earth, now in hell, are in a permanent state, which was fixed and determined at the second coming of Christ in the Revelation when all the wicked were judged and cast into the lake of fire. (The righteous had been previously caught up to meet Jesus in the clouds in the air.) The sheep have been separated from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the just from the unjust. There will be no further opportunities for individuals to change in any way.

Notice the two classes of bad and the two classes of good mentioned here: The unrighteous as a class are contrasted with the righteous, and then the filthy are contrasted with the holy. The wicked will remain wicked; the righteous will remain righteous. All destinies are fixed now, all conditions are permanent. The eternal day has dawned.

Verses 12-13: **“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”** We are reminded of the certainty and the nearness of the return of Jesus . . . not returning simply to be cheered by expectant saints and sons (verse 7), but coming with rewards, many and varied, to bestow upon each one according to the quality and character of stewardship rendered. The least service—even a cup of cold water given in Jesus’ name will not be overlooked or go unrewarded.

The only One who can speak with eternal authority is speaking: **“Alpha and Omega . . . the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”** . Revelation comes to a close even as it opened, with these divine titles used in reference to Christ. None other can claim to be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 1:8; 1:17; 21:6).

God the Father is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent; so is God the Son. He was in the beginning with God the Father; all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. All judgment will be committed unto Him, and He is everlasting. Explain it? I cannot. If I could, I would be as wise as my God - and I am happy that the God I serve is far, far superior to me in wisdom, power and understanding. I thank God for a God whom I cannot understand nor reason out. I cannot put God in a test tube nor carry Him to the laboratory and analyze Him. I can serve that kind of God much easier, I can have faith in that kind of God much easier than in a God whom I could understand.

Verses 14-15: **“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”**

Romans 10:4: **“Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”** We cannot inherit eternal life by keeping the commandments. Here we are assured that those who live spotless, consecrated, dedicated Spirit-filled lives will be rewarded to the highest degree—or, as John puts it in II John 8, they will receive a full reward. Certainly there will be degrees of reward in Heaven and throughout eternity. Those who live spotless lives will be blessed (happy) and they will have the right to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and they will have the right to go through the gates of the city.

Verse 15 does not mean that just outside the city limits are dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, idolaters, etc. This verse refers to the same group and place as Revelation 21:8. There is no need to be confused about this verse.

Those who are consecrated are happy, and happiness in this life will be rewarded with full joy and abundant reward on the other side.

Verse 16: **“I JESUS HAVE SENT MINE ANGEL TO TESTIFY UNTO YOU THESE THINGS IN THE CHURCHES. I AM THE ROOT AND THE OFFSPRING OF DAVID, AND THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.”** We are again assured that this is not a riddle, not a book of confusion, but the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The things in Revelation have been sent to the churches.

I am not critical when I say that some of you dear people who read these lines have never heard a sermon on Revelation where you attend church. Ask yourself why. If God Almighty sent His angel to dictate twenty-two chapters of the Bible to John the Beloved, exiled to the Isle of Patmos for the specific purpose of receiving this great book; If God commanded John to pen down what he saw and heard and send it to the churches, why should any pastor refuse to preach Revelation?

Perhaps you have asked your pastor about it, and he said, “I do not understand it.” If so, answer him with these words: **“The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”** Then ask him to study Revelation with you. Start a week-night Bible class, and study every word in Revelation. Pray, search, and God will reveal what He wants you to know. We will never understand it all . . . no man will ever understand all of Revelation; but certainly most of us could understand much more about it if we would spend more time studying it.

A pastor has no excuse for neglecting to preach Revelation to his people. An evangelist has no excuse for not preaching it in his meetings. A radio minister or Bible teacher has no excuse for ignoring this book. Jesus Christ sent His angel to testify these things in the churches. Jesus Christ assures us that He is the root and offspring of David, He is the bright and morning star, and He will sit on the throne of David right here on this earth and reign in the by-and-by. Jesus was born King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2); He died as King of the Jews (Matthew 27:37). Jesus shall reign as King of the Jews (Zechariah 9:9). Not only is He King of kings, Lord of lords, and King of the Jews, but He is also **“THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.”**

This great revelation of Himself - Jesus, the King, the Bridegroom - stirs the slumbering affections of the Bride. Her heart is moved. Jesus has kindled a fire in her soul which cannot be put out. She heard her lover say, **“I AM THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR!”** The Bride immediately answers, **“And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come!”**

The true Church-consecrated, true believers long for the coming of Jesus. We are not shirkers of our duty, but it would be wonderful if Jesus would come this moment! We would be caught up to meet Him in the clouds in the air. We would attend the marriage supper of the Lamb. What a glorious day that will be! No wonder the Spirit and the Bride say, **“Come!”**

Please notice, it is not the Spirit IN the Bride, but the Spirit AND the Bride. Both say, “**Come.**” Then each individual hearer says, “**COME!**” This is the day when every believer should be crying out, “**Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**” This is the day of grace, the day of God’s longsuffering, the day of God’s mercy. The call today is to every thirsty soul, to every weary, disappointed soul. The invitation today is, “**Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him drink of the water of life freely.**” Any thirsty individual is invited to take and drink of the water of life freely.

This the last invitation in the Bible.

A SOLEMN WARNING

Verses 18-19: “**For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**”

Verse 18 solemnly warns every man who hears the words of Revelation, that if that man shall add anything to the book, God shall add unto that man the plagues that are written in this book. I think it is all right to apply this warning to the entire Bible, but there is no doubt in my mind that it specifically has to do with the twenty-two chapters of Revelation. Revelation 1:3 promises a blessing to all who read it, hear it, keep it and obey it. Revelation 22:18-19 warns that judgment and fury shall be poured out upon all who tamper with Revelation.

Verse 18 warns concerning adding to the book.

Verse 19 warns the man who shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy. God will take that man’s part “**out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**”

You may rest assured that a born again, God-called preacher or teacher would not add to or take from the book of Revelation. Those who tamper with this book (or with any other book of the Bible) to make it fit their religion or denomination are not called of God, nor are they sent by God.

When verse 19 mentions taking away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book, it is not referring to a born again, blood-washed, redeemed child of God falling from grace or being taken out of grace, but to the fact that any person who tampers with Revelation (which a Spirit-filled, born again believer would not do) has cancelled his right to any part of eternal life and the joys of Heaven beyond the grave. He will burn in hell for tampering with the prophecies of the book of Revelation - or any other portion of God’s holy Word. To add to the Word of God, or to take from the Word, is to tamper with God, because “**in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh**” (John 1:1, 14).

So dear reader, if you are not born again, do not try to interpret Revelation! Do not try to explain it away. Read John's Gospel, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, give your heart to Jesus, be born again and then read Revelation, and you will understand the part of it that God wants you to understand. When you are born again you will not worry about the part you do not understand, because in the end, God will explain to us all that we were unable to understand in this tabernacle of clay.

THE LAST PROMISE AND THE LAST PRAYER OF THE BIBLE

Verses 20-21: **“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”**

In verse 20 the statement **“He which testifieth these things”** points back to all the things contained in Revelation. Thus the Lord Jesus assures us that the entire Revelation was dictated to John by God and truly is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly!” This is the final message to the Church.

This is the last word from Heaven, until Jesus comes into the air above us and calls the Church up to meet Him in the clouds in the air. The Old Testament closes with the promise of the first coming of Jesus; the New Testament closes with the announcement of the grand and glorious second coming of our great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

When we speak of the second coming we mean both phases of it - first, in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18); second, in the Revelation when He returns to the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:1-4). Both make up the second coming, and yet they are not one and the same. There will be at least seven years between the Rapture and the Revelation - the time when He comes as a thief in the night, and the time when He comes **“and every eye shall see Him.”**

The Old Testament closes with the words, **“. . . I come and smite the earth with a curse”** (Malachi 4:6).

The New Testament closes with the precious words, **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”**

“I come quickly,” is the last spoken word from Heaven. Heaven has been silent for almost two thousand years; I wonder just how soon Heaven will speak to us from the air, with the shout and the trumpet calling the saints up to meet the Bridegroom in the air. It has been a long time-almost two thousand years - of waiting, suffering, weeping; but His coming is much, much nearer.

Our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The gloom of this night is about to be changed into the gladness of His everlasting joy! The shadows of time are fast passing. The faint streaks of eternal day can be seen on the eastern horizon. Who knows? Perhaps this will be the day when Jesus comes! Weary pilgrim, take courage! Joy cometh in the morning!

In the last part of verse 20 we have the answer to the Lord's declaration, "**Surely I come quickly.**" The answer is, "**Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**" John is here sounding out the testimony of every true believer.

Oh, yes - every born again child of God believes in the return of Jesus: "**For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ**" (Titus 2:11-13).

The grace of God that saves us (Ephesians 2:8) teaches us to look for Jesus.

All believers do not agree on every minute detail of His coming, but all believers do believe in His return. Jesus says to weary pilgrims, "**Behold, I come quickly!**" And the weary pilgrims answer back, "Yes, Lord! Come! Come quickly!"

I know many times it seems that the righteous are in the minority and are fighting a losing battle; but not so. Sometimes we become weary and discouraged - but we should not. A thousand years is as a day with the Lord, and a day as a thousand years (II Peter 3:8). You may rest assured that "**THE LORD IS NOT SLACK CONCERNING HIS PROMISE.**"

The whole creation is crying out for deliverance (Romans 8:22). Persecuted Israel, sin-benighted individuals, an earth stricken with pain, heartache and heartbreak, men's hearts failing them for the fear of things which are coming upon the earth - the whole creation is groaning, travailing and longing for that glorious day when deliverance will come.

Many who groan do not understand for what they are groaning. Many who thirst do not realize for what they are thirsting; but the righteous understand. Believers know! The **ONLY** answer to the ills of earth is the second coming of Jesus Christ. Rulers, kings, queens, dictators and governments will never solve earth's troubles . . . only He who said, "**Behold, I come quickly.**" When He comes, men will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. They will not study war, but peace will engulf the earth. There will be peace on earth, good will toward men as the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth; but this will never happen until Jesus comes.

THE CLOSING BENEDICTION

Verse 21: "**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**" That is just like Jesus, our wonderful Lord. His favor, His blessings, His goodness, rest upon all the saints. The strongest, the weakest; the mighty, the humble; the wise, the unlearned; the grandfather, the child . . . all are equal recipients of His grace. His grace rests upon all.

Through cloudy days, through days of sunshine; through long nights, through weary days; in the summertime, in the dead of winter; when all is well, when all seems lost, His grace is sufficient.

By grace He saves us. Through grace He keeps us. His grace never runs out - there is enough to last all the way - and then if we depart this life before the Rapture we have the promise, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Psalm 23).

Life eternal begins in grace, continues In grace, and comes to its final fulness in grace. Paul said, “I am what I am by the grace of God!” I join Paul in that testimony, for were it not for grace, we would all end up in the pit with the Beast, the false prophet, the devil, and the terrible group named in Revelation 21:8!

Thank God for the promise in Revelation 22:21: **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints.”** I am glad I am one of those saints. I may be one of the least of the saints, I may be weak and insignificant - but praise God I am under the Blood, and therefore I am a saint! All blood-washed believers are saints.

Let me bring this study to a close by asking you: Are YOU saved? Have you been born again? I did not ask you if you belong to some church, or if you embrace some religion or if you have been baptized. The question is, Are you SAVED? Are you BORN AGAIN? Are you washed in the Blood? Is your name in the Lamb’s book of life? If not, bow your head, receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, trust Him in your heart, and you have nothing to fear or dread. God’s grace will save you, keep you, and present you faultless before His glory!

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!” (Acts 16:31).

~ end of book ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
